

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2015

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HOUSE BILL 92

Short Title: Nonpartisan Redistricting Commission. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Stam, McGrady, Hardister, and G. Martin (Primary Sponsors).
For a complete list of Sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly Web Site.

Referred to: Elections, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House.

February 18, 2015

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A NONPARTISAN REDISTRICTING PROCESS.
3 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

4 **SECTION 1.** Chapter 120 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new
5 Article to read:

6 "Article 1B.

7 "Nonpartisan Redistricting Process.

8 "**§ 120-4.51. Definitions.**

9 As used in this Article, unless the context requires otherwise, the following definitions
10 apply:

- 11 (1) Census Bureau. – The United States Bureau of the Census.
12 (2) Commission. – The Temporary Redistricting Advisory Commission
13 established pursuant to this Article.
14 (3) Federal census. – The decennial census required by federal law to be
15 conducted by the Census Bureau in every year ending in zero.
16 (4) Four selecting authorities. –
17 a. The President Pro Tempore of the Senate.
18 b. The minority leader of the Senate.
19 c. The Speaker of the House of Representatives.
20 d. The minority leader of the House of Representatives.
21 (5) Ideal population. – The number determined by dividing the number of
22 members in a plan into the population of the State as reported in the federal
23 census.
24 (6) Plan. – A plan for legislative and congressional reapportionment drawn up
25 pursuant to the requirements of this Article.
26 (7) Political party office. – An office in the national or State organization of a
27 political party.
28 (8) Public office. –
29 a. An elective State, local, or federal office.
30 b. An appointive State or federal office.
31 (9) Relative. – An individual who is related to the person in question as father,
32 mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, first cousin, nephew,
33 niece, husband, wife, grandfather, grandmother, father-in-law,
34 mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law,



1 stepfather, stepmother, stepson, stepdaughter, stepbrother, stepsister, half
2 brother, or half sister.

3 (10) VTD. – A voting tabulation district reported by the Census Bureau.

4 **"§ 120-4.52. Preparations for redistricting.**

5 (a) The Legislative Services Office shall acquire appropriate information, review and
6 evaluate information, review and evaluate available facilities, and develop programs and
7 procedures in preparation for drawing congressional and legislative redistricting plans on the
8 basis of each federal census. Funds shall be expended for the purchase or lease of equipment
9 and materials only with prior approval of the Legislative Services Commission.

10 (b) By December 31 of each year ending in zero, the Legislative Services Office shall
11 obtain from the Census Bureau information regarding geographic and political units in this
12 State for which federal census population data has been gathered and will be tabulated. The
13 Legislative Services Office shall use the data so obtained to:

14 (1) Prepare necessary descriptions of geographic and political units for which
15 census data will be reported and which are suitable for use as components of
16 legislative districts.

17 (2) Prepare maps of counties, cities, precincts, VTDs, and other geographic units
18 within the State which may be used to illustrate the locations of legislative
19 district boundaries proposed in plans drawn in accordance with this Article.

20 (c) As soon as possible after January 1 of each year ending in one, the Legislative
21 Services Office shall obtain from the Census Bureau the population data needed for legislative
22 districting which the Census Bureau is required to provide this State under P.L. 94-171 and
23 shall use that data to assign a population figure to geographic and political units based upon
24 that data. Upon completing that task, the Legislative Services Office shall begin the preparation
25 of congressional and legislative districting plans as required by this Article.

26 (d) Upon each delivery by the Legislative Services Office to the General Assembly of a
27 bill embodying a plan, pursuant to this Article, the Legislative Services Office shall at the
28 earliest feasible time make available to the public the following information:

29 (1) Copies of the bill delivered by the Legislative Services Office to the General
30 Assembly.

31 (2) Maps illustrating the plan.

32 (3) A summary of the standards prescribed by this Article for development of
33 the plan.

34 (4) A statement of the population of each district included in the plan and the
35 relative deviation of each district population from the ideal district
36 population.

37 **"§ 120-4.53. Preparations for redistricting.**

38 (a) Not later than April 1 of each year ending in one, the Legislative Services Office
39 shall deliver to the Principal Clerk of the Senate and the Principal Clerk of the House of
40 Representatives and to the members of the Senate and the House of Representatives identical
41 bills embodying a plan of legislative and congressional districting prepared in accordance with
42 this Article. It is the intent of this Article that the bill shall be brought to a vote in either the
43 Senate or the House of Representatives expeditiously, but not less than three legislative days
44 after the report of the Temporary Redistricting Advisory Commission required by
45 G.S. 120-4.56 is received and made available to the members of the General Assembly. The
46 bill shall be voted in under a procedure or rule permitting no amendments except those of a
47 purely corrective nature. It is further the intent of this Article that if the bill is approved on third
48 reading by the first house in which it is considered, it shall expeditiously be brought to a vote in
49 the second house under a similar procedure or rule. If the bill embodying the plan submitted by
50 the Legislative Services Office under this subsection fails to be approved on second or third
51 reading in either the Senate or the House of Representatives, the Principal Clerk of the Senate

1 or the Principal Clerk of the House, as the case may be, shall at once, but in no event later than
2 seven days after the date the bill failed to be approved, transmit to the Legislative Services
3 Office information which the Senate or House may direct by resolution regarding reasons why
4 the plan was not approved.

