RESOLUTION NO. 138-2016-2018

TO: THE HONORABLE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE PORTAGE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

RE: RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE CREATION OF A NONPARTISAN REDISTRICTING PROCEDURE FOR THE PREPARATION OF LEGISLATIVE AND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS

WHEREAS, on December 17, 2013, Portage County passed Resolution No. 245-2012-2014, which is attached to this resolution, in support of creating nonpartisan procedures for legislative and congressional redistricting; and

WHEREAS, currently under the Wisconsin Constitution, the legislature is directed to redistrict state legislative districts “according to the number of inhabitants” at its next session following the decennial federal census by the majority party; and at the same intervals, the legislature also reapportions congressional districts pursuant to federal law; and

WHEREAS, legislative and congressional redistricting plans enacted pursuant to this procedure are used to elect members of the legislature and members of Congress in the fall of the second year following the year of the census; and

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

WHEREAS, the current redistricting practice is outdated and stifles political competition, discourages compromise, lacks transparency and has allowed for partisan influence and manipulation to put the desires of politicians ahead of the electoral prerogative of the citizens of Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, the 2011 Wisconsin redistricting was ruled unconstitutional by a panel of federal district court judges costing taxpayers in excess of $2.1 million with litigation still ongoing; and

WHEREAS, redistricting to achieve partisan gain is an improper process that both Republican and Democrats must be prohibited from doing; and

FISCAL NOTE: No appropriation of funds is required for this resolution.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Portage County Board of Supervisors insists upon the creation of a nonpartisan procedure and for the preparation of legislative and congressional redistricting plans to be in place and utilized as required pursuant to the Wisconsin Constitution, prior to Election Day on November 6th, 2018. That the Portage 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 new process needs to promote more accountability and transparency, and prohibit 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 United States Constitution; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Portage County Clerk is hereby directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Governor of the State of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Counties Association, the Wisconsin Towns Association, the Wisconsin League of Municipalities, all members of the state legislature, and to each Wisconsin County.

Dated this 20th day of June, 2017.

Respectfully submitted,

EXECUTIVE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

[Signatures]

D. Philip Idsvoog (Chair)

Allen Haga

James Zdroik

James Gifford

Don Butkowski