

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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C.S.S.B. 837
By: Wentworth
State Affairs
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Committee Report (Substituted)

DIGEST

Currently, the Texas Constitution requires the legislature to apportion Texas after the publication of the U.S. decennial census. A redistricting commission could redistrict state legislative, congressional, and judicial districts with independent, bipartisan citizens. Members of the commission would be appointed by the respective political caucuses of the House and Senate, who would each elect one voting member. These four voting members would select a nonvoting chairman. Three votes would be required to adopt a plan, with the requirement that districts be compact, contiguous, and have a community interest. S.B. 837 establishes the Texas Redistricting Commission.

PURPOSE

As proposed, S.B. 837 establishes the Texas Redistricting Commission.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is granted to the Texas Redistricting Commission in SECTION 1 (Sec. 307.006, Government Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Title 3A, Government Code, by adding Chapter 307, as follows:

CHAPTER 307. TEXAS REDISTRICTING COMMISSION

Sec. 307.001. DEFINITIONS. Defines "commission" and "plan."

Sec. 307.002. OATH. Requires each person appointed to the Texas Redistricting Commission (commission) to take the constitutional oath of office.

Sec. 307.003. ELIGIBILITY. Provides that eligibility of a person to serve on the commission is as prescribed by Section 28a, Article III, Texas Constitution.

Sec. 307.004. POLITICAL ACTIVITIES PROHIBITED. Prohibits certain political activities for a member of the commission.

Sec. 307.005. OPERATION OF COMMISSION. Requires the legislature to fund the commission. Requires the commission to have access to statistical information. Requires the Texas Legislative Council to provide the commission with technical staff and clerical services.

Sec. 307.006. DUTIES. Sets forth the duties of the commission, including adopting rules to carry out its duties and acting as the legislature's official recipient of census data.

Sec. 307.007. REDISTRICTING PLAN; FORM. Requires the commission to publish a report for each redistricting plan or modification plan, employing certain criteria, and make a copy available to the public.

Sec. 307.008. REDISTRICTING PLAN STANDARDS. Requires a redistricting plan adopted by the commission to conform to certain Texas constitutional standards.

Sec. 307.009. SUBMISSION OF PLAN. Requires the commission to submit each plan to the

Sec. 307.010. CESSATION OF OPERATIONS. Requires the commission to conclude and reconvenes as provided by certain constitutional provisions. Requires the commission to prepare developed by the commission. Requires the secretary of state to become the custodian of the revert to the general revenue fund.

commission's plan after the plan adoption, by filing a petition with the supreme court. Authorizes

Sec. 307.012. RECONVENING OF COMMISSION FOR REAPPORTIONMENT OF Judicial Districts Board failing to make certain statewide reapportionments of judicial districts. provided by the Texas Constitution. Provides that the reapportionment becomes effective as suspend its operations within a certain period of time after the effective date of reapportionment,

SECTION 2. Amends Section 24.945(e), Government Code, to prohibit the Texas Redistricting actions. Makes conforming changes.

Commission to make a statewide reapportionment of the judicial districts not later than the 90th day, rather a conforming change.

to establish the Texas Redistricting Commission.