
DIGEST

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HB 544 Engrossed

2024 Regular Session

Boyd

Abstract: Provides relative to the membership and certain powers of the Regional Transit Authority Board. Creates the Regional Transit Authority Advisory board and provides for its purpose, composition, and powers.

Present law requires the board of commissioners of the authority be composed of three members from each participating parish appointed by the chief executive officer of that parish, subject to the approval of its governing authority.

Present law specifies that each member appointed by the chief executive officer of a parish must be domiciled within that parish.

Present law requires that one member be appointed from House District 102 by the state representative representing the district. Further requires, one member be appointed from Senate District 7 by the state senator representing the District.

Proposed law adds additional qualifications to present law for the board of commissioners and members. Specifies that each member appointed must possess minimum transit expertise standards, the required training, and have previous union experience. Further specifies that the transit minimum standards be established by Jan. 1, 2025, and will apply to all newly appointed commissioners. Grants the City Council of New Orleans authority to recall and confirm members of the board.

Present law grants authority to make and execute all contracts and other instruments necessary or convenient, including the power to contract for managerial and operating services.

Proposed law makes authority in present law contingent on management and labor attempting to resolve all contracts bilaterally before involving a mediator.

Proposed law specifies that quarterly reporting of the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) funds is required, and establishes penalties for when the RTA breaks city and state laws.

Proposed law provides the power to establish and address situations where the RTA violates state and city laws and establish penalties.

Proposed law gives the authority the power to probe waste, bid rigging, abuse of employees, and labor law violations.

Proposed law creates the Regional Transit Authority Advisor board and provides for its purpose, composition, and powers.

Proposed law specifies that the advisory board is created to assist and advise the RTA and make recommendations to make informed decisions regarding the functions outlined in present law.

Proposed law specifies that the advisory board does not have the power to vote on any matters decided on by the board of commissioners. Further specifies that the advisory board is to meet quarterly with the board of commissioners.

Proposed law requires the advisory board be composed of nine persons as follows:

- (1) An employee of the Regional Transit Authority appointed by the chief executive officer.
- (2) A member of the Amalgamated Transit Union appointed by the President/ Business agent.
- (3) A member from the Downtown Development District appointed by the executive director.
- (4) Each president of the following universities: Loyola University, Tulane University, Xavier University, Dillard University, Southern University at New Orleans, and the University of Holy Cross

(Amends R.S. 48:1655(A)(1)(a) and (b) and (2) and 1658(8) and (23); Adds R.S. 48:1656(24)-(26) and 1656.1)

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Transportation, Highways and Public Works to the original bill:

1. Make technical changes.
2. Revert back to present law by changing the approval authority from the city council to the parish's governing authority.
3. Remove the two members to be appointed from submissions by the parish's legislative delegation.
4. Add two members to the Regional Transit Authority board of commissioners as follows:
(a) one member appointed from House District 102 by the state representative who represents the district and (b) one member appointed from Senate District 7 by the state senator who represents the district.

5. Add a requirement that each member appointed to the authority possess previous union experience.
6. Remove a provision that would have required the powers of the Regional Transit Authority board of commissioners to include at least one designated representative from the authority's non-management labor force.