

HB 1372 -- MISSOURI STATE PARK BOARD

SPONSOR: McGhee

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Corrections and Public Institutions by a vote of 5 to 2.

This bill establishes the Missouri State Park Board, created by Executive Order 86-26, which is responsible for managing all aspects of the Historical Marker Program. The board will consist of nine members with no more than one member from any Congressional district and no more than five members of the same political party.

The Department of Natural Resources and other state agencies are prohibited from erecting, modifying, or removing any state historic military monument, memorial, or marker located on any site under its control or located on state land listed on the board's registry without first holding a public hearing and receiving the board's approval. The department must publish a public hearing notice in the Missouri Register at least 60 days in advance of any action to seek the board's approval. The notice must also be published once a week for two consecutive weeks in any qualified newspaper in the area where the monument is located.

Anyone who knowingly removes, defaces, or destroys any registered state historic military monument, memorial, or marker without the approval of the General Assembly or the board will be guilty of a class A misdemeanor.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds in FY 2009, FY 2010, and FY 2011.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the Missouri State Park Board needs to be established by statute. There is a due process issue regarding the erection, removal, or name change of historic monuments and markers. Historic markers have been removed, battle flags taken down, and name changes made on state buildings without any input from interested parties or the public at large. When this happens, history is lost; and it is very important not to censor the past. These decisions should not be made arbitrarily, and there should be an opportunity for people to discuss their concerns in an open forum.

Testifying for the bill were Representative McGhee; and Bruce Hillis.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.