

SUBJECT: Deleting constitutional references to inspector of hides and animals

COMMITTEE: Agriculture and Livestock — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 6 ayes — Miller, Anderson, B. Brown, Aycock, Garcia, Heflin
0 nays
1 absent — Gallego

WITNESSES: None

BACKGROUND: Texas Constitution, Art. 16, sec. 64 sets a four-year term for the county office of inspector of hides and animals and stipulates that the office holder must serve until a successor is qualified.

Sec. 65 stipulates that certain officers serving unexpired terms of more than one year, including an inspector of hides and animals, resign automatically if they run or announce their candidacy for any office of profit or trust under Texas or U.S. law.

DIGEST: HJR 69 would remove the office of inspector of hides and animals from Texas Constitution, Art. 16, secs. 64 and 65(a).

The proposal would be presented to the voters at an election on Tuesday, November 6, 2007. The ballot proposal would read: “The constitutional amendment to abolish the constitutional authority for the office of inspector of hides and animals.”

SUPPORTERS SAY: HJR 69 would remove out-of-date references from the Texas Constitution regarding an office that no longer serves a purpose in Texas. The county office of inspector of hides and animals was established in 1871 to aid in the prevention of cattle theft by thoroughly inspecting the hides and animals shipped out of the county. According to the *Handbook of Texas*, published by the Texas State Historical Association, only about one-third of Texas counties had an inspector of hides and animals in 1945, and the office has been virtually, if not completely, nonexistent since the early 1990s.

In November 1999, Texas voters approved Proposition 3 (HJR 62 by Mowery), which made numerous changes to the Texas Constitution, including deleting references to obsolete offices and provisions. It was merely an oversight that the county office of inspector of hides and animals was not included in that clean-up legislation.

The House Committee on County Affairs Interim Report to the 80th Legislature recommended the amendment of Texas statutes to remove all mention of the office of inspector of hides and animals. Further, the 78th Legislature enacted SB 1389 by Duncan in 2003, which removed the powers and duties of the office from the Agriculture Code, but the office is still mentioned in several other Texas statutes, as well as the Texas Constitution. This proposed constitutional amendment, along with HB 1631 by Heflin, would delete these archaic references.

OPPONENTS
SAY:

No apparent opposition.

NOTES:

HB 1631 by Heflin, which would abolish the office of inspector of hides and animals and delete references to the office in the Election Code, Local Government Code, and Agriculture Code, is on today's General State Calendar.