5 (b) If the population data for legislative districting which the Census Bureau is required
6 to provide this State under P.L. 94-171 and, if used by the Legislative Services Office, the
7 corresponding geographic referencing data file for that population data are not available to the
8 Legislative Services Office on or before February 15 of the year ending in one, the April 1 date
9 set forth in subsection (a) of this section shall be extended by a number of days equal to the
10 number of days after February 15 of the year ending in one that the federal census population
11 data and the geographic encoding and referencing data file for legislative districting become
12 available.

13 (c) If the bill embodying the plan submitted by the Legislative Services Office under
14 subsection (a) of this section fails to pass second or third reading in either house, the
15 Legislative Services Office shall prepare a bill embodying a second plan of legislative and
16 congressional districting. The bill shall be prepared in accordance with this section and, insofar
17 as it is possible to do so within the requirements of G.S. 120-4.54, with the reasons cited by the
18 Senate or House of Representatives by resolution for the failure to approve the plan. If a second
19 plan is required under this subsection, the bill embodying it shall be delivered to the Principal
20 Clerk of the Senate and the Principal Clerk of the House of Representatives and to the members
21 of the Senate and the House of Representatives not later than 35 calendar days after the date of
22 the vote by which the Senate or the House of Representatives fails to approve the bill submitted
23 under subsection (a) of this section. If it is necessary to submit a bill under this subsection, the
24 bill shall be brought to a vote not less than seven calendar days after the bill is submitted and
25 made available to the members of the General Assembly, under a procedure or rule permitting
26 no amendments except those of a purely corrective nature. It is further the intent of this Article
27 that if the bill is approved on third reading by the first house in which it is considered, it shall
28 expeditiously be brought to a vote in the second house under a similar procedure or rule. If the
29 bill embodying the plan submitted by the Legislative Services Office under this subsection fails
30 to be approved on second or third reading in either the Senate or the House of Representatives,
31 the Principal Clerk of the Senate or the Principal Clerk of the House, as the case may be, shall
32 transmit to the Legislative Services Office in the same manner, as described in subsection (a) of
33 this section, information which the Senate or House may direct by resolution regarding reasons
34 why the plan was not approved.

35 (d) If the bill embodying the plan submitted by the Legislative Services Office under
36 subsection (c) of this section fails to be enacted, the same procedure as prescribed by
37 subsection (c) of this section shall be followed. If a third plan is required under this subsection,
38 the bill embodying it shall be delivered to the Principal Clerk of the Senate and the Principal
39 Clerk of the House of Representatives and to the members of the Senate and the House of
40 Representatives not later than 35 calendar days after the date of the vote by which the Senate or
41 the House of Representatives fails to approve the bill submitted under subsection (c) of this
42 section. If it is necessary to submit a bill under this subsection, the bill shall be brought to a
43 vote within the same time period after its delivery to the Principal Clerk of the Senate and the
44 Principal Clerk of the House of Representatives as is prescribed for the bill submitted under
45 subsection (c) of this section but shall be subject to amendment in the same manner as other
46 bills.

47 (e) Prior to delivering any plan and the bill embodying that plan in accordance with this
48 section, the Legislative Services Office shall provide to persons outside its staff only such
49 information regarding the plan as may be required by policies agreed upon by the Temporary
50 Redistricting Advisory Commission. This subsection does not apply to population and
51 geographic data furnished to the Legislative Services Office by the Census Bureau.

1 **"§ 120-4.54. Redistricting standards.**

2 (a) Legislative and congressional districts shall be established on the basis of
3 population.

4 (b) Senatorial and representative districts, respectively, shall each have a population
5 that is within five percent (5%) of the ideal population for that district.

6 (c) Congressional districts shall each have a population as nearly equal as practicable to
7 the ideal population, but in all cases within one-tenth of a percent (0.1%) of the ideal
8 population.

9 (d) Legislative and congressional districts shall be drawn in a manner that complies
10 with requirements of federal and State law.

11 (e) To the extent consistent with other standards provided by this section, district
12 boundaries in a plan shall coincide with the boundaries of political subdivisions of the State. In
13 Senate and State House plans, the "whole county" requirements established by the North
14 Carolina Constitution shall be complied with in a manner consistent with federal law. The
15 number of counties and cities divided among more than one district shall be as small as
16 possible, but in the case of cities located in more than one county, minimizing the division of
17 counties prevails. The division of VTDs shall also be minimized consistent with the other
18 standards of this section.

19 (f) Districts shall be composed of convenient contiguous territory. Areas which meet
20 only at the points of adjoining corners are not contiguous.

