

August 14, 2015

To the Honorable Members of
The Illinois House of Representatives,
99th General Assembly:

Today I return House Bill 219 with a specific recommendation for change.

Current law permits a territory within a fire protection district to be disconnected from the district and transferred to a contiguous district provided that certain criteria are met. The proposed transfer is subject to approval by voters of the territory. If this bill were enacted, the proposed transfer would be subject to approval by voters of the entire district from which the territory is to be disconnected.

Illinois is suffering from too many units of local government. For government to be more efficient and responsive, we need to enable, not hinder, consolidation of local governments. This bill simply replaces one hurdle to consolidation with another hurdle to consolidation.

Real reform requires bolder action. In 2013, the General Assembly passed legislation to permit DuPage County to dissolve and consolidate county-appointed districts, including so-called "paper" fire protection districts that tax residents but do not employ firefighters. The Local Government Consolidation Commission recommended that the authority granted to DuPage County be extended to all counties if, as has been the case, the DuPage County effort proves successful. The change recommended below would incorporate the legislative revisions recommended by the Commission in its report.

Consolidation of local government is a meaningful step to reducing property taxes in Illinois. The proliferation of taxing jurisdictions is a direct cause of our high property tax rates. By extending the authority granted to DuPage County to all counties, counties will be able to reduce the number of taxing jurisdictions, streamline services, and control costs.

Therefore, pursuant to Section 9(e) of Article IV of the Illinois Constitution of 1970, I hereby return House Bill 219 entitled "AN ACT concerning local government", with the following specific recommendation for change:

On page 6, immediately after line 25, by inserting:

"Section 10. The Counties Code is amended by changing Section 5-44010 as follows:

(55 ILCS 5/5-44010)

Sec. 5-44010. Applicability. The powers and authorities provided by this Division 5-44 apply all counties in the state of Illinois ~~only to counties with a population of more than 900,000 and less than 3,000,000 that are contiguous to a county with a population of more than 3,000,000~~ and units of local government within such counties.

(Source: P.A. 98-126, eff. 8-2-13)".

With this change, House Bill 219 will have my approval. I respectfully request your concurrence.

Sincerely,

Bruce Rauner
GOVERNOR