



IOWA HOUSE DEMOCRATS

BILL SUMMARY

County Supervisor District Plans HF 2372

Status of Bill: House Calendar
Committee: Local Government (11-9)
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Lead Democrat: Gaskill
Floor Manager: Carlson

Background

Currently there are three types of district plans for supervisors under code 331.206. They include the following:

Plan “one” Election at large without district residence requirements for the members.

Plan “two” Election at large but with equal-population district residence requirements.

Plan “three” Election from single-member equal-population districts, in which the electors of each district shall elect one member who must reside in that district.

Currently law requires that the plan used is to be selected by the board or by a special election. A plan selected by the board is to maintain in effect for at least six years unless it is changed by a special election. A plan selected by the board will become effective on the first day in January which is not a Sunday or holiday following the next general election, at which time the terms of the members expire and the terms of the members elected under the requirements of the new supervisor representation plan at the general election as specified will commence.

Currently, any registered voter in a county may file a complaint with the Secretary of State (SOS) within 14 days following the adoption of a county supervisor district plan alleging the plan was drawn for improper political reasons. The complaint is then forwarded to the Ethics and Campaign Disclosure Board for determination of whether the plan was improperly drawn. The board is required to determine if a plan was drawn for political purposes, but the board has no authority to take any action against the county. To date there has not been a case where the board has found that a plan was drawn in such a way.

Also under current law, a temporary county redistricting commission is required to notify the SOS when the boundaries of supervisor districts are changed, provide a map delineating the new boundary lines, and certify to the SOS that the populations of the new supervisor districts as determined under the latest federal decennial census. An approved plan by the board of supervisors may be rejected by the SOS if it does not meet the specific requirements of how the county is supposed to be divided up into districts or if the boundaries were drawn for political purposes. Under those cases, the temporary county redistricting commission is required to make the appropriate changes and resubmit a new map. A public hearing is not required in these cases. They would need to make as many subsequent changes as necessary to have a map approved by the SOS. If by December 15th of the year following the census there is not an adopted plan approved by the SOS, a new plan would be imposed upon the county by the SOS, and the county could pay for the cost of the development of the plan. The SOS may use the Legislative Service Agency (LSA) to develop the plan.

Bill Summary

County Supervisors Representation District Plans

Under the bill, the procedure for adopting a representation plan for a county that has a population that exceeds 180,000 or that has adopted a charter for a city-county consolidation form or community commonwealth form that provides for representation by districts will also apply to a county with a population of 150,000 or more that has adopted a plan “three” form of representation.

Such a county is required to submit to the State Commissioner of Elections, the precinct plan to be used to draw the representation plan. The State Commissioner of Elections will review and approve the precinct plan to be used. Following approval of the plan, the State Commissioner of Elections will notify the Legislative Council to direct LSA to prepare a representation plan for the county.

The county’s initial plan for districts, and the county’s first plan for districts after each federal decennial census, will be drawn by LSA based upon an approved precinct plan for the county and the standards applicable to congressional and legislative redistricting. If the plan drawn by LSA is rejected by the governing body, the governing body will direct LSA to prepare another plan as provided by current law.

Complaints for improper political reasons relative to an adopted supervisor district plan, is amended to make the complaint process inapplicable to plans prepared by LSA. The state commissioner of elections will not be permitted to request assistance from the LSA relating to a representation plan drawn per current law.