

HJR 32 -- Legislative Redistricting and Membership

Sponsor: Neth

Upon voter approval, this proposed constitutional amendment changes the process for electing members of the General Assembly based on district boundaries. In its main provisions, the amendment:

(1) Increases, beginning in 2021, the number of senators and senate districts from 34 to 40 and decreases the number of representatives and representative districts from 163 to 120;

(2) Establishes the temporary redistricting advisory commission. The commission is composed of members selected by the Majority and Minority Floor Leaders of the Senate and the Majority and Minority Floor Leaders of the House of Representatives and an additional member chosen by the existing commission members who will serve as chairman. The selection process for the committee must be completed by February 15 of the year ending in one. The commission must act only in an advisory capacity to the nonpartisan redistricting division and hold three hearings on redistricting proposals as specified in the amendment. It must submit a report on the hearings to the General Assembly within 14 days of the hearings;

(3) Establishes a nonpartisan redistricting division in the Joint Committee on Legislative Research to conduct the redistricting based on any constitutional requirements, no more than a 1:3 ratio of senate to house districts, political subdivision boundaries, specified geometric criteria, mathematical deviation criteria based on population, and recommendations from the commission. An attempt to improperly influence the division will be a class D felony, and certain specified demographic and political information concerning voters or incumbents is prohibited from use by the division;

(4) Requires the redistricting division to submit its first proposal to the General Assembly by April 1 of each year ending in one. The legislature must act after receipt of the commission report on the hearings previously mentioned. Redistricting bills will not be subject to veto by the Governor. If the first proposal fails, then the division must submit a second proposal within 35 days for consideration by the General Assembly during a special session. If the second proposal fails, then the division must submit a third proposal within 35 days for consideration by the General Assembly during a special session. If a plan is not adopted, or the adopted plan is deficient in the view of the Missouri Supreme Court, then the court is instructed to adopt the division plan with the least population range percentage variances that complies with the Missouri Constitution; and

(5) Specifies the procedures for maintaining senate districts with one-half of members elected every two years. Once fully implemented, senators will be elected during even year general elections to terms that run four years and commence in January of the odd year following the general election. Some incumbent senators may be forced to resign based on the renumbering of the new districts. The amendment specifies a process for evaluating who may run for office in new "holdover" senate districts that are created by the division in the 2021 redistricting plan.