

SESSION OF 2011

**SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE ON HOUSE BILL NO. 2294**

As Amended by House Committee on  
Local Government

**Brief\***

HB 2294 would make a number of changes and additions to annexation law.

Specifically, the bill would do the following:

**Homestead Exemption Continuation**

- Require homestead rights attributable prior to annexation (unilateral, bilateral, or in most consent-annexation circumstances) to continue after annexation until the land is sold after the annexation.

**County Commission Ruling on Unilateral Annexations**

- Restrict the unilateral annexation of land (*via* the subsections of KSA 12-520 that allow unilateral annexation) by requiring the board of county commissioners to determine whether the proposed annexation would have an adverse effect on the county. The determination must be by resolution and must occur within 30 days following the hearing on the proposed annexation. If the board of county commissioners fails to adopt a resolution, the annexation would be deemed approved by the board.

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\*Supplemental notes are prepared by the Legislative Research Department and do not express legislative intent. The supplemental note and fiscal note for this bill may be accessed on the Internet at <http://www.kslegislature.org>

## **Reviewing Service Provision; Possible Deannexation Proceedings**

- Require a city proposing to annex land unilaterally or by most consent methods (*i.e.*, pursuant to KSA 12-520) to submit a copy of the city's plan, dealing with extending services to the area concerned, to the board of county commissioners at least 10 days prior to the required public hearing on the proposed annexation.
- Modify current law dealing with the review process for both unilateral and most consent annexations (KSA 12-520) and bilateral annexations (KSA 12-521) to determine whether municipal services were provided as stated in the relevant annexation plan, by reducing the total time that must elapse before deannexation procedures might begin. In detail, the bill would:
  - Reduce from five to three years the time that must elapse following the annexation of land (or related litigation) before the board of county commissioners is required to hold a hearing to consider whether the city has provided the services set forth in its annexation plan and timetable. If the board of county commissioners refuses to hold the hearing, a landowner would be permitted to bring a court action. The court would be required to award attorney fees and costs to the landowner if the court finds a hearing is required.
  - Reduce from two and one-half years to one and one-half years the time that must elapse following the services hearing (or following the conclusion of litigation), when the city has not provided the municipal services stated in the plan, before a landowner may petition to the board of county commissioners to deannex the land in question. If the board of county commissioners refuses to hold the required deannexation hearing, a landowner would be permitted to bring a court action. The

court would be required to award attorney fees and costs to the landowner if the court finds a hearing is required.

### **21-Acre Limitation on Bilateral Annexations**

- Prohibit the annexation, *via* approval by the board of county commissioners, of any portion of any unplatted agricultural land of 21 acres or more without the written consent of the landowner. (This prohibition exists in the current unilateral-annexation statute; the bill would extend the prohibition to bilateral annexations.)

### **Election Required on Bilateral Annexations**

- Require an election be held for any annexation proposed to be made *via* approval by the board of county commissioners, if voters reside in the proposed area. The election must be by mail ballot of the qualified voters residing in the area proposed to be annexed, if the area contains qualified voters. If a majority of those voting reject the annexation, the city would be prohibited from annexing the land and no further proposal to annex the proposed area could take place for at least four years from the election date, unless the proposed annexation is authorized based on one of the following conditions specified in KSA 12-520:
  - The land is owned by or held in trust for the city;
  - The land adjoins the city and is owned by or held in trust for any governmental unit other than another city (with restrictions); or
  - The land adjoins the city and the landowner consents to the annexation.

### **Background**

The bill was requested by the Annexation Reform Coalition, a group of rural landowners whose land was annexed in 2008 by the City of Overland Park. As introduced, with the exception of the Homestead provisions and one

additional provision, the bill contained the provisions of 2009 House Sub. for SB 51 as recommended by the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources. That bill contained the provisions of all three bills recommended by the 2008 Special Committee on Eminent Domain in Condemnation of Water Rights, which, in addition to its primary responsibility, was charged with examining the issue of local annexation. 2009 House Sub. for SB 51 (which was further amended by Conference Committee and ultimately contained other annexation provisions as well) was vetoed by then-Governor Sebelius.

Testifying in favor of the bill were representatives of the Annexation Reform Coalition and Americans for Prosperity, as well as a private citizen. The proponents cited concern over annexations authorized under KSA 12-521, which allows a city to seek approval by the board of county commissioners for a number of different types of annexations, as well as concern for private property rights. Proponents also explained the Homestead exemption change in the bill, noting the annexation of large tracts of unplatted farm land raises a question about the loss of Homestead Exemption rights. Article 15, Section 9 of the *Kansas Constitution* exempts 160 acres of farm land, or one acre within a city's limits, from forced sale for debt collection (with some exceptions). Concern was raised that the annexation of farm land could result in the reduction of a landowner's protection from 160 acres to one acre.

Opponents testifying included city representatives for Olathe, Overland Park, and Topeka; the League of Kansas Municipalities, and the Overland Park Chamber of Commerce. The opponents cited a number of objections, including concern that the bill might restrict or result in unnatural growth of cities, as well as consideration for the larger population versus a small group. One conferee suggested the Legislature needed to consider the difference between voters' and landowners' rights, as the two groups are not necessarily the same.

The House Committee on Local Government amended HB 2294 as follows:

- Deleted language that would have made the extension of the Homestead provision retroactive to January 1, 2011.
- Added the contents of 2011 HB 2065 requested by Representative Ann Mah, which would require that the board of county commissioners review each proposed unilateral annexation to determine whether the annexation would have an adverse effect on the county.
- Deleted the requirement that the court award the landowner reasonable attorney fees and costs, when a landowner aggrieved by the decision of the board of county commissioners prevails regarding an annexation ruled on by the board.

According to the fiscal note, for which the League of Kansas Municipalities (LKM) was consulted, passage of HB 2294 as introduced would cause additional expense to counties and cities by adding the requirement to pay landowners' litigation costs. The fiscal note states cities also may encounter additional costs due to the accelerated timetables for service plans, potential litigation, the cost to conduct a mail ballot election, and costs incurred to prepare for and conduct additional hearings. Finally, the fiscal note indicates concern on the part of the LKM that the bill could lead to reduced city growth which could affect economic development and tax base growth.