

SUPPORTING REFORM OF THE COUNTY BOARD REDISTRICTING PLANNING PROCESS

Redistricting plans for both the Wisconsin Legislature and local county boards currently are developed by the same elected officials who are subject to those redistricting plans.

Wisconsin Statute §59.10 governs the process for determining the composition of county board supervisory districts. Currently, that statute requires that each county board “shall propose a tentative county supervisory district plan setting forth the number of supervisory districts and tentative boundaries or a description of boundary requirements, hold a public hearing on the proposed plan and adopt a tentative plan” within a time period designated by the statute (Wis. Stats. 59.10(3)(b)1). The statute also sets forth factors that should be addressed when creating the proposed supervisory districts, such as population and contiguity of municipalities and other standards to be followed.

This current redistricting process is subject to abuse when legislative bodies redesign voting districts to remain in office and favor their friends. Gerrymandering practices can result in districts with boundaries that make little geographical sense and distort the intentions of voters.

To address this concern and change this practice on the state level, Dane County Board Supervisor and Wisconsin State Representative Dianne Hesselbein recently introduced a State Assembly Bill—LRB-0665/1—to change the procedures for drawing redistricting plans for the State Legislature. Among other things, the bill establishes an independent, non-partisan Redistricting Advisory Commission to create redistricting plans on the state legislative level.

This resolution is intended to complement Supervisor and Representative Hesselbein’s proposed legislation by recommending a similar reform of the process by which county supervisory redistricting plans are created.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Dane County Board of Supervisors joins with Dane County Supervisor and State Representative Hesselbein in supporting reform of the legislative redistricting planning process.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Dane County Board of Supervisors supports amending the state statute governing the composition of county board supervisory districts to allow for the establishment of an independent, non-partisan body to develop county supervisory redistricting plans.

Adopted by the Dane County Board of Supervisors May 23, 2013.