

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2001

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HOUSE BILL 318\*

Short Title: Independent Redistricting Comm. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Pope, Weatherly; Arnold, Blust, Culp, Daughtry,  
Decker, Ellis, Grady, Harrington, Hilton, Morris, Preston, and Russell.

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

February 28, 2001

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO AMEND THE STATE CONSTITUTION TO ESTABLISH AN  
3 INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING COMMISSION.

4 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

5 **SECTION 1.** Section 3 of Article II of the Constitution of North Carolina  
6 reads as rewritten:

7 "**Sec. 3. Senate districts; apportionment of Senators.**

8 The Senators shall be elected from districts. ~~The General Assembly, at the first~~  
9 ~~regular session convening~~ The Independent Redistricting Commission, beginning as  
10 soon as practical after the return of every decennial census of population taken by order  
11 of Congress, shall revise the senate districts and the apportionment of Senators among  
12 those districts, subject to the following requirements:

13 (1) Each Senator shall represent, as nearly as may be, an equal number of  
14 inhabitants, ~~the number of inhabitants that each Senator represents being determined for~~  
15 ~~this purpose by dividing the population of the District that he represents by the number~~  
16 ~~of Senators apportioned to that district; and the Commission, to the extent it deems~~  
17 practical, shall avoid establishing districts represented by more than one Senator;

18 (2) Each senate district shall at all times consist of geographically compact and  
19 contiguous territory;

20 (3) ~~No county shall be divided in the formation of a senate district; The~~  
21 Commission, to the extent it deems practical, shall avoid establishing district boundaries  
22 that cross county boundaries;

23 (4) When established, the senate districts and the apportionment of Senators shall  
24 remain unaltered until the return of another decennial census of population taken by  
25 order of Congress."

26 **SECTION 2.** Section 5 of Article II of the Constitution of North Carolina  
27 reads as rewritten:

1       **"Sec. 5. Representative districts; apportionment of Representatives.**

2       The Representatives shall be elected from districts. ~~The General Assembly, at the~~  
3 ~~first regular session convening~~ The Independent Redistricting Commission, as soon as  
4 practical after the return of every decennial census of population taken by order of  
5 Congress, shall revise the representative districts and the apportionment of  
6 Representatives among those districts, subject to the following requirements:

7       (1) Each Representative shall represent, as nearly as may be, an equal number of  
8 inhabitants, ~~the number of inhabitants that each Representative represents being~~  
9 ~~determined for this purpose by dividing the population of the district that he represents~~  
10 ~~by the number of Representatives apportioned to that district; and the Commission, to~~  
11 ~~the extent it deems practical, shall avoid establishing districts with more than one~~  
12 Representative;

13       (2) Each representative district shall at all times consist of geographically  
14 compact and contiguous territory;

15       (3) ~~No county shall be divided in the formation of a representative district; The~~  
16 ~~Commission, to the extent it deems practical, shall avoid establishing district boundaries~~  
17 ~~that cross county boundaries;~~

18       (4) When established, the representative districts and the apportionment of  
19 Representatives shall remain unaltered until the return of another decennial census of  
20 population taken by order of Congress."

21       **SECTION 3.** Article II of the Constitution of North Carolina is amended by  
22 adding a new section to read:

23       **"Sec. 25. Independent Redistricting Commission.**

24       (1) Establishment and membership. There is established the Independent  
25 Redistricting Commission to consist of nine persons appointed as follows:

- 26       (a) Two by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, with no more than one  
27 affiliated with the same political party;  
28       (b) Three by the Governor, with no more than two affiliated with the same  
29 political party;  
30       (c) Two by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, with no more  
31 than one affiliated with the same political party; and  
32       (d) Two by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, with no more than  
33 one affiliated with the same political party.

34 The appointing officers shall appoint the initial members of the Independent  
35 Redistricting Commission as soon as practicable after this Section becomes law.  
36 Subsequent to the initial appointments, the appointing officers shall make their  
37 appointments, other than vacancy appointments, no earlier than February 1 of the year  
38 prior to the year in which the appointed members are to take office under subsection (2)  
39 of this Section and no later than June 1 of the year in which the members are to take  
40 office under subsection (2) of this Section.

41       (2) Term of office; vacancies, chair. The initial members of the Independent  
42 Redistricting Commission shall take office as soon as practicable after their  
43 appointment. The initial members shall serve until their successors are appointed and  
44 qualified. Subsequent to the initial appointments, the members of the Independent

1 Redistricting Commission shall take office on the first day of July of each year ending  
2 in the number 0 and shall continue in office until their successors are appointed and  
3 qualified. Any vacancy occurring in the membership of the Commission shall be filled  
4 for the remainder of the unexpired term by the officer who appointed the vacating  
5 member. The Independent Redistricting Commission shall elect from its members a  
6 Chair, who will serve throughout the term of the Commission unless replaced by vote of  
7 the Commission.

