



SB 843

Sponsor: Lincoln Hough

Path to full text: <https://www.senate.mo.gov/26info/pdf-bill/intro/SB843.pdf>

PART 1 – QUICK SNAPSHOT

1.1 One-Paragraph Overview

SB 843 amends §140.982, RSMo, to change **how county land bank boards are appointed**. Under current law, the seven-member board is appointed through a mix of the county executive, county council members from the districts with the highest number of tax-delinquent parcels, cooperation with the municipal league, and resident representatives from heavily affected municipalities. SB 843 **wipes out that shared structure** and replaces it with a simple rule: **all seven board members are appointed solely by the county executive under the county charter**. It does not create new land banks or expand their formal powers, but it **centralizes control over an already troubling, quasi-governmental entity that manages tax-delinquent properties**—raising serious concerns about property rights, cronyism, and lack of neighborhood representation.

1.2 Triage Table

- **Single-subject / clear title (Art. III §23)**
 - Likely **passes** – The bill’s title says it relates to land banks and it amends a single section (§140.982) about land bank boards.
- **Does it expand or entrench government power?**
 - Yes, in practice.
 - Formal powers of land banks stay the same, but **control is consolidated** in a single elected office, making the structure **less accountable and more prone to abuse**.
- **Overall impact on Missouri families:**
 - **Hurts.**

- Makes it easier for insiders and the county executive's political allies to control decisions about tax-delinquent properties and redevelopment, with **less guaranteed input from the neighborhoods most affected**.
- **Alignment with Act for Missouri's core beliefs:**
 - **Conflicts with** limited government, strong property rights, and citizen-level representation over insider control.
- **Recommended stance:**
 - **OPPOSE.**
 - To "fix" the bill, you would essentially have to restore the current appointment structure or strengthen it further.
 - Given that **land banks themselves are already very troubling**, centralizing them like this is a hard **no**.

PART 2 – PURPOSE & PROVISION MAP

2.1 Stated Purpose (Practical)

- **Plain-language purpose:**
To **restructure who appoints county land bank board members**, moving from a diversified appointment structure to one where **the county executive appoints all seven members**.
- **Title honesty:**
 - Title: "An Act ... relating to land banks."
 - That's technically accurate but very broad; it doesn't advertise that the bill's real effect is to **centralize control over land bank boards**.

2.2 Provision-by-Provision Map

Below is what actually changes, in plain language.

Provision 1 – County executive appoints all 7 board members

- **Current law (substance):**
 - Board has **7 members**, with **shared appointment authority**:
 - 2 appointed by the **county executive** (one with professional expertise).
 - 2 appointed by county council members from the districts with the **highest numbers of tax-delinquent parcels** (each must live in those districts).

- 1 appointed jointly by the **county executive and the president of the county municipal league**.
- 2 **resident representatives**, chosen by the board, who must live in municipalities with the highest percentage of tax-delinquent parcels.
- If an appointing authority fails to act on time, the **county council** steps in as backup.
- **Change in SB 843:**
 - All that detailed structure (district-based seats, municipal league seat, resident reps, council fallback) is bracketed out.
 - Replaced with:

“The board of directors of the land bank agency shall consist of seven members **appointed by the county executive** pursuant to the authority vested in that office by the county charter.”

- **Effect:**
 - **Destroys the existing plural, neighborhood-aware appointment structure.**
 - **Hands the entire board to the county executive.**
- **Tag: Major Red Flag.**

Provision 2 – Vacancies and compliance with the charter

- **Current law (substance):**
 - If an appointing authority fails to appoint a member within the required time, the **county council** may step in and make the appointment.
- **Change in SB 843:**
 - The vacancy-filling language is updated so that appointments are made “**in compliance with the county charter**”, and the previous explicit council fallback is removed.
 - The practical meaning under the new structure: **vacancies are still controlled through the county executive’s appointment power**, with no clear independent backstop.
- **Effect:**
 - **Removes a check** that allowed the council to step in and keeps the power looped around the executive and charter framework.
- **Tag: Red Flag / Concern.**

Provision 3 – Existing land bank powers left in place (renumbering)

- **What stays the same (but matters):**
 - Members:
 - 4-year terms.
 - Must live in the county.
 - Serve at the pleasure of the appointing authority (now the executive).
 - Can be employees of the appointing authority.
 - Board powers:
 - May organize its administrative structure.
 - May hire an executive director, counsel, and staff, and set compensation.
 - County may issue **bonds or other debt** to fund land bank operations.
 - Board members have no personal liability on bonds.
 - Board actions typically require a majority vote, with special rules for certain decisions.
- **Effect under SB 843:**
 - Those **broad, already-troubling land bank powers remain**, but are now concentrated in a board that is **entirely hand-picked by the county executive**.
- **Tag: Structural Concern (pre-existing but made worse by centralization).**

