
SENATE BILL 5842

State of Washington**63rd Legislature****2013 Regular Session****By** Senators Tom, Fain, Sheldon, and Litzow

Read first time 02/21/13. Referred to Committee on Governmental Operations.

1 AN ACT Relating to redistricting; amending RCW 44.05.090; and
2 creating a new section.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that there is a need
5 to encourage the development of competitive districts in the
6 redistricting plan adopted by the redistricting commission. Democracy
7 is defined primarily by the accountability of the elected to the
8 electors, an accountability that is in turn shaped through competitive
9 elections. The way in which districts are delineated has profound
10 implications for the public's engagement with politics, for the
11 character of political representation, for electoral competition, and
12 for partisan fairness. Only through an appropriately competitive
13 partisan environment can one of the central goals of democratic
14 politics be realized: That the policy outcomes of the political
15 process are responsive to the interests and views of citizens. It is
16 the intent of the legislature to require that the districts in the
17 redistricting plan be competitive.

1 **Sec. 2.** RCW 44.05.090 and 1990 c 126 s 1 are each amended to read
2 as follows:

3 In the redistricting plan:

4 (1) Wherever possible, districts must be competitive such that the
5 majority of districts have no greater than a three percent advantage
6 for any one political party based on an average of the votes cast for
7 the three offices with the most votes cast in the last election
8 preceding the adoption of the redistricting plan.

9 (2) Districts shall have a population as nearly equal as is
10 practicable, excluding nonresident military personnel, based on the
11 population reported in the federal decennial census.

12 ((+2))) (3) To the extent consistent with subsection ((1))) (2) of
13 this section the commission plan should, insofar as practical,
14 accomplish the following:

15 (a) District lines should be drawn so as to coincide with the
16 boundaries of local political subdivisions and areas recognized as
17 communities of interest. The number of counties and municipalities
18 divided among more than one district should be as small as possible;

19 (b) Districts should be composed of convenient, contiguous, and
20 compact territory. Land areas may be deemed contiguous if they share
21 a common land border or are connected by a ferry, highway, bridge, or
22 tunnel. Areas separated by geographical boundaries or artificial
23 barriers that prevent transportation within a district should not be
24 deemed contiguous; ((and))

25 (c) Whenever practicable, a precinct shall be wholly within a
26 single legislative district; and

27 (d) Include the maximum number of districts that are competitive
28 with no greater than a three percent advantage for any one political
29 party based on an average of the votes cast for the three offices with
30 the most votes cast in the last election preceding the adoption of the
31 redistricting plan.

32 ((+3))) (4) The commission's plan and any plan adopted by the
33 supreme court under RCW 44.05.100(4) shall provide for forty-nine
34 legislative districts.

35 ((+4))) (5) The house of representatives shall consist of ninety-
36 eight members, two of whom shall be elected from and run at large
37 within each legislative district. The senate shall consist of forty-

1 nine members, one of whom shall be elected from each legislative
2 district.

3 ((+5)) (6) The commission shall exercise its powers to provide
4 fair and effective representation and to encourage electoral
5 competition. The commission's plan shall not be drawn purposely to
6 favor or discriminate against any political party or group.

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