

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 6296

As Passed House:

January 16, 2002

Title: An act relating to the timeline for submission of a redistricting plan by the redistricting commission.

Brief Description: Revising timelines for redistricting plans.

Sponsors: By Senators Snyder, West, Horn, Carlson and T. Sheldon; by request of Attorney General and Redistricting Commission.

Brief History:

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 1/16/02, 93-3.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Moves the deadline for the redistricting commission to approve a plan from December 15 to January 1.

Majority/Minority Report: None.

Staff: Catherine Blinn (786-7114).

Background:

In 1983 the people approved a constitutional amendment that transferred the process of redrawing legislative and congressional districts from the legislature and to a non-elected body of commissioners. Under the Washington State Redistricting Act, following the federal decennial census, a redistricting commission is established in January of every year ending in one. The commission is comprised of four voting members appointed by the two political parties in the senate and house of representative, and a nonvoting chair. The voting members may not hold or campaign for elected office. The vote of three members is required to conduct any official action. The commission must establish 49 legislative districts and the allotted number of congressional districts to provide as equal a population in each district as possible, excluding nonresident military personnel.

According to statute, the commission must approve a plan no later than December 15 of the year ending in one. If three voting members approve a plan no later than December 15, the commission submits the plan to the legislature for approval. The legislature has 30 days during the next session to amend or approve the plan. Any amendments by the legislature must be approved by a two-thirds vote in both the senate and the house of representatives. The plan is final upon approval of the amendments or upon expiration of the 30 days, whichever occurs first. If three voting members fail to approve a plan by the end of December 15, the supreme court must adopt a plan by March 1 of the year ending in two. Any plan approved by the court is final.

According to the state constitution, the commission must approve a plan no later than January 1 of the year ending in two. If three voting members approve a plan no later than January 1, the commission submits the plan to the legislature for approval, the legislature has 30 days to review the plan, and any amendments require a two-thirds approval of both houses of the legislature. If three voting members fail to approve a plan by the end of January 1, the supreme court must adopt a plan by April 30 of the year ending in two.

Once the plan takes effect, any registered voter may file a petition with the supreme court challenging the plan. The court may consolidate petitions and must give them precedence over all other matters.

Summary of Bill:

The statutory deadline by which the commission must approve a plan is changed from December 15 of the year ending in one to January 1 of the year ending in two. The act is remedial and curative in nature, and applies retroactively to any plan submitted to the legislature by the redistricting commission that was established in 2001.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: None.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: None.