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MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE - TENNESSEE

Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County v. Lee

Supreme Court of Tennessee - November 2, 2026 - S.W.3d - 2026 WL 3300720

Consolidated metropolitan government and individual county residents brought action against Governor, Secretary of State, and Coordinator of Elections, challenging a state law capping the size of metropolitan councils at twenty members and seeking declaratory and injunctive relief on the grounds that the law violated the Local Legislation Clause and Exemption Clause of the Tennessee Constitution.

A three-judge panel of the Chancery Court held that the cap violated the Local Legislation Clause and the Exemption Clause and permanently enjoined enforcement. State officials appealed. The Court of Appeals reversed. Plaintiffs sought and obtained permission to appeal, after which the General Assembly amended the challenged law.

The Supreme Court held that:

- Metropolitan government’s claim that law capping the size of metropolitan councils at 20 members violated the Local Legislation Clause was moot after legislature amended the law to eliminate the challenged language, and
- Law capping the size of metropolitan councils at 20 members did not violate the Exemption Clause.

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