

# FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FINAL BILL ANALYSIS

*This bill analysis was prepared by nonpartisan committee staff and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.*

**BILL #:** [HB 4029](#)

**TITLE:** Hillsborough County Charter

**SPONSOR(S):** Owen

**COMPANION BILL:** None

**LINKED BILLS:** None

**RELATED BILLS:** None

**FINAL HOUSE FLOOR ACTION:** 87 Y's 26 N's **GOVERNOR'S ACTION:** Pending

## SUMMARY

### **Effect of the Bill:**

If approved by a majority vote in a referendum, the bill amends the Hillsborough County Charter to increase the size of the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners from seven members to nine members and to require all members of the county commission to be elected from single-member districts. These changes would take effect beginning with the 2028 general election.

The bill also amends the charter to increase the size of the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners to 11 members if the population of the county exceeds 2,500,000 residents based on the most recent decennial census.

The charter amendment proposed by the bill is subject to approval by the electors of Hillsborough County voting in a referendum to be held at the 2026 general election.

### **Fiscal or Economic Impact:**

The Economic Impact Statement (EIS) submitted for the bill estimates the county would incur costs of between \$1.9 million and \$2.3 million in the first full fiscal year after the bill takes effect and \$1.1 million in the second fiscal year if the charter amendment is approved by the voters. The EIS also projects a one-time cost of \$740,000 for the Hillsborough County Supervisor of Elections associated with updating voter information cards if the charter amendment is approved by the voters.

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## ANALYSIS

### **EFFECT OF THE BILL:**

If approved by a majority vote in a referendum, the bill amends the [Hillsborough County Charter](#) to increase the [size of the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners from seven members to nine members and to require all members of the county commission to be elected from single-member districts](#). These changes would take effect beginning with the 2028 general election. (Section [1](#))

The bill also amends the charter to increase the size of the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners to 11 members if the population of the county exceeds 2,500,000 residents based on the most recent decennial census.<sup>1</sup> (Section [1](#))

The bill makes conforming changes to the charter to reflect the increased number of county commissioners and contains transition provisions for both a nine-member board and an 11-member board. (Section [1](#))

The bill provides that the charter amendment is subject to approval by the electors of Hillsborough County voting in a referendum to be held at the 2026 general election. The bill provides ballot language for the referendum and requires the referendum to be held in accordance with the Florida Election Code. (Section [2](#))

<sup>1</sup> As of July 1, 2024, Hillsborough County had approximately 1,581,426 residents. United States Census, [Quick Facts: Hillsborough County, Florida](#) (last visited Jan. 26, 2026).

**STORAGE NAME:** h4029z.IAS

**DATE:** 3/20/2026

Subject to the Governor’s veto powers, the effective date of this bill is upon becoming a law, except that the changes to the charter only take effect upon its approval by a majority vote of the qualified electors of Hillsborough County voting in a referendum. (Section [3](#))

## FISCAL OR ECONOMIC IMPACT:

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT:

The Economic Impact Statement (EIS) submitted for the bill estimates the county will incur costs of between \$1.9 million and \$2.3 million in the first full fiscal year after the bill takes effect and \$1.1 million in the second fiscal year if the charter amendment is approved by the voters. The EIS also projects a one-time cost of \$740,000 for the Hillsborough County Supervisor of Elections associated with sending updated voter information cards if the charter amendment is approved by the voters.

## RELEVANT INFORMATION

### SUBJECT OVERVIEW:

#### [Composition of County Commissions](#)

The Florida Constitution requires each county commission to divide the county into districts of contiguous territory with as equal population as practicable following each decennial census.<sup>2</sup> One commissioner residing in each district is elected as provided by law. Each county commission consists of five or seven members serving staggered terms of four years, unless otherwise provided by a county charter.

