

Submitter: Alice Jones
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure: SB1576

Sen. Prozanski and Sen. Thatcher,

Today I was alerted to the possibility that by tomorrow the structure of government in my small county, that I have lived in for the last 50 years, may change. We have had a judge and two commissioners for as long as I can remember. Now we have three county court members that are trying to abolish the position of Judge and go to a Board of Commissioners, against very vocal concerns being expressed by the public. I suppose it's possible this change could have its advantages, but the timing and the way they are going about it frankly stinks. I have been under the impression all along that a monumental change such as this for our county would go to a vote of the people, but I am now learning this may not be the case. Due to the turmoil of late, I have been paying much closer attention to the activities of our county court, although many believe much of their business is conducted in private. In fact, our county court met last Wednesday but no mention was made of this coming down the pike AT ALL.

This is not a simple probate matter. This is not a simple matter of giving these small counties LOCAL CONTROL. In discussions with other residents in Arlington today I have learned that Sherman and Wheeler County are not interested in any change. I can imagine scenarios in all six counties where two commissioners can decide to overthrow their judge, with a simple motion and vote.

I also notice in the amendment there is an emergency clause. There is no emergency here, only political, so hopefully you will see fit to remove that portion of the amendment at the very least.

I know on the outside looking in this amendment may seem like a simple legislative fix to allow more local control in these six counties but there is so much more going on here in Gilliam County. Please take the time to take a closer look.

If this must go through, please add a stipulation to refer it to the voters. Or just put a halt to it for now. This is huge for us out here and needs much more time and consideration.

Thank you for your time,

Alice Jones
Gilliam Co Resident

Cc Sen Manning, Linthicum, Gelser