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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 8201

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State of Washington

54th Legislature

1995 Regular Session

By Senators Haugen and Winsley

Read first time 01/09/95. Referred to Committee on Government Operations.

1 BE IT RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
2 STATE OF WASHINGTON, IN LEGISLATIVE SESSION ASSEMBLED:

3 THAT, At the next general election to be held in this state there  
4 shall be submitted to the qualified voters of the state for their  
5 approval and ratification, or rejection, an amendment to Article XI,  
6 section 3 of the state Constitution to read as follows:

7 Article XI, section 3. No new counties shall be established, or  
8 annexation shall occur, which ~~((shall))~~ at the time of such action  
9 reduces any county to a population less than ((four)) forty thousand  
10 ~~((+4,000), nor shall a)).~~ No new county shall be formed containing a  
11 ~~((less))~~ population of less than ((two)) forty thousand ((+2,000)),  
12 except by the consolidation of two or more counties. ((There shall be  
13 no territory stricken from any county unless a majority of the voters  
14 living in such territory shall petition therefor and then only under  
15 such other conditions as may be prescribed by a general law applicable  
16 to the whole state.))

17 Notwithstanding the provisions of Article II, section 28 of this  
18 Constitution, county boundaries shall be described in special laws  
19 enacted by the legislature. All portions of the state shall be in a  
20 county.

1 County boundaries shall be altered as follows:

2 (1) A new county shall be established when: (a) First, the action  
3 is initiated by petition of a majority of the voters residing in the  
4 proposed new county, but when the proposed new county would take  
5 territory out of more than one county the action must be initiated by  
6 petition of a majority of the voters residing in each portion of the  
7 proposed new county that is located within each county; (b) second, the  
8 petition forms referred to in (a) are certified by voting precinct; (c)  
9 third, the legislature enacts a special law creating the new county;  
10 and (d) fourth, a ballot proposition authorizing the creation of the  
11 new county is approved by the voters residing in the proposed county.  
12 The legislature may establish the boundaries of the new county  
13 notwithstanding the boundaries proposed by the petition.

14 (2) An existing county may annex territory from another county  
15 when: (a) First, the action is initiated by either resolution of the  
16 legislative authority of the annexing county or petition of twenty-five  
17 percent of the voters residing in the area within a county proposed to  
18 be annexed; (b) second, the legislative authority of the county from  
19 which the area would be removed adopts a resolution authorizing the  
20 annexation; (c) third, the legislature enacts a special law providing  
21 for the annexation; and (d) fourth, a ballot proposition authorizing  
22 the annexation is approved by the voters residing in that area.

23 (3) Two or more counties may consolidate when: (a) First, the  
24 action is initiated in each of the counties proposed to be consolidated  
25 by either resolution of the county legislative authority or petition by  
26 twenty-five percent of the voters residing in the county; (b) second,  
27 the legislature enacts a special law providing for the consolidation;  
28 and (c) third, a ballot proposition authorizing the consolidation is  
29 approved by the voters of each of the counties.

30 The legislature may implement this section and may place additional  
31 requirements or conditions on the altering of county boundaries by  
32 enacting general laws applicable to the entire state.

33 Notwithstanding the provisions of section 2 of this Article, the  
34 legislature shall enact general laws applicable to the entire state to  
35 establish procedures whereby, at the time of a vote under subsection  
36 (1), (2), or (3) of this section, the voters also select the location  
37 of a county seat whenever two or more counties consolidate, or the  
38 location of a county seat in that portion of a county remaining after

1 an annexation or creation of a new county, if the old county seat is  
2 located in the territory removed from the county.

3 Every county which shall be enlarged or created from territory  
4 taken from any other county or counties shall be liable for a just  
5 proportion of the existing debts and liabilities of the county or  
6 counties from which such territory shall be taken: PROVIDED, That in  
7 such accounting neither county shall be charged with any debt or  
8 liability then existing incurred in the purchase of any county real  
9 property, or in the (~~purchase or~~) construction or improvement of any  
10 county buildings (~~then in use, or under construction~~) or other real  
11 property, which shall fall within and be retained or obtained by the  
12 other county: PROVIDED FURTHER, That this shall not be construed to  
13 affect the rights of creditors.

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the secretary of state shall cause  
15 notice of the foregoing constitutional amendment to be published at  
16 least four times during the four weeks next preceding the election in  
17 every legal newspaper in the state.

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