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## DIGEST

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Leger

HB No. 627

**Abstract:** Establishes and provides for a redistricting commission to propose alternative redistricting plans for each public body to be redistricted by the legislature. Requires the legislature to enact one of those plans for each body without amendment.

Proposed constitutional amendment provides for a redistricting commission as follows:

- (1) Establishes a redistricting commission in each year in which the federal decennial census is taken to propose plans for redistricting of public bodies in the executive, legislative, and judicial branch of state government whose members are elected from districts. Provides for the commission to be composed of 13 members selected by May 1 as follows:
  - (a) Two elected by the membership of the House of Representatives and two elected by the membership of the Senate; one member elected by each house to be a voter registered as affiliated with the recognized political party in the state with the greatest number of voters registered as affiliated with the party who is nominated by the members of the house who are registered as affiliated with that party and the other to be a voter registered as affiliated with the recognized political party in the state with the second greatest number of voters registered as affiliated with the party who is nominated by the members of the house who are registered as affiliated with that party.
  - (b) Eight appointed by the La. Supreme Court, including at least one registered voter in each congressional district, appointed from separate lists of at least eight names each (at least one registered voter in each congressional district) submitted by April 1 by the Public Affairs Research Council of La., the Council for a Better La., the president of Centenary College at Shreveport, the president of Dillard University at New Orleans, the president of La. College at Pineville, the president of Loyola University at New Orleans, the president of Tulane University of La. at New Orleans, and the president of Xavier University at New Orleans. Provides that if any nominating authority fails to submit nominees in the time required or ceases to exist, the court shall make the appointments from the nominees submitted or, if none are submitted, the court shall make the appointments without nominations.
  - (c) One registered voter in this state who is not affiliated with any political party

appointed by the governor.

- (d) Provides that no person shall be eligible or selected to serve on the commission who: holds elected or appointed public or political party office; is a member of the immediate family of a public official subject to redistricting by the commission; is a public employee; is an employee of a public official subject to redistricting by the commission or of a legal entity in which such public official has a business or financial interest; or is a registered voter in any other state.
  - (e) Provides for filling vacancies in the manner of the original selection within 20 days of the vacancy.
  - (f) Provides that commission members serve until redistricting of each body, as required, has been completed after the decennial census and has become effective, at which time the commission shall be dissolved until a new commission is established in the year of the next federal census. Provides, however, if a new redistricting is required during the time between decennial censuses, a new commission shall be established as provided in proposed law. Specifies that each member shall receive the same per diem and travel allowance as provided to legislators.
- (3) Requires all meetings to be public, requires at least one meeting in each congressional district, and requires all communications to the commission or any member thereof about redistricting to be placed into the official record of the commission.
  - (4) Requires the commission to submit three alternative plans for redistricting of each house to the legislature at least three days prior to the final date for prefiling of legislation at the regular session in the year following the year in which the population of the state is reported to the president of the U.S. and for each other public body, at least three days prior to the final date for prefiling of legislation at the regular session next preceding qualification of candidates for election at the first election of members of the public body after the release of decennial census information at the precinct level.
  - (5) Requires that each plan shall redistrict the districts in accordance with the requirements of the La. constitution and in accordance with federal law.
  - (6) Requires the legislature to enact one of the three plans for each body without amendment. Requires the legislature to enact such legislative plans not later than the time as provided in present constitution (Const. Art. III, §6; see below) relative to legislative redistricting and other plans not later than the regular session next preceding qualification of candidates for election at the first election of members of the public body after the release of decennial census information at the precinct level.
  - (7) Provides that if the commission fails to submit three plans for each public body or if the legislature fails to enact one of those plans for a public body, the La. Supreme Court,

upon petition of any elector, shall redistrict the public body.

- (8) Provides that the proposed constitutional amendment is self-operative, but authorizes the legislature to provide by law relative to the redistricting commission and procedures to implement the proposed constitutional amendment, including but not limited to expenses and staffing for the commission, such law to be consistent with the proposed constitutional amendment and the present constitution.

Present constitution (Const. Art. III, §6) provides for legislative reapportionment. Requires the legislature to reapportion each house as equally as practicable on the basis of population shown by the census not later than the end of the year following the year in which the state's population is reported to the president of the U.S. for each decennial federal census.

Proposed constitutional amendment changes the terminology in the present constitution to reflect a change from "reapportion" and "reapportionment" to "redistrict" and "redistricting" and further requires that such redistricting comply with the proposed constitutional amendment (summarized above). Also retains present constitution that provides for "redistricting of the districts to elect members" of the legislature by the supreme court upon petition of any elector if the legislature fails to "redistrict" as required by the present constitution and proposed constitutional amendment. Also retains present constitution that provides that procedure for review and for petition shall be provided by law.

Provides for submission of the proposed amendment to the voters at the statewide election to be held Nov. 4, 2014.

(Amends Const. Art. III, §6; Adds Const. Art. XI, §6)