21 (g) Districts shall be reasonably compact in form, to the extent consistent with the
22 standards established by this section. In general, reasonably compact districts are those which
23 are square, rectangular, or hexagonal in shape, and not irregularly shaped, to the extent of
24 natural or political boundaries or those of VTDs. If it is necessary to compare the relative
25 compactness of two or more districts, or of two or more alternative districting plans, the tests
26 prescribed by this subsection shall be used as follows:

27 (1) Length-width compactness. – The compactness of a district is greatest when
28 the length of the district and the width of the district are equal. The measure
29 of a district's compactness is the absolute value of the difference between the
30 length and the width of the district. In general, the length-width compactness
31 of a district is calculated by measuring the distance from the northernmost
32 point or portion of the boundary of a district to the southernmost point or
33 portion of the boundary of the same district and the distance from the
34 westernmost point or portion of the boundary of the district to the
35 easternmost point or portion of the boundary of the same district. The
36 absolute values computed for individual districts under this subdivision may
37 be cumulated for all districts in a plan in order to compare the overall
38 compactness of two or more alternative districting plans for the State or for a
39 portion of the State.

40 (2) Perimeter compactness. – The compactness of a district is greatest when the
41 distance needed to traverse the perimeter boundary of a district is as short as
42 possible. The total perimeter distance computed for individual districts under
43 this subdivision may be cumulated for all districts in a plan in order to
44 compare the overall compactness of two or more alternative districting plans
45 for the State or for a portion of the State.

46 (h) No district shall be drawn for the purpose of favoring a political party, incumbent
47 legislator, or member of Congress, or other person or group, or for the purpose of augmenting
48 or diluting the voting strength of a language or racial minority group. In establishing districts,
49 no use shall be made of any of the addresses or geographic locations of incumbents.

50 Except to the extent required by the North Carolina or United States Constitutions, the
51 Voting Rights Act of 1965, and applicable court decisions, no use shall be made of:

- 1 (1) Political affiliations of registered voters.
- 2 (2) Previous election results.
- 3 (3) Demographic information, other than population head counts.

4 **"§ 120-4.55. Temporary Redistricting Advisory Commission.**

5 (a) Not later than February 15 of each year ending in one, a five-member Temporary
6 Redistricting Advisory Commission shall be established as provided by this section. The
7 Commission's only functions shall be those prescribed by G.S. 120-4.56.

8 (b) Each of the four selecting authorities shall certify to the Chair of the State Board of
9 Elections the authority's appointment of a person to serve on the Commission.

10 (c) Within 10 days after the four selecting authorities have certified their respective
11 appointments, but in no event later than February 15 of the year ending in one, the four
12 commission members so appointed shall select, by a vote of at least three members, and certify
13 to the Chair of the State Board of Elections the fifth Commission member, who shall serve as
14 chairperson.

15 (d) A vacancy on the Commission shall be filled by the initial selecting authority within
16 15 days after the vacancy occurs.

17 (e) Members of the Commission shall receive from funds appropriated to the General
18 Assembly per diem, travel expenses, and reimbursement for other necessary expenses incurred
19 in performing their duties as provided by G.S. 138-5 or G.S. 138-6, as applicable.

20 (f) No person shall be appointed to the Commission who:

- 21 (1) Is not a registered voter of this State at the time of selection.
- 22 (2) Holds public office or political party office.
- 23 (3) Is a relative of or is employed by a member of the General Assembly or of
24 the United States House of Representatives or Senate or is employed directly
25 by the General Assembly or by the United States House of Representatives
26 or Senate.

27 **"§ 120-4.56. Duties of Commission.**

28 The functions of the Commission shall be as follows:

- 29 (1) Answer a written request for direction made by the Legislative Services
30 Office when in preparation of plans as required by this Article; the
31 Legislative Services Office is confronted with the necessity to make any
32 decision for which no clearly applicable guideline is provided by
33 G.S. 120-4.54 and requests direction from the Commission.
- 34 (2) Authorize by adoption of policies the release of information under
35 G.S. 120-4.53(e).
- 36 (3) Upon the delivery by the Legislative Services Office to the General
37 Assembly of a bill embodying an initial plan, as required by
38 G.S. 120-4.53(a), the Commission shall:
 - 39 a. As expeditiously as reasonably possible, schedule and conduct at
40 least three public hearings, in different geographic regions of the
41 State, on that plan.
 - 42 b. Following the hearings, promptly prepare and submit to the Principal
43 Clerk of the Senate and the Principal Clerk of the House of
44 Representatives a report summarizing information and testimony
45 received by the Commission in the course of the hearings. The
46 Commission's report shall include any comments and conclusions
47 which its members deem appropriate on the information and
48 testimony received at the hearings or otherwise presented to the
49 Commission. The report as to a plan shall be submitted no later than
50 14 calendar days after the date the bill embodying an initial plan is
51 delivered to the General Assembly."

1 **SECTION 2.** This act is effective when it becomes law and applies to redistricting
2 following the return of the 2020 federal decennial census.