Resolution No. 18-06/17
Supporting Creation of a Nonpartisan Procedure for the Preparation of Legislative and Congressional Redistricting Plans

Moved/Sponsored by: Executive Committee

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WHEREAS, Wisconsin’s historical practice of redistricting by the majority party in each legislative chamber is an outdated practice that stifles political competition, discourages compromise, ensures continued control by the party in power, and lacks the transparency necessary to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

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Walworth County Board of Supervisors hereby urges 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.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Walworth County Board of Supervisors advocates for an amendment to the Wisconsin Constitution giving the responsibility of legislative redistricting to a nonpartisan commission.
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the County Clerk is hereby directed to forward a copy of this resolution to Governor Scott Walker, Wisconsin Counties Association, Wisconsin Towns Association, and Wisconsin League of Municipalities as well as assembly members and senators representing Walworth County.

Nancy Russell
County Board Chair

Kimberly S. Bushey
County Clerk

County Board Meeting Date: June 13, 2017

Action Required: Majority Vote [X]  Two-thirds Vote _____  Other _____

Policy and Fiscal Note is attached.
Reviewed and approved pursuant to Section 2-91 of the Walworth County Code of Ordinances:

David A. Bretl  Date  5/17/17
County Administrator/Corporation Counsel

Nicole Andersen  Date  5/17/17
Deputy County Administrator - Finance

If unsigned, exceptions shall be so noted by the County Administrator.

This Resolution/Ordinance was: [ ] Adopted [ ] Roll Call/ U.C. [ ] Voice
[ ] Rejected/ Referred/ Laid Over

Ayos:  Noes:  Absent:
Date  June 13, 2017