Provision 4 – Municipal land banks

- **What SB 843 does:**
 - Leaves **municipal land bank provisions** in §140.982(2)–(3) intact.
 - Municipalities still determine their own board size and appointment methods.
- **Effect:**
 - The bill is targeted at **county-created land banks**, not municipal ones.
- **Tag: Neutral (but the county change is bad enough).**

PART 3 – CONSTITUTIONAL & PROCESS CHECKS

3.1 Single-Subject & Title (Art. III §23)

- **Single subject:**
 - The bill amends only §140.982. Everything in it concerns the **governance of land bank boards**.
 - No unrelated policy riders.
 - Likely **meets** the single-subject requirement.
- **Clear title:**
 - The title references “relating to land banks.”
 - It’s broad but **not deceptive** – still within what Missouri courts usually tolerate.
- **Original purpose / logrolling:**
 - All changes remain within the theme of land bank governance; no obvious bait-and-switch.

Conclusion: From a technical standpoint, SB 843 probably **passes** the procedural tests of Art. III §23. Our objections are not procedural; they’re about **substance and structure of power**.

3.2 Delegation, Separation of Powers & Unelected Boards

- **Existing problem:**
 - Land banks are already **unelected boards** with:
 - control over tax-delinquent property,
 - authority to manage and dispose of real estate,
 - access to county-backed debt and staff.
- **What SB 843 does:**
 - **Does not** add new powers to land banks.
 - But it **tightens** the connection between a single elected office (county executive) and this unelected board.
 - Members “serve at the pleasure” of their appointing authority; now all 7 serve at the pleasure of the **same** authority.
- **Why that matters:**
 - This makes it far easier for the executive to:
 - purge dissenting voices,
 - staff the board with loyalists,

- align the land bank with the interests of large donors, developers, or favored projects.

Assessment:

SB 843 **worsens** an already dubious delegation of power by putting the whole board under a single elected official's thumb, rather than dispersing appointment authority.

3.3 Property Rights & Due Process (Indirect)

- **Land banks themselves:**
 - Exist because of tax delinquency and foreclosure.
 - By design, they sit at the point where **government converts private property into an asset for redevelopment.**
- **SB 843's role:**
 - It doesn't re-write the foreclosure or redemption procedures directly.
 - But it **changes who gets to make the land-bank decisions** once the property is in that system.
- **Risk profile:**
 - A land bank board entirely appointed by the executive is more likely to:
 - favor politically connected developers,
 - prioritize big, flashy projects over neighborhood stability,
 - make decisions less driven by fairness to former owners or local families.

Conclusion:

While SB 843 doesn't itself create a new due-process violation, it **increases the danger** that land bank structures will be used in ways that undermine the spirit of property rights and equal treatment.

PART 4 – IMPACT ON MISSOURI FAMILIES

4.1 Impact on Household Finances & Neighborhoods

- **Direct taxes & fees:**
 - SB 843 doesn't impose new taxes or fees by itself.
- **But land banks affect:**
 - **Property values** – who gets property and for what use can raise or crush nearby values.

- **Neighborhood safety & stability** – decisions about which properties are renovated, which are bulldozed, and which are left to decay.
- **Who benefits from “redevelopment”** – large institutional players vs. local families and small investors.
- **Centralization effect:**
 - A board hand-picked by the county executive increases the odds that:
 - decisions prioritize **large, politically connected interests** over ordinary citizens,
 - land disposition becomes a tool of political patronage, not neighborhood renewal.

Net result for families:

- **Negative.**
 - SB 843 doesn't fix anything families care about (property-tax pressure, fairness, opportunity); it just rearranges power at the top in a way that **reduces neighborhood voice** and **raises the cronyism risk**.

4.2 Parental Rights, Education, Cultural Issues

- **SB 843 is not directly about:**
 - schools, DESE, curriculum,
 - parental rights,
 - explicit moral/cultural content.
- **However**, property decisions can indirectly influence:
 - what kinds of facilities and institutions get prioritized in certain neighborhoods,
 - whether family-friendly uses or more harmful uses get favored.

Still, the primary concern here is **property and power**, not explicit cultural policy.