The default county election system requires the county commission to draw five districts nearly equal in population as possible, with one commissioner elected from each district by the qualified electors of the entire county.<sup>3</sup> County commissioners are responsible for making periodic boundary adjustments to ensure district populations are nearly as equal as possible, but these changes may only be made during odd-numbered years.<sup>4</sup>

Alternatively, county commissioners may be elected from single-member districts, subject to voter approval at a referendum.<sup>5</sup> A referendum to convert to single-member districts may be called by the county commission or electors of the county may petition to have the proposition placed on the ballot by gathering the signatures of at least 10 percent of the qualified electors of the county.<sup>6</sup> The referendum may convert the county commission to a five-member body, with all members elected in districts, or a seven-member body with five members elected in districts and two members elected at-large by the qualified electors of the entire county.<sup>7</sup> Commissioners are elected to four-year terms which are staggered so that approximately half of the commissioners elected from districts and, if applicable, one of the commissioners elected at-large from the entire county, are elected every two years.<sup>8</sup> The conversion to single-member districts does not impact the term of current officeholders.<sup>9</sup>

#### [Hillsborough County Charter](#)

Each county may adopt a charter using the procedures provided by general law.<sup>10</sup> Hillsborough County adopted its charter in 1983.<sup>11</sup> The charter assigns the county’s legislative powers to a seven-member county commission, with four members elected from single-member districts and three members elected at-large.<sup>12</sup> The charter allows for

<sup>2</sup> [Art. VIII, s. 1, Fla. Const.](#)

<sup>3</sup> [S. 124.01\(1\) and \(2\), F.S.](#)

<sup>4</sup> [S. 124.01\(3\), F.S.](#)

<sup>5</sup> [S. 124.011, F.S.](#)

<sup>6</sup> [S. 124.011\(3\), F.S.](#)

<sup>7</sup> [S. 124.011\(1\), F.S.](#)

<sup>8</sup> [S. 124.011\(2\), F.S.](#)

<sup>9</sup> [S. 124.011\(11\), F.S.](#)

<sup>10</sup> See ss. [125.60-125.64](#) and [125.80-125.88](#), F.S.

<sup>11</sup> Hillsborough County, [About the County Charter](#) (last visited Jan. 26, 2026).

<sup>12</sup> [Hillsborough County Charter art. IV, ss. 4.01, 4.02, and 4.03.](#)

amendments to be placed on the ballot by the county commission, a charter review board that meets every five years, or by citizen initiative.<sup>13</sup>

### Local Bill Forms

The Florida Constitution prohibits the passage of any special act unless a notice of intention to seek enactment of the bill has been published as provided by general law or the act is conditioned to take effect only upon approval by referendum vote of the electors in the area affected.<sup>14</sup> A legal advertisement of the proposed bill must be placed in a newspaper of general circulation or published on a publicly accessible website<sup>15</sup> at least 30 days prior to the introduction of the local bill in the House or Senate.<sup>16</sup> The bill will take effect only upon its approval in a referendum held on November 3, 2026.

The House local bill policy requires a completed and signed Local Bill Certification Form and Economic Impact Statement be filed with the Clerk of the House at the time the local bill is filed or as soon thereafter as possible.<sup>17</sup> Under the policy, a committee or subcommittee may not consider a local bill unless these forms have been filed. The following forms have been submitted for the bill:

- [Local Bill Certification Form](#)
- [Economic Impact Statement](#)

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<sup>13</sup> [Hillsborough County Charter art. IV, ss. 8.01, 8.02, and 8.03.](#)

<sup>14</sup> [Art. III, s. 10, Fla. Const.](#)

<sup>15</sup> [S. 50.0311\(2\), F.S.](#)

<sup>16</sup> [S. 11.02, F.S.](#) If there is no newspaper circulated throughout or published in the county and no publicly accessible website has been designated, notice must be posted for at least 30 days in at least three public places in the county, one of which must be at the courthouse.

<sup>17</sup> Intergovernmental Affairs Subcommittee, [Local Bill Policies and Procedures Manual](#), p. 11 (last visited Jan. 26, 2026).