

SUBJECT: Backup authority to fill vacancies on the Harris County MTA board

COMMITTEE: Urban Affairs — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 7 ayes — Hill, Bailey, Davila, Ehrhardt, Thompson, Tillery, Woolley
0 nays
2 absent — Conley, Staples

WITNESSES: For — None
Against — None

BACKGROUND: The Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) in Harris County has nine members. The City of Houston appoints five, the Harris County Commissioners Court, two; and the 14 other cities served by MTA, two others.

DIGEST:
HB 1115 would allow the City of Houston or Harris County to fill a transit authority board term of another entity that had failed to promptly make an appointment. The county could fill a vacancy of a municipally appointed member, and Houston could fill a county vacancy, if more than 45 days had elapsed after the term of an appointee expired and the member was serving as a holdover. The bill would take effect immediately if approved by a two-thirds vote of the membership of each house.

SUPPORTERS SAY: HB 1115 would encourage the entities that make appointments to the Harris County MTA to make their appointments in a timely manner. The appointing entities would have up to 45 days after the appointment has expired to either reappoint a member or make a new appointment. After that, the backup mechanism created by this bill would let one of the other entities take over and fill a vacancy, to assure that the board's work could proceed.

OPPONENTS SAY: No apparent opposition.