

February 12, 2007

H 149. INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING COMMISSION. Filed 2/12/07. *TO AMEND THE CONSTITUTION TO REFORM LEGISLATIVE AND CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING.* To be summarized in tomorrow's *Daily Bulletin*.

Intro. by Dollar.

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H 149. INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING COMMISSION. Filed 2/12/07. *TO AMEND THE CONSTITUTION TO REFORM LEGISLATIVE AND CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING.*

Subject to approval by the voters of the state in the November 2008 general election, proposes the following changes to the NC Constitution (Constitution). Rewrites Sections 3 and 5, Article II, of the Constitution to provide that an agency in the executive branch is to supervise the revision of Senate and House of Representative districts after each federal ten-year (decennial) census, with each senator and representative to represent a number of inhabitants that does not deviate more than five percent from the ideal. Current law requires the General Assembly to revise the senate and representative districts and the apportionment of Senators and Representatives among the districts at the first regular convening after the federal decennial census. Amends Article II, Section 6, qualifications for senator, and Section 7, qualifications for representative, to provide that if the Senate or House of Representative district boundaries are revised less than 15 months before the general election, candidates are eligible if they established residence within the district no later than three months after the boundaries were last revised. Enacts new Section 25, Article II, to provide that an agency in the executive branch is to supervise the revision of districts for members of the House of Representatives of the US Congress after each decennial census, with each representative to represent a number of inhabitants that does not deviate more than five percent from the ideal.

Specifies that the ideal for senators is the State population divided by 50, the ideal for NC representatives is the state population divided by 120, and the ideal for Congressional representatives is the state population divided by the number of federal representative seats for NC.

Enacts new Section 26, Article II, (1) directing that citizens of North Carolina are to revise legislative and congressional districts, and (2) providing that an executive agency designated by law is to adopt legislative and congressional districts based on quality scoring of plans submitted by citizens. Any citizen may submit a redistricting plan to the agency upon payment of a \$100 fee per plan. Requires that the agency (1) announce at the end of the submission period the plan for each district type with the highest total quality score, and (2) adopt those plans to define legislative and congressional districts until another decennial census unless the agency determines that the highest scoring plan does not comply with federal law, in which case the agency is to adopt the plan complying with federal law that received the highest total quality score.

Mandatory standards for districts include that the districts be contiguous, have single members, and comply with federal law. Districts meeting mandatory standards are then scored for quality according to defined standards, including compactness, one-person one-vote, and minimizing split counties, municipalities, and precincts. Sets a 90-day period for submission and evaluation of plans. Waives the fee for the highest scoring plan for each day. Requires that each proposed plan become public information and directs that the highest scoring proposed plans be posted on the agency website at least once a week. Provides for exhaustion of legal appeals if districts are invalidated by a court before revisions of districts. Amendments become effective when voter approval is certified. If the amendments are approved, designates the State Board of Elections as the executive agency to supervise redistricting.

Intro. by Dollar.

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