STATE OF NEW YORK

10637

IN SENATE

June 1, 2026

Introduced by Sen. STEWART-COUSINS -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Rules

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND ASSEMBLY

proposing an amendment to sections 4 and 5-b of article 3 of the constitution, in relation to the independent redistricting commission

Section 1. Resolved (if the Assembly concur), That sections 4 and 5-b of article 3 of the constitution are amended and a new section 5-c is added to read as follows:

§ 4. (a) Except as herein otherwise provided, the federal census taken in the year nineteen hundred thirty and each federal census taken decennially thereafter shall be controlling as to the number of inhabitants in the state or any part thereof for the purposes of the apportionment of members of assembly and readjustment or alteration of senate and assembly districts next occurring, in so far as such census and the tabulation thereof purport to give the information necessary therefor. The legislature, by law, shall provide for the making and tabulation by state authorities of an enumeration of the inhabitants of the entire state to be used for such purposes, instead of a federal census, if the taking of a federal census in any tenth year from the year nineteen hundred thirty be omitted or if the federal census fails to show the number of aliens or Indians not taxed. If a federal census, though giving the requisite information as to the state at large, fails to give the information as to any civil or territorial divisions which is required to be known for such purposes, the legislature, by law, shall provide for such an enumeration of the inhabitants of such parts of the state only as may be necessary, which shall supersede in part the federal census and be used in connection therewith for such purposes. The legislature, by law, may provide in its discretion for an enumeration by state authorities of the inhabitants of the state, to be used for such purposes, in place of a federal census, when the return of a decennial federal census is delayed so that it is not available at the beginning of the regular session of the legislature in the second year after the year nineteen hundred thirty or after any tenth year therefrom, or if an apportionment of members of assembly and readjustment or alteration of senate districts is not made at or before such a session. At the regular

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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session in the year nineteen hundred thirty-two, and at the first regular session after the year nineteen hundred forty and after each tenth year therefrom the senate districts shall be readjusted or altered, but if, in any decade, counting from and including that which begins with the year nineteen hundred thirty-one, such a readjustment or alteration is not made at the time above prescribed, it shall be made at a subsequent session occurring not later than the sixth year of such decade, meaning not later than nineteen hundred thirty-six, nineteen hundred forty-six, nineteen hundred fifty-six, and so on; provided, however, that if such districts shall have been readjusted or altered by law in either of the years nineteen hundred thirty or nineteen hundred thirty-one, they shall remain unaltered until the first regular session after the year nineteen hundred forty. No town, except a town having more than a full ratio of apportionment, and no block in a city [~~inclosed~~] **enclosed** by streets or public ways, shall be divided in the formation of senate districts. In the reapportionment of senate districts, no district shall contain a greater excess in population over an adjoining district in the same county, than the population of a town or block therein adjoining such district. Counties, towns or blocks which, from their location, may be included in either of two districts, shall be so placed as to make said districts most nearly equal in number of inhabitants, excluding aliens.

No county shall have four or more senators unless it shall have a full ratio for each senator. No county shall have more than one-third of all the senators; and no two counties or the territory thereof as now organized, which are adjoining counties, or which are separated only by public waters, shall have more than one-half of all the senators.

(b) The independent redistricting commission established pursuant to section five-b of this article shall prepare a redistricting plan to establish senate, assembly, and congressional districts every ten years commencing in two thousand [~~twenty-one~~] **thirty-one**, and shall submit to the legislature such plan and the implementing legislation therefor on or before January first or as soon as practicable thereafter but no later than January fifteenth in the year ending in two beginning in two thousand [~~twenty-two~~] **thirty-two**. The redistricting plans for the assembly and the senate shall be contained in and voted upon by the legislature in a single bill, and the congressional district plan may be included in the same bill if the legislature chooses to do so. The implementing legislation shall be voted upon, without amendment, by the senate or the assembly and if approved by the first house voting upon it, such legislation shall be delivered to the other house immediately to be voted upon without amendment. If approved by both houses, such legislation shall be presented to the governor for action.