PART 5 – ACT FOR MISSOURI CORE PRINCIPLES

Using your criteria as the lens:

- **Pro-Life / Equal Protection for the Unborn**
 - Not addressed in the bill. No direct implications.
- **Biblical & Christian Values**

- Scripture emphasizes **honest weights and measures, justice for ordinary people, and righteous stewardship**, not inside deals and concentrated political power.
- A system that makes it easier for elites to control land and harder for ordinary families and neighborhoods to have a say **cuts against those values**, even if it isn't explicitly anti-Christian.
- **Limited Government & Property Rights**
 - Land banks are already a **high-risk, big-government tool**.
 - SB 843:
 - keeps the **big, powerful land bank**, and
 - makes its governance **more centralized and more political**.
 - This is the opposite direction from what a limited-government, property-rights perspective would seek.
- **State & Local Accountability**
 - Good policy disperses power and builds in checks, especially where property is involved.
 - SB 843:
 - removes representation from the most tax-delinquent districts,
 - removes resident-representative guarantees,
 - downplays municipal input,
 - removes a clear council fallback.
 - That's a **step away from true local accountability** and toward county-executive dominance.
- **Transparency & Citizen Control**
 - The more centralized the appointments, the easier it becomes for citizens to be **shut out** of meaningful influence.
 - SB 843 does nothing to add transparency, reporting, or citizen remedies; it simply **reshuffles power upward**.

Overall principle verdict:

SB 843 **conflicts with** our core principles of limited, accountable government and robust property-rights protections. It doesn't promote equal protection, liberty, or genuine local control.

PART 6 – SPECIAL PRIORITY SCREENS

- **Amendment 3 / Personhood / Life Issues:**
 - Not implicated.
- **Surveillance / Digital ID / Data Hubs:**
 - Not mentioned, though any entity that controls large swaths of property can later be used as a tool in broader agendas. No explicit link in this bill.
- **Utilities, Energy, Data Centers:**
 - Not addressed, though land bank property could theoretically be used for large projects. SB 843 doesn't deal with tariffs or rates.
- **Federal Money & Strings:**
 - No explicit reference to federal grants or strings in the text, though in practice land-bank projects often involve federal/state dollars. Again, the bill **ignores** that dimension; it just changes who runs the board.
- **Globalist / Agenda 21 / WEF-style Pattern Matching:**
 - No explicit buzzwords in this bill, but the pattern of **centralized, unaccountable entities controlling land and redevelopment** fits the kind of architecture that can be misused down the road.

PART 7 – RED FLAGS & FINAL STANCE

7.1 Red-Flag List

1. **All seven board members appointed by county executive**
 - Destroys shared appointment structure (districts, municipalities, resident reps).
 - Enables single-office control over powerful board.
2. **Removal of clear council fallback**
 - Eliminates an important check if appointments are stalled or manipulated.
 - Keeps power in the same hands and narrows options for independent oversight.
3. **Powerful unelected land bank left untouched**
 - Debt authority, staffing power, and property-disposition powers all remain.
 - SB 843 doesn't fix any of the underlying property-rights concerns; it just **centralizes** governance of that system.
4. **Land banks already troubling; this goes the wrong way**

- Our position: land banks as currently structured are **inherently troubling** – mixing tax enforcement, forfeiture, and redevelopment in ways that are ripe for abuse.
- SB 843 takes an already bad structural idea and makes it **more top-down and executive-centric**.

7.2 Amendments?

Given your stance, this is important:

- To “fix” SB 843, you would **basically have to undo the main change**:
 - Restore the diversified appointment scheme (or something even stronger), **plus** add property-rights and transparency safeguards.
- At that point, the bill either:
 - does nothing meaningful, or
 - becomes a completely different bill that **strengthens limits on land banks**, not executive control.

So, realistically:

There is no meaningful, minor “tweak” that would make SB 843 acceptable.

Anything that solved your concerns would amount to **keeping or improving the current law**, not passing this bill’s core idea.

7.3 Final Recommendation (for scorecards & messaging)

- **Official stance: OPPOSE SB 843.**
- **Short justification:**

Act for Missouri opposes SB 843 because it takes an already troubling land-bank system and hands it over to a single county executive. Instead of protecting property rights and neighborhood voices, this bill centralizes control, strips away built-in community representation, and makes it easier for political insiders to control what happens to tax-delinquent properties. To address our concerns, lawmakers would have to restore or strengthen the current appointment structure—at which point there is no reason to pass this bill at all.