

Submitter: Pat Shaw
On Behalf Of: SB 1576
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure: SB1576

I am writing in opposition to the proposed Amendment #4 to Senate Bill 1576. I have been a resident of Gilliam County for more than 70 years. I served the people of Gilliam County working in County Government for more than 26 years, 20 years as an elected official including Gilliam County Judge. During my years as County Judge, I presided over both Juvenile and Probate cases. I have grave concerns over the proposed amendment #4 to Senate Bill 1576 as presented by the Gilliam County Court. One of my concerns is the process that led up to this proposal. The Court's process for changing our county structure has met major local opposition, but our county government has failed to acknowledge the public outcry or even given the citizens a chance to have a vote on the matter. In fact, the proposal for this amendment, which was drafted on Gilliam County letterhead, appears to have not gone through a public meeting law approval process.

Amendment #4 to Senate bill 1576 would permanently change the structure of the Gilliam County Judge position and our court structure. I believe this is not in the best interest of the citizens of our small county nor is it what the majority of our citizens would choose if given a chance to vote on the matter. The proposed law looks benign, but it is too powerful. Discussing change in law should occur carefully with the communities affected being involved in the process and not rushed through a state statute. There is an emergency clause in the proposed amendment. There is no actual emergency in this case (except for an upcoming election, a political emergency). What is the hurry to push this amendment through in a short session?

Two out of the three positions on our county court are up for election this year and there are multiple people who have filed to run for election to fill these positions. To my knowledge, all those who have filed, oppose this amendment. The good citizens of Gilliam County have a right and the current court has an obligation to give this proposal some time and not rush the matter.

I respectfully request that proposed Amendment #4 be deleted from this bill and that you give the citizens of our County the time to resolve this issue in a manner that will meet with the approval of the majority of our electorate.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,

Pat Shaw
Former Gilliam County Judge