If either house shall fail to approve the legislation implementing the [~~first~~] redistricting plan, or the governor shall veto such legislation and the legislature shall fail to override such veto**, or the independent redistricting commission fails to submit such a plan and implementing legislation by January fifteenth**, [~~each house or the governor if he or she vetoes it, shall notify the commission that such legislation has been disapproved. Within fifteen days of such notification and in no case later than February twenty-eighth, the redistricting commission shall prepare and submit to the legislature a second redistricting plan and the necessary implementing legislation for such plan. Such legislation shall be voted upon, without amendment, by the senate or the assembly and, if approved by the first house voting upon it, such legislation shall be delivered to the other house immediately to be voted~~

~~upon without amendment. If approved by both houses, such legislation shall be presented to the governor for action.~~

~~If either house shall fail to approve the legislation implementing the second redistricting plan, or the governor shall veto such legislation and the legislature shall fail to override such veto,~~] each house shall prepare a redistricting plan and introduce [~~such~~] implementing legislation [~~with any amendments each house of the legislature deems necessary. All such amendments shall comply with the provisions of this article~~] for such plan. If approved by both houses, such legislation shall be presented to the governor for action.

[~~All votes by the senate or assembly on any redistricting plan legislation pursuant to this article shall be conducted in accordance with the following rules:~~

~~(1) In the event that the speaker of the assembly and the temporary president of the senate are members of two different political parties, approval of legislation submitted by the independent redistricting commission pursuant to subdivision (f) of section five-b of this article shall require the vote in support of its passage by at least a majority of the members elected to each house.~~

~~(2) In the event that the speaker of the assembly and the temporary president of the senate are members of two different political parties, approval of legislation submitted by the independent redistricting commission pursuant to subdivision (g) of section five-b of this article shall require the vote in support of its passage by at least sixty percent of the members elected to each house.~~

~~(3) In the event that the speaker of the assembly and the temporary president of the senate are members of the same political party, approval of legislation submitted by the independent redistricting commission pursuant to subdivision (f) or (g) of section five-b of this article shall require the vote in support of its passage by at least two-thirds of the members elected to each house.~~]

(b-1) At any time after congressional districts are enacted pursuant to subdivisions (b) or (e) of this section, or otherwise implemented pursuant to a court order, the legislature shall have the authority on its own initiative, by law, to make changes to one or more of such districts, provided, however, any such changes shall comply with the provisions of this section, except for subdivision (b) of this section, and shall not remain in force beyond the effective date of a reapportionment plan subsequently enacted based upon the next succeeding federal census.

(c) [~~Subject to~~] State senate, state assembly and congressional districts shall be drawn in compliance with the requirements of the federal constitution and statutes and [~~in compliance with~~] state constitutional requirements, and with consideration for the following principles [~~shall be used in the creation of state senate and state assembly districts and congressional districts~~]:

(1) [~~When drawing district lines, the commission shall consider whether such lines would result in the denial or abridgement of racial or language minority voting rights, and districts~~] Districts shall not be drawn to have the purpose of[~~, nor shall they result in,~~] the denial or abridgement of [~~such~~] racial or language minority voting rights. Districts shall be drawn so that, based on the totality of the circumstances, racial or [~~minority~~] language minority groups do not have less opportunity to participate in the political process than other members of the electorate and to elect representatives of their choice.

(2) To the extent practicable, districts shall contain as nearly as may be an equal number of inhabitants. [~~For each district that deviates from this requirement, the commission shall provide a specific public explanation as to why such deviation exists.~~]

(3) Each district shall consist of contiguous territory.

(4) [~~Each district shall be as compact in form as practicable.~~

~~(5) Districts shall not be drawn to discourage competition or for the purpose of favoring or disfavoring incumbents or other particular candidates or political parties. The commission shall consider the~~] **The** maintenance [~~of cores of existing districts, of pre-existing political subdivisions, including counties, cities, and towns, and~~] of communities of interest.

[~~(6) In drawing senate districts, towns or blocks which, from their location may be included in either of two districts, shall be so placed as to make said districts most nearly equal in number of inhabitants. The requirements that senate districts not divide counties or towns, as well as the 'block on border' and 'town on border' rules, shall remain in effect.~~]

During the preparation of the redistricting plan, the independent redistricting commission shall conduct not less than one public hearing on proposals for the redistricting of congressional and state legislative districts in each of the following (i) cities: Albany, Buffalo, Syracuse, Rochester, and White Plains; and (ii) counties: Bronx, Kings, New York, Queens, Richmond, Nassau, and Suffolk. Notice of all such hearings shall be widely published using the best available means and media a reasonable time before every hearing. At least thirty days prior to the first public hearing and in any event no later than September fifteenth of the year ending in one or as soon as practicable thereafter, the independent redistricting commission shall make widely available to the public, in print form and using the best available technology, its draft redistricting plans, relevant data, and related information. Such plans, data, and information shall be in a form that allows and facilitates their use by the public to review, analyze, and comment upon such plans and to develop alternative redistricting plans for presentation to the commission at the public hearings. The independent redistricting commission shall report the findings of all such hearings to the legislature upon submission of a redistricting plan.

