

August 14, 2015

To the Honorable Members of  
The Illinois Senate,  
99th General Assembly:

Today I return Senate Bill 781 with a specific recommendation for change.

This bill would provide that a fire protection district is not required to assume responsibility for fire protection services for an adjacent municipality that elects to discontinue its municipal fire department without consent by the fire protection district.

Illinois is suffering from too many units of local government. For government to be more efficient and responsive, we need to enable, not hinder, consolidation of local governments. This bill adds one more hurdle to the consolidation of services and governments.

Real reform requires bolder action. In 2013, the General Assembly passed legislation to permit DuPage County to dissolve and consolidate county-appointed districts, including so-called “paper” fire protection districts that tax residents but do not employ firefighters. The Local Government Consolidation Commission recommended that the authority granted to DuPage County be extended to all counties if, as has been the case, the DuPage County effort proves successful. The change recommended below would incorporate the legislative revisions recommended by the Commission in its report.

Consolidation of local government is a meaningful step to reducing property taxes in Illinois. The proliferation of taxing jurisdictions is a direct cause of our high property tax rates. By extending the authority granted to DuPage County to all counties, counties will be able to reduce the number of taxing jurisdictions, streamline services, and control costs.

Therefore, pursuant to Section 9(e) of Article IV of the Illinois Constitution of 1970, I hereby return Senate Bill 781 entitled “AN ACT concerning local government”, with the following specific recommendation for change:

On page 3, immediately after line 10, by inserting:

“Section 10. The Counties Code is amended by changing Section 5-44010 as follows:

(55 ILCS 5/5-44010)

Sec. 5-44010. Applicability. The powers and authorities provided by this Division 5-44 apply all counties in the state of Illinois ~~only to counties with a population of more than 900,000 and less than 3,000,000 that are contiguous to a county with a population of more than 3,000,000~~ and units of local government within such counties.

(Source: P.A. 98-126, eff. 8-2-13)”.

With this change, Senate Bill 781 will have my approval. I respectfully request your concurrence.

Sincerely,

Bruce Rauner  
GOVERNOR