



PETER C. SCHWARTZKOPF
MAJORITY LEADER
Fourteenth District

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE OF DELAWARE
LEGISLATIVE HALL
DOVER, DELAWARE 19901

COMMITTEES
Ethics, Chair
House Administration, Chair
House Rules, Chair
Gaming & Pari-mutuels
Veterans Affairs

House Administration Committee
Meeting Minutes
April 28, 2010

Chairman Schwartzkopf called the meeting to order at 3:33 pm. Members present included Speaker Gilligan and Representatives D. Short, Longhurst and Cathcart. For a list of guests present, please see attached.

After calling the meeting to order, Chairman Schwartzkopf introduced Rep. D. Short to introduce his bill, **HB 359, AN ACT TO AMEND THE CHARTER OF THE TOWN OF BLADES RELATING TO ELECTIONS**. Rep. D. Short stated that this bill was originally in the Senate, but after the vote it was re-written. The bill changes the election date from March to April in the Town of Blades. The bill also allows for a map to define the territory instead of metes and bounds, which will help make the voting map easier to understand. It also requires candidates to register to run for mayor or council 30 days before Election Day instead of 20.

Chairman Schwartzkopf asked for any questions or comments from committee members or the public. Seeing none, Rep. Longhurst motioned to release the bill; Speaker Gilligan seconded the motion. HB 359 was released from committee on a 1-4-0 vote.

Rep. D. Short then introduced his next bill **HB 360, AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 29 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE REPORTS**. Rep. D. Short stated that this bill has to do with reporting to the financial disclosure commission. He then brought up how the act will move the financial disclosure reporting date from February 15 of each year to March 15 of each year, which will give legislators more time to file their paper work. Rep. D. Short stated that this bill will help simplify the entire filling process.

Chairman Schwartzkopf asked for any questions or comments from committee members or the public. Seeing none, Rep. Cathcart motioned to release the bill; Speaker Gilligan seconded the motion. HB 360 was released from committee on a 1-4-0 vote.

Chairman Schwartzkopf then introduced **HB 362 AN ACT TO AMEND THE LAWS OF DELAWARE VOLUME 66, AS AMENDED, PERTAINING TO THE CHARTER OF THE TOWN OF CLAYTON**. Chairman Schwartzkopf asked for any questions or comments from committee members or the public. Seeing none, Speaker Gilligan motioned to release the bill; Rep Longhurst seconded the motion. HB 360 was released from committee on a 0-5-0 vote.

Chairman Schwartzkopf then asked Rep. Ramone to introduce his bill, **HB 214 AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 9 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO NEW CASTLE COUNTY**. Rep. Ramone asked that the committee release the bill from committee in order for the legislators to engage in further dialogue. He commented that with the fiscal situation of the country, state and New Castle County, it is irresponsible to have 13 county council members. Rep. Ramone stated that when the council was originally expanded to 12 members, it was excessive. He cited that currently, New Castle County is laying off police officers, and they do not have enough paramedics. By cutting the amount of council members, the county will be able to save money and spend it on other areas. He then brought up how releasing this bill for discussion on the House floor is important.

Rep. Longhurst then asked Rep Ramone how many constituents each council member represents. He stated that each council member represents around twice as many constituents as a state representative. He brought up that due to the simplification of the land use system, their jobs are not as labor intensive as they were before. He commented that the money spent on each council member is inefficient and pointed out that the number of people each council member represents is high but the amount of work they do is low.

Rep. Longhurst then pointed out that 35,000 people for each council member to represent is a lot. She stated that the council members take care of county issues that help alleviate the amount of work that state representatives have to do. She commented that if each council member represents over 35,000 people, the council members will have a lot of constituent work and this would not be fair. Rep. Longhurst brought up how if the county council wants to save money, they should look for other solutions like sharing executive aides.

Rep. Ramone then commented how each county council member does have a big job, but the way each district is split up, across the county, was not properly thought out. The work is not balanced out for each member. He stated that by cutting the amount of members down to six will hopefully help balance out the work load. He then brought up that it is important that the House have dialogue about this issue. Rep. Ramone commented how some in the county think that a council of only six is too small and that he is open to amendments to the bill.

Speaker Gilligan stated that the increase in the amount of council members happened because each member had too much influence on land use and zoning. It would not be responsible to have only six council members and to only need four to receive majority votes. He brought up that this was originally voted in to protect New Castle County for zoning ordinances. He then stated that constituent services for the increased amount of people will be difficult. Speaker Gilligan commented that since the increase in county council members, his job has gotten easier because he does not have to focus his time on county constituent issues. He stated that there do need to be cuts, but cutting this amount of members would not be responsible, and he believes that the council is running well as

is. He concluded by saying that he does not support the bill and does not want it to be released.

Rep. Ramone stated that he disagreed with Speaker Gilligan and if there were only six council members, he thinks that it would be harder to receive a majority than it would be to receive a majority of seven out of 13 members. He then brought up that county council members do a great job with constituent services, but there is a disproportionate amount of work and if the council was minimized to six members, the work would more likely be spread out evenly among members. He stated that when the council doubled in members, the House and Senate both grew but they did not come close to doubling. He then brought up how he would like New Castle County to be more fiscally responsible, and he does not want them to keep dipping into their reserve funds every year.

Rep. Longhurst then commented that the council is doing a great job now, and she does not want to see them take on more constituent work. Rep. Ramone then followed up by saying that he does think they are doing a good job, but he wants the county to be more fiscally responsible.

Chairman Schwartzkopf asked for any questions or comments from the public. Councilman Smiley, New Castle County Council Member, stated that he does not know any council members that are for this bill. He commented that the current council eliminated a great deal of spending and the county expenses would be worse off if it was not for the current council members. He concluded by saying that the expansion actually caused the county to spend less money, because of the great job they are doing to eliminate spending.

Chairman Schwartzkopf asked for a motion. Rep. Cathcart motioned to release the bill; Rep. D. Short seconded. The motion failed to get enough votes, and HB 214 was not released from committee.

Chairman Schwartzkopf adjourned the meeting at 3:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Trevor Felix