(d) The ratio for apportioning senators shall always be obtained by dividing the number of inhabitants, excluding aliens, by fifty, and the senate shall always be composed of fifty members, except that if any county having three or more senators at the time of any apportionment shall be entitled on such ratio to an additional senator or senators, such additional senator or senators shall be given to such county in addition to the fifty senators, and the whole number of senators shall be increased to that extent.

The senate districts, including the present ones, as existing immediately before the enactment of a law readjusting or altering the senate districts, shall continue to be the senate districts of the state until the expirations of the terms of the senators then in office, except for the purpose of an election of senators for full terms beginning at such expirations, and for the formation of assembly districts.

(e) The process for redistricting congressional and state legislative districts established by this section and sections five and five-b of this article shall govern redistricting in this state except to the extent that a court is required to order the adoption of, or changes to, a redistricting plan [~~as a remedy for a violation of law~~] **enacted in**

violation of this section, section five, or section five-b of this article, and (1) the legislature, after having a full and reasonable opportunity to remedy such violation, has failed to enact redrawn districts to remedy such violation; and (2) such order is the only remaining remedy available to ensure the state's compliance with the federal constitution or statutes or the applicable provisions of this constitution.

A reapportionment plan and the districts contained in such plan shall be in force until the effective date of a plan based upon the subsequent federal decennial census taken in a year ending in zero unless modified pursuant to a court order, or subdivisions (b-1) or (e) of this section.

§ 5-b. (a) On or before February first of each year ending with a zero [~~and at any other time a court orders that congressional or state legislative districts be amended~~], an independent redistricting commission shall be established to determine the district lines for congressional and state legislative offices. The independent redistricting commission shall be composed of ten members, appointed as follows:

(1) two members shall be appointed by the temporary president of the senate;

(2) two members shall be appointed by the speaker of the assembly;

(3) two members shall be appointed by the minority leader of the senate;

(4) two members shall be appointed by the minority leader of the assembly;

(5) two members shall be appointed by the eight members appointed pursuant to paragraphs (1) through (4) of this subdivision by a vote of not less than five members in favor of such appointment, and these two members shall not have been enrolled in the preceding five years in either of the two political parties that contain the largest or second largest number of enrolled voters within the state;

(6) one member shall be designated chair of the commission by a majority of the members appointed pursuant to paragraphs (1) through (5) of this subdivision to convene and preside over each meeting of the commission.

(b) The members of the independent redistricting commission shall be registered voters in this state. No member shall within the last three years:

(1) be or have been a member of the New York state legislature or United States Congress or a statewide elected official;

(2) be or have been a state officer or employee or legislative employee as defined in section seventy-three of the public officers law;

(3) be or have been a registered lobbyist in New York state;

(4) be or have been a political party chairman, as defined in paragraph (k) of subdivision one of section seventy-three of the public officers law;

(5) be the spouse of a statewide elected official or of any member of the United States Congress, or of the state legislature.

(c) To the extent practicable, the members of the independent redistricting commission shall reflect the diversity of the residents of this state with regard to race, ethnicity, gender, language, and geographic residence and to the extent practicable the appointing authorities shall consult with organizations devoted to protecting the voting rights of minority and other voters concerning potential appointees to the commission.

(d) Vacancies in the membership of the commission shall be filled within thirty days in the manner provided for in the original appointments.

(e) The legislature shall provide by law for the compensation of the members of the independent redistricting commission, including compensation for actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

(f) A minimum of five members of the independent redistricting commission shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of any business or the exercise of any power of such commission prior to the appointment of the two commission members appointed pursuant to paragraph (5) of subdivision (a) of this section, and a minimum of seven members shall constitute a quorum after such members have been appointed, and no exercise of any power of the independent redistricting commission shall occur without the affirmative vote of at least a majority of the members, provided that, in order to approve any redistricting plan and implementing legislation, the following rules shall apply:

(1) In the event that the speaker of the assembly and the temporary president of the senate are members of the same political party, approval of a redistricting plan and implementing legislation by the commission for submission to the legislature shall require the vote in support of its approval by at least seven members including at least one member appointed by each of the legislative leaders.

