
DIGEST

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HB 409 Engrossed

2018 Regular Session

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Abstract: Provides relative to limitations on changes to precinct boundaries, particularly for the purposes of establishing boundaries for the federal decennial census and for the purposes of redistricting efforts following each federal decennial census.

Present law (R.S. 18:532) provides for the establishment of precincts, definition of territorial limits for which each precinct is established, prescription of boundaries, and designation of precincts by the governing authority of each parish. Prohibits any precinct from having fewer than 300 registered voters within its boundaries except in certain circumstances, including making it more convenient for voters to vote in geographically isolated areas who would otherwise have to travel more than 10 miles or cross a public ferry to vote, when the precinct contains the entire area of an incorporated place (small municipality), when a precinct may not be merged because of different voting district boundaries, under extraordinary and unforeseen circumstances as permitted by the secretary of state, and when a parish governing authority is responsible for all election expenses incurred in the precinct.

Present law provides that the requirement that the parish governing authority is responsible for all election expenses incurred in a small precinct that has less than 300 registered voters and does not meet one of the exceptions shall not apply from Jan. 1, 2009, through Dec. 31, 2013.

Proposed law provides instead that such requirement does not apply during the period of Dec. 31st of any year ending in zero and Jan. 1st of any year ending in three established in proposed law (see below).

Present law (R.S. 18:532.1) provides relative to changing the boundaries of precincts. Authorizes the parish governing authority to change the configuration, boundaries, or designation of an election precinct. Provides for requirements for changing precinct boundaries. Provides that no election precinct shall be created, divided, abolished, or merged, or the boundaries thereof otherwise changed between Jan. 1st of any year of which the last digit is nine and Dec. 31st of any year of which the last digit is three, unless ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction. Provides exceptions. Present law contains specific dates regarding the establishment of precincts and mergers of precincts for the 2010 federal decennial census and the redistricting efforts following said census.

Proposed law provides instead that no election precinct shall be created, divided, abolished, or merged, or the boundaries thereof otherwise changed between Dec. 31st of any year of which the last digit is zero and Jan. 1st of any year of which the last digit is three.

Proposed law removes language regarding mergers of precincts to accomplish reapportionment and removes specific language regarding the establishment of block boundaries for the 2010 federal decennial census and precinct changes during the time that redistricting efforts following said census occurred.

Proposed law provides instead that in order to establish block boundaries for a subsequent federal decennial census, precinct mergers submitted for review through Dec. 31st of any year ending in nine shall not be subject to the requirement that all parts be in the same voting districts. Further provides that such mergers shall be effective for March 31st for the federal decennial census and for reapportionment and redistricting purposes following that federal decennial census and not later than July 1st of any year the last digit is one for all purposes.

Present law further provides relative to precinct mergers that the secretary of state shall make a determination that all parts of the precinct be in same voting districts. Proposed law further allows a merger if the secretary of state makes a determination that the voting machine is capable of accommodating all elections that will occur in the precinct if the proposed merger occurs and the proposed merger will not cause voter inconvenience.

Present law (R.S. 18:1903) also prohibits an election precinct from being created, divided, abolished, or merged, or the boundaries thereof otherwise changed between Jan. 1st of any year of which the last digit is nine and Dec. 31st of any year of which the last digit is three. Proposed law removes this specific restriction.

(Amends R.S.18:532(A) and (B)(5) and 532.1(B)(2), (C)(3), and (D)(1) and (2)(a); Repeals R.S. 18:1903)