8 (3) Eligibility. To be eligible for appointment to the Independent Redistricting  
9 Commission, a person must be a resident of North Carolina. No person may serve on  
10 the Commission who has held elective public office or been a candidate for elective  
11 public office in the four years prior to commencement of service on the Independent  
12 Redistricting Commission. No person who has served as a member of the Independent  
13 Redistricting Commission shall be eligible to hold any elective State office for four  
14 years after termination of service on the Independent Redistricting Commission.

15 (4) Legislative plans. The Independent Redistricting Commission shall adopt, in  
16 accordance with Sections 3 and 5 of this Article, plans for revising the senate districts  
17 and representative districts, which shall have the force and effect of acts of the General  
18 Assembly. The General Assembly shall not adopt any legislative district plan.

19 (5) Congressional plans. The Independent Redistricting Commission is responsible  
20 for adopting a district plan for election of members of the House of Representatives of  
21 the Congress of the United States. The General Assembly shall not adopt any district  
22 plan for election of members of the United States House of Representatives.

23 (6) Preparation and adoption of plans. The Independent Redistricting Commission  
24 shall adopt district plans as required by subsections (4) and (5) of this Section no later  
25 than October 1 of the year following each decennial census of population taken by order  
26 of Congress. In preparing or adopting its plans, the Independent Redistricting  
27 Commission shall not consider the following information:

- 28 (a) The political affiliation of voters;
- 29 (b) Voting data from previous elections;
- 30 (c) The location of incumbents' residences; or
- 31 (d) Demographic data from sources other than the United States Bureau of  
32 the Census. In the use of Census data, racial and ethnic data shall be  
33 used only for the purposes of compliance with the Constitution of the  
34 United States and laws enacted pursuant thereto.

35 There shall be a minimum period of 45 days of public comment on a plan before it is  
36 finally adopted.

37 (7) In case plan held invalid. The Independent Redistricting Commission shall  
38 adopt a new district plan in the event that a plan it has adopted is held invalid.

39 (8) Federal law. In adopting any plan under this section, the Independent  
40 Redistricting Commission shall take into consideration all relevant requirements of the  
41 United States Constitution and Acts of Congress.

42 (9) Local redistricting. The General Assembly may by law assign to the  
43 Independent Redistricting Commission the duty to adopt districting and redistricting

1 plans for any county, city, town, special district, and other governmental subdivision if  
2 the governing board of the unit or a court of competent jurisdiction so requests."

3 **SECTION 4.** Subsection (5) of Section 22 of Article II of the Constitution of  
4 North Carolina reads as rewritten:

5 "(5) ~~Other exceptions.~~ Appointments to office. Every bill:

- 6 (a) ~~In bill in which the General Assembly makes an appointment or~~  
7 ~~appointments to public office and which contains no other matter;~~  
8 (b) ~~Revising the senate districts and the apportionment of Senators among~~  
9 ~~those districts and containing no other matter;~~  
10 (c) ~~Revising the representative districts and the apportionment of~~  
11 ~~Representatives among those districts and containing no other matter;~~  
12 ~~or~~  
13 (d) ~~Revising the districts for the election of members of the House of~~  
14 ~~Representatives of the Congress of the United States and the~~  
15 ~~apportionment of Representatives among those districts and containing~~  
16 ~~no other matter,~~

17 matter shall be read three times in each house before it becomes law and shall be signed  
18 by the presiding officers of both houses."

19 **SECTION 5.** The amendments set out in Sections 1 through 4 of this act  
20 shall be submitted to the qualified voters of the State at the general election in  
21 November 2002, which election shall be conducted under the laws then governing  
22 elections in the State. Ballots, voting systems, or both may be used in accordance with  
23 Chapter 163 of the General Statutes. The question to be used in the voting systems and  
24 ballots shall be:

25 "[ ] FOR [ ] AGAINST

26 A constitutional amendment providing for an Independent Redistricting  
27 Commission to redistrict the State for the purpose of electing members of the General  
28 Assembly and members of the United States House of Representatives."

29 **SECTION 6.** If a majority of votes cast on the question are in favor of the  
30 amendments set out in Sections 1 through 4 of this act, the State Board of Elections  
31 shall certify the amendments to the Secretary of State. The amendments become  
32 effective upon this certification. The Secretary of State shall enroll the amendments so  
33 certified among the permanent records of that office.

34 **SECTION 7.** Members of the Independent Redistricting Commission shall  
35 be paid per diem, subsistence, and travel allowances at the rate established in G.S.  
36 138-5.

37 **SECTION 8.** This act is effective when it becomes law.