



Legislative Report

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Townships face threats in final weeks of session

THE FINAL DEADLINE FOR ACTION in the House and Senate for bills to be passed out of committee came and went last week. Although dozens of anti-township bills were cast aside during committee deliberations, there are still a handful of bills that townships will have to work hard to derail during the final five weeks of session. Lawmakers are on a two-week spring break, but will return to Springfield on April 25 for the final run to its May 31 adjournment.

Let's take a look at some of the more onerous bills that remain alive:

House Bill 496 (Rep. Tom Demmer, R-Dixon; Sen. Tom Cullerton, D-Villa Park) allows a vote by a city council or by referendum to abolish a township that is coterminous with that city. Applies the specific provisions in a law that applied to abolition of Evanston Township statewide. This bill will simply not work in that there is no "one size fits all" solution to absorption of coterminous townships since all are structured differently. Passed the House; Senate Assignments Committee.

House Bill 607 (Rep. Sam Yingling, D-Round Lake) allows a township board to put a question on the ballot to abolish that township's highway commissioner. Passage stage, House.

Senate Bill 3 (Sen. Tom Cullerton) among other things, addresses combination, absorption, abolition of certain townships, including coterminous townships, in an orderly and thoughtful manner. It does however, allow township boards where there are 15 or fewer miles to put a question on the ballot to abolish its highway commissioner. TOI's threshold is 10 miles or less, therefore, we oppose the bill. Passed the Senate.

Senate Bill 85 (Sen. Michael Connelley, R-Lisle) creates the Local Government Inspector General Act. Senate floor.

Senate Bill 909 (Sen. Melinda Bush, D-Grayslake) allows for the abolition of township assessors in Lake County by vote of the county board. Senate floor.

Senate Bill 923 (Sen. Bush) prohibits the same person from holding specific offices simultaneously that are part of the county board and township. Senate floor.

Five weeks of session is an eternity. And while TOI will turn its focus on these bills right now, there are opportunities for several other ill-advised proposals to make their way into the legislative process between now and May 31.



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