

HCS HJR 48, 46 & 47 -- ETHICS (Plocher)

COMMITTEE OF ORIGIN: Standing Committee on General Laws

Upon voter approval, this proposed Constitutional amendment modifies laws pertaining to the influence of special interest groups on the state legislature. In its main provisions, the resolution:

(1) Repeals an existing exception to the lobbyist gift ban for members of the General Assembly that allows small gifts of under \$5.00 so that no gifts from lobbyists or lobbyist principals to members of the General Assembly will be allowed and sets campaign finance limits for state senators or their candidate committees at \$2000 per general assembly election;

(2) Repeals provisions relating to the use of a nonpartisan state demographer to draw redistricting maps using mathematical formulas based on partisan fairness and competitiveness;

(3) Creates separate House and Senate independent bipartisan citizens commissions to draw redistricting maps beginning 60 days after the annual census report;

(4) Establishes the following redistricting criteria:

(a) Compliance with the equal population within a small degree of accuracy, compliance with the Constitution of the United States, compliance with the Voting Rights Act, and an effort to ensure that communities of interest be allowed representation and participation in the political process;

(b) Districts should be composed of contiguous territory as compact as may be such that they approximate squares, rectangles, or hexagons to the extent permitted by natural or political boundaries; and

(c) Districts should achieve partisan fairness and, secondarily, competitiveness where these criteria are further specified in the resolution;

(5) Specifies a procedure for gubernatorial appointment of six member House and Senate bipartisan redistricting committees. The process of selection allows each of the two major political parties to nominate candidates using majority votes of their congressional district committees and state committees. Congressional committees submit two candidates and state committees submit five with the Governor selecting two from each state committee and one member from those nominated by the political party congressional district

committees. Additional criteria for service as a member on the committees or selection of members if the political party committees fail to nominate candidates is specified in the resolution. Bipartisan commissions will always have equal numbers of members from the two political parties receiving the most votes in past elections and the same person is barred from service on more than one bipartisan committee;

(6) Requires the bipartisan committees to meet within 15 days, excluding Sundays and state holidays, of appointment to select officers, adopt an agenda, and file a tentative plan of apportionment and map with the Secretary of State within five months after appointment. Public hearings will be held after filing and a final map will be filed within six months of appointment which must be approved by seven-tenths of the commission members;

(7) Specifies that a panel of appellate judges will create a redistricting map if a bipartisan commission fails to agree by the requisite seven-tenths vote. Deadlines and requirements for the map are further specified in the resolution; and

(8) Requires the bipartisan commissions to establish a "Redistricting Public Comment Portal," to accept comments, maps, or other communications from the general public or interested parties. Submissions to the portal must disclose whether the entity making the submission was responsible for its content and whether or not the submission was funded by contributors. If a submission was funded, then the identity of the contributors shall be disclosed.