



Legislation Text

File #: 71381, **Version:** 1

Fiscal Note

No appropriation required.

Title

Proclaiming opposition to the loss of local control, additional costs, and continuing damage to the interests of the residents of Madison and the State of Wisconsin as caused by the 2011 changes to Wisconsin's redistricting statutes and the State's 2022 Legislative districts.

Body

WHEREAS, the US Constitution requires that every 10 years representative districts be redrawn, equalizing population to achieve the goal of "one person, one vote" at all levels of government; and,

WHEREAS, Federal and State law mandate that the new districts be compact and contiguous, respect existing municipal boundaries, and reflect communities of interest; and,

WHEREAS, between August 12, 2021 and October 7, 2021, the City of Madison's Ad Hoc Redistricting Committee held a series of nine open, publicly noticed meetings, City staff visited nine libraries for public engagement, and City staff held a virtual public meeting on redistricting; and,

WHEREAS, the Ad Hoc Redistricting Committee and City staff received hundreds of public comments on the City's redistricting; and

WHEREAS, with extensive public input, and by following State law, the Committee and City staff developed ten Alder redistricting concepts; and,

WHEREAS, City staff developed a draft ward map for Common Council consideration immediately following the Committee's recommendation of an Alder redistricting concept to the Common Council; and

WHEREAS, on November 2, 2021 the Common Council held public hearings, as required by State statute, on proposed Alder district boundaries and proposed ward boundaries; and,

WHEREAS, the Common Council approved Alder district boundaries and wards on November 2, 2021, as was required for County Board candidates to circulate nominating papers starting on December 1, 2021 for the February 2022 primary election; and

WHEREAS, the City submitted approved Alder district boundaries and wards to the State of Wisconsin, as required by State law, before December 2021; and

WHEREAS, as required by State law, the wards adopted by the City split old wards with a population over 4,000 and consolidated old wards with a population under 1,000, including wards with a population under 1,000 that were required by the State during 2011 redistricting after Senate Bill 150 was adopted; and

WHEREAS, State law perversely requires municipalities to consolidate low-population wards, only for the State to later force municipalities to create low, and sometimes zero, population wards to comply with Legislative boundaries; and

WHEREAS, the State has senselessly required the City of Madison to create 20 new wards in April of 2022 to accommodate irregular and discontinuous Legislative boundaries that needlessly split many of the City's adopted wards between two, and sometimes three, Assembly districts; and

WHEREAS, the eight of the 20 wards the State has required the City to create have zero dwelling units; and

WHEREAS, the State's Legislative maps disregard the ward boundaries the City is required to submit to the State, ignore how the City's boundaries have changed over the past 10 years due to annexation, and require creation of wards that jeopardize the democratic principle of secret ballots; and

WHEREAS, the requirement of the State to create new fragmented wards imposes additional election administration costs on the City, wasting taxpayer money while also creating time-consuming election administration barriers; and

WHEREAS, the new maps incur additional costs not only in Madison but in municipalities around the State by forcing modification of already-approved ward maps; and,

WHEREAS, the State's new Legislative maps follow municipal boundaries strictly but ignore recent annexations, creating dozens of "islands" in Dane County alone - areas disconnected from the bulk of the remaining Legislative district - a characteristic that maps drawn prior to 2011 did not have, and which violates the requirement that districts be compact and contiguous; and,

WHEREAS, by following those borders and creating those "islands" the new maps will continue to force the creation of new, small wards when lands are added to cities under annexation agreements or through requests by property owners, adding additional costs to elections to print ballots specifically for those wards and to manage them at the polls, as well as likely create additional wards where voters will not be guaranteed a secret ballot due to the small size of the wards and lack of population growth in those wards over the next 10 years; and,

WHEREAS, the maps drafted by the Legislature were created with a lack of transparency and a lack of public involvement, unlike the process within the City and the processes of municipalities throughout the State; and

WHEREAS, the net effect of 2011 SB 150 gutted local control of the redistricting process and created the problems described above.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the City of Madison decries the redistricting process forced upon both it and other municipalities throughout Wisconsin for purely partisan ends by the 2011 adoption of SB 150 and which have been perpetuated as a result of the State's 2021 redistricting; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Madison believes that municipalities should be responsible for determining ward lines before other units of government, including the State, set their districts, as had been done prior to 2011, because municipalities are best equipped to identify and protect communities of interest; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Madison believes that the State should be required to use wards adopted by municipalities, as was done prior to 2011, and should not force municipalities to create new wards

after a municipal ward plan has been adopted that complies with State law; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Madison calls for the State to require Legislative districts be contiguous for future redistricting processes to prevent the creation of Legislative islands that break up neighborhoods and neighbors between multiple Legislative districts at no benefit and great harm to representation of local interests at the State level; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the City of Madison calls upon the State Legislature and the Governor to create a nonpartisan redistricting process that results in fair maps adopted in a timely manner that will allow the residents of the State of Wisconsin to select representatives of their choosing, rather than existing Legislators choosing their voters.