(2) In the event that the speaker of the assembly and the temporary president of the senate are members of two different political parties, approval of a redistricting plan by the commission for submission to the legislature shall require the vote in support of its approval by at least seven members including at least one member appointed by the speaker of the assembly and one member appointed by the temporary president of the senate.

(g) In the event that the commission is unable to obtain seven votes to approve a redistricting plan on or before January first in the year ending in two or as soon as practicable thereafter, the commission shall submit to the legislature that redistricting plan and implementing legislation that garnered the highest number of votes in support of its approval by the commission with a record of the votes taken. In the event that more than one plan received the same number of votes for approval, and such number was higher than that for any other plan, then the commission shall submit all plans that obtained such number of votes. The legislature shall consider and vote upon such implementing legislation in accordance with [~~the voting rules set forth in~~] subdivision (b) of section four of this article.

(h) (1) The independent redistricting commission shall appoint two co-executive directors by a majority vote of the commission in accordance with the following procedure:

(i) In the event that the speaker of the assembly and the temporary president of the senate are members of two different political parties, the co-executive directors shall be approved by a majority of the commission that includes at least one appointee by the speaker of the assembly and at least one appointee by the temporary president of the senate.

(ii) In the event that the speaker of the assembly and the temporary president of the senate are members of the same political party, the co-executive directors shall be approved by a majority of the commission that includes at least one appointee by each of the legislative leaders.

(2) One of the co-executive directors shall be enrolled in the political party with the highest number of enrolled members in the state and one shall be enrolled in the political party with the second highest number of enrolled members in the state. The co-executive directors

shall appoint such staff as are necessary to perform the commission's duties, except that the commission shall review a staffing plan prepared and provided by the co-executive directors which shall contain a list of the various positions and the duties, qualifications, and salaries associated with each position.

(3) In the event that the commission is unable to appoint one or both of the co-executive directors within forty-five days of the establishment of a quorum of seven commissioners, the following procedure shall be followed:

(i) In the event that the speaker of the assembly and the temporary president of the senate are members of two different political parties, within ten days the speaker's appointees on the commission shall appoint one co-executive director, and the temporary president's appointees on the commission shall appoint the other co-executive director. Also within ten days the minority leader of the assembly shall select a co-deputy executive director, and the minority leader of the senate shall select the other co-deputy executive director.

(ii) In the event that the speaker of the assembly and the temporary president of the senate are members of the same political party, within ten days the speaker's and temporary president's appointees on the commission shall together appoint one co-executive director, and the two minority leaders' appointees on the commission shall together appoint the other co-executive director.

(4) In the event of a vacancy in the offices of co-executive director or co-deputy executive director, the position shall be filled within ten days of its occurrence by the same appointing authority or authorities that appointed [~~his or her~~] their predecessor.

(i) The state budget shall include necessary appropriations for the expenses of the independent redistricting commission, provide for compensation and reimbursement of expenses for the members and staff of the commission, assign to the commission any additional duties that the legislature may deem necessary to the performance of the duties stipulated in this article, and require other agencies and officials of the state of New York and its political subdivisions to provide such information and assistance as the commission may require to perform its duties.

§ 5-c. Subject to the requirements of the federal constitution and statutes, and as otherwise provided in this section, the legislature may by law make changes to one or more of the congressional districts in the state. Any such changes enacted pursuant to this section shall be based upon the federal census taken in two thousand twenty and shall not be subject to any of the provisions of sections four or five-b of this article. Provided, further, that the power conferred upon the legislature in this section, and any districts enacted pursuant to this section, shall remain in force only until the effective date of a reapportionment plan subsequently enacted based upon the federal census taken in two thousand thirty.

In the event that a court invalidates any congressional districts enacted pursuant to this section, the legislature shall have a full and reasonable opportunity to remedy any such violations. Provided, however, that no court shall order the drawing of any congressional districts unless the legislature has failed to enact redrawn congressional districts to remedy such violations and such order is the only remaining remedy available to ensure the state's compliance with the federal constitution or statutes.

§ 2. Resolved (if the Assembly concur), That the foregoing amendment be referred to the first regular legislative session convening after the next succeeding general election of members of the assembly, and, in conformity with section 1 of article 19 of the constitution, be published for 3 months previous to the time of such election.