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Single-Member District Bill Gets 1st House OK

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Saturday, May 19, 1973

Single-Member Districts Bill Gets 1st House OK

Chronicle Austin Bureau

Austin — The Texas House tentatively has approved, 112-7, a bill to require all major Texas cities to hold elections on the question of single-member city council districts.

HB 957 would require all cities over 600,000 to hold such elections. Small cities would have to hold elections on receipt of petition by 10 percent of the qualified voters in the last election.

House approval came Friday as members drifted away to attend to other matters.

The House needs a quorum—100 members — to conduct business. While vote tabulations reflected more than a quorum present late Friday, a head count showed only about 85 members present. Others were being voted by friends on the electronic house gadgetry.

With such scant attendance, the House took up the Senate-passed version of the bill reforming the state's penal code—one of the more important matters the legislature will consider this session.

However, after several members noted the lack of attendance, House Speaker Price Daniel Jr. accepted an adjournment motion.

In other action Friday, the House:

- Initially approved HB 611, 82-36, to give voters the option of retaining or rejecting daylight saving time.
- Initially approved HB 105, 68-50, authorizing commissioners courts—on approval of voters—to regulate the use of land lying outside the limits of incorporated towns.
- Tabled and killed SB 253, 75-53, which would have authorized lenders to charge 18 percent interest on loans between \$2500 and \$5000 to corporations. Opponents charged the bill was only a vehicle to raise interest rates for individuals by conference committee action.
- Initially approved SB 369, by Houston Sen. Bob Gammage and Houston Rep. Mickey Leland, to authorize the State Board of Pharmacy to fine those pharmacists who do not comply with the law as an alternative to suspending or revoking license.
- Finally passed HB 895, to authorize cooperatives to purchase consumable supplies, such as food, to save costs for the poor.
- Finally passed and sent to the governor SB 545, to provide a three-day "cooling off" period during which a consumer may cancel a home solicitations contract.
- Finally passed SB 854, outlawing present provisions in health and accident insurance that exclude coverage of newborn infants.
- Finally passed SB 44, to authorize the hinting of predators from aircraft.
- Finally passed and sent to the governors SB 383, which would create bail bond boards in counties over 100,000 population to regulate those in the business of executing bail bonds.
- Finally passed SB 263, to allow the banking section of the finance commission to regulate state bank loans on real estate and construction rather than have the regulations spelled out in statute.
- Finally passed SB 60, making Lyndon B. Johnson's Aug.-27 birthday a legal holiday and deleting the Jan. 19 legal holiday for Robert E. Lee's birthday. Lee and other confederate heroes would be celebrated on June 3, Jefferson Davis' birthday.

1st House OK

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- Initially approved HB 725, changing the status of domestic relations and juvenile courts to district courts of regular jurisdictions to be called family district courts. Harris County's five domestic relations courts and three juvenile courts would be affected by the administrative change, but would continue to specialize in family law.
- Initially approved HB 740, to authorize maternity leaves for school district employees.