

RESOLUTION NO. 2017-09

Creating a Nonpartisan Procedure for the Preparation of State Legislative and Congressional Redistricting Plans

Executive Summary

Under the Wisconsin Constitution, the State Legislature is directed to reapportion legislative districts following the decennial federal census according to the number of inhabitants. The legislature also reapportions congressional districts at the same interval pursuant to federal law. Because state and federal legislative redistricting is controlled by the majority party at the time of the redistricting, legislative and congressional plans in Wisconsin have been subject to partisan influence that puts the desires of politicians ahead of the electoral prerogative of the people. This practice of redistricting by the majority party stifles political competition, discourages compromise, ensures continued control by the party in power, and lacks the transparency necessary to reinforce citizens' faith in the democratic process. This resolution asks the State Legislature to enact legislation before the start of the next redistricting process following the 2020 federal census to pass legislation that creates a fair, nonpartisan procedure for the preparation of state legislative and congressional redistricting plans. The Administration and Rules Committee met on April 26, 2017, and recommended forwarding this resolution to the County Board for approval.

WHEREAS, the Executive Summary is hereby incorporated by reference into this resolution, and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Article IV, Section 3 of the Wisconsin Constitution, the Wisconsin Legislature is directed to reapportion state legislative districts according to the number of inhabitants at its next session following the decennial federal census, and

WHEREAS, because Wisconsin and federal legislative redistricting is controlled by the majority party at the time of the redistricting, legislative and congressional plans in Wisconsin have been subject to partisan influence that puts the desires of politicians ahead of the electoral prerogative of the people, and

WHEREAS, a panel of federal district court judges has ruled that the redistricting that was done in Wisconsin in 2011 was unconstitutional, and

WHEREAS, legal costs in defense of the 2011 redistricting have already cost taxpayers in excess of \$2.1 million, with the litigation still ongoing, and

WHEREAS, redistricting to achieve partisan gains is improper by any political party.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Jefferson County Board of Supervisors requests the State Legislature, before the start of the next redistricting process following the 2020 federal census, to pass legislation that creates a fair, nonpartisan procedure for the preparation of state legislative and congressional redistricting plans, that promotes more accountability and transparency, prohibits the consideration of voting patterns, party information, and incumbents' residence information or demographic information in drawing the maps, except as necessary to ensure minority participation as required by law, and

