

- SUPPORTING CREATION OF A NONPARTISAN PROCEDURE FOR THE PREPARATION OF LEGISLATIVE AND CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING PLANS -

WHEREAS, pursuant to Article VI, Section 3 of the Wisconsin Constitution, the Wisconsin Legislature is directed to redistrict state legislative districts "according to the number of inhabitants" at its next session following the decennial federal census. The legislature also reapportions congressional districts at the same interval pursuant to federal law; and

WHEREAS, 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. Redistricting to achieve partisan gains is improper, whether it is done by Republicans or Democrats; and

WHEREAS, a panel of federal district court judges has ruled that the redistricting done in Wisconsin in 2011 was unconstitutional. Legal costs in defense of the 2011 redistricting has already cost taxpayers in excess of \$2.1 million, with the litigation still ongoing; and

WHEREAS, the state and congressional districts belong to the citizens of Wisconsin and not to any legislator, interest group or political party. The redistricting process should not be a tool used by those in power to protect and bolster their power, but should be designed with the best interest of Wisconsin's democracy and its citizens; and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin's historical practice of redistricting by the majority party in each legislative chamber is an outdated practice that stifles political competition, discourages compromise, ensures continued control by the party in power, and lacks the transparency necessary to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; and

WHEREAS, there is a critical need at this time to restore trust, compromise and fair competition to Wisconsin politics;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the Eau Claire County Board of Supervisors calls upon 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 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 the U.S. Constitution; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Eau Claire County Board of Supervisors advocates for an amendment to the Wisconsin Constitution giving the responsibility of legislative redistricting to a nonpartisan commission; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the County Clerk is directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Governor of the State of Wisconsin, assembly members and senators representing Eau Claire County and the Wisconsin Counties Association.

ADOPTED: June 20, 2017

Janet K. Loomis, County Clerk