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House Bill 4637 (as passed by the House)  
Sponsor: Representative David Martin  
House Committee: Local Government and Municipal Finance  
Senate Committee: Local Government

Date Completed: 9-28-21

### **CONTENT**

**The bill would amend Chapter 16 of the Revised Statutes of 1846 to allow a township board to change the name of the township, subject to approval of the majority of electors of the township.**

Chapter 16 of the Revised Statutes of 1846 establishes the powers and duties of townships, the election and duties of township officers, and the division of township officers. The bill would amend Chapter 16 to allow a township board, by resolution adopted by two-thirds of the members elected to and serving on the board, to change the name of the township. The resolution would have to include the new name of the township.

However, this resolution would not take effect unless it was approved by a majority of the electors of the township voting on the question at an election to be held on the next August or November regular election date, whichever occurred first, that was not less than 60 days after the date the resolution had been adopted. If a majority of township's electors voting on the question approved it, the name of that township would be authorized to be changed by the township to the new name in the resolution.

A township could change its name only once every 25 years.

Proposed MCL 41.2a

### **BACKGROUND**

Michigan law prescribes procedures by which cities and villages may change their name but provides no comparable procedure for townships. In 2017, Flint Township's township board introduced legislation to change the name of Flint Township to Carman Hills Township to distinguish the township from the City of Flint. The name change was sought, for business and tourism reasons, to avoid the negative connotations associated with the City of Flint as a result of the 2014 Flint water crisis. However, without statutory authorization to do so, it is unclear whether the township has the authority to affect the desired name change.

Legislative Analyst: Christian Schmidt

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The bill would have no fiscal impact on the State and no fiscal impact on any local government except a township that chose to change its name. A township that chose to undergo a name

change would incur some costs related to replacing materials with the new township name, such as signs, stationary, and vehicle lettering or decals. The bill's provisions would be permissive, so any costs would depend on actions taken by a township.

Fiscal Analyst: Ryan Bergan

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.