

State of Arkansas  
95th General Assembly  
Regular Session, 2025

# A Bill

SENATE BILL 297

By: Senator K. Hammer

By: Representative Beck

## For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO AMEND THE LAW CONCERNING MUNICIPALITIES CHOOSING TO ELECT COUNCIL MEMBERS; TO REQUIRE THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE MUNICIPALITY TO FILE THE ORDINANCE DESCRIBING THE ELECTION OF CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS WITH THE COUNTY CLERK; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

## Subtitle

TO AMEND THE LAW CONCERNING MUNICIPALITIES CHOOSING TO ELECT COUNCIL MEMBERS; AND TO REQUIRE FILING OF THE ORDINANCE DESCRIBING THE ELECTION OF CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS WITH THE COUNTY CLERK.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 14-43-307, concerning the election of council members at large or by ward, is amended to add an additional subsection to read as follows:

(c)(1) Ordinances enacted under subdivision (b)(1) of this section shall be filed with the county clerk no later than August 31 of the calendar year before the election of council members.

(2) A city of the first class that has an ordinance enacted under subdivision (b)(1) of this section shall file the ordinance with the county clerk no later than January 1, 2026.

(3) Once an ordinance is filed with the county clerk, changes



shall not be made to the election of council members until a new ordinance is passed by the governing body of the municipality and filed with the county clerk by August 31 of the calendar year before the election of council members.

(4) A city of the first class that does not file an ordinance under subdivision (b)(1) of this section shall have its council members elected at large.

SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 14-43-308, concerning the residence qualifications of council members in primaries, is amended to add an additional subsection read as follows:

(c)(1) Ordinances enacted under subdivision (b)(1) of this section shall be filed with the county clerk no later than August 31 of the calendar year before the election of council members.

(2) A city of the first class that has an ordinance enacted under subdivision (b)(1) of this section shall file the ordinance with the county clerk no later than January 1, 2026.

(3) Once an ordinance is filed with the county clerk, changes shall not be made to the election of council members until a new ordinance is passed by the governing body of the municipality and filed with the county clerk by August 31 of the calendar year before the election of council members.

(4) A city of the first class that does not file an ordinance under subdivision (b)(1) of this section shall have its council members elected at large.

SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 14-43-309, concerning the residence qualifications of council members in general elections, is amended to add an additional subsection to read as follows:

(c)(1) Ordinances enacted under subdivision (b)(1) of this section shall be filed with the county clerk no later than August 31 of the calendar year before the election of council members.

(2) A city of the first class that has an ordinance enacted under subdivision (b)(1) of this section shall file the ordinance with the county clerk no later than January 1, 2026.

(3) Once an ordinance is filed with the county clerk, changes

shall not be made to the election of council members until a new ordinance is passed by the governing body of the municipality and filed with the county clerk by August 31 of the calendar year before the election of council members.

(4) A city of the first class that does not file an ordinance under subdivision (b)(1) of this section shall have its council members elected at large.

SECTION 4. Arkansas Code § 14-44-103(b)(1)(C)(i), concerning the election of council members in a city of the second class, is amended to read as follows:

(C)(i) Except as provided in subdivision (b)(1)(C)(ii) of this section, the county board of election commissioners ~~in the city~~ shall ensure that the qualified electors of each ward have at least one (1) voting precinct in each ward where the resident electors of the ward may cast their ballots.

SECTION 5. Arkansas Code § 14-44-103, concerning the election of council members in a city of the second class, is amended to add an additional subsection to read as follows:

(e)(1) Ordinances enacted under subdivision (c)(1) of this section shall be filed with the county clerk no later than August 31 of the calendar year before the election of council members.

(2) A city of the second class that has an ordinance enacted under subdivision (c)(1) of this section shall file the ordinance with the county clerk no later than January 1, 2026.

(3) Once an ordinance is filed with the county clerk, changes shall not be made to the election of council members until a new ordinance is passed by the governing body of the municipality and filed with the county clerk by August 31 of the calendar year before the election of council members.

(4) A city of the second class that does not file an ordinance under subdivision (c)(1) of this section shall have its council members elected at large.

**APPROVED: 3/12/25**