



TACIR

The Tennessee Advisory Commission
on Intergovernmental Relations



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MEMORANDUM

TO: Commission Members
FROM: *Lynnise* Lynnise Roehrich-Patrick
Executive Director

DATE: 22 October 2015

SUBJECT: County Employees Serving on County Commissions—Draft Report for Review and Comment

The attached commission report is submitted for your review and comment. The report responds to a request to study Senate Bill 466 by Bell and House Bill 985 by Rogers, which would disqualify all county government employees from serving on county legislative bodies; the restriction would not apply to members elected before December 1, 2015. Current commissioners reelected on or after December 1, 2015, without an interruption in service, could continue to serve. The Senate State and Local Government and the House Local Government committees were the source of the request to study this legislation.

The draft report describes issues revised by the bill and past legislative efforts to restrict county employees' service on their county commissions. It also describes ways to manage conflicts of interest that go beyond what is required by Tennessee law. Examples are drawn from the existing practices of Tennessee counties and other states' laws and include restricting service on certain committees; requiring written disclosure of conflicts when voting, ethics training, and local ethics committees; and authorizing state ethics commissions to enforce conflict of interest laws.