State Government, Elections & Information Technology Committee

HB 1567

Brief Description: Concerning modification of precinct and district boundary lines.

Sponsors: Representatives Koster, Dolan, Griffey and Muri; by request of Secretary of State.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Enables county auditors to modify precinct and district boundaries.
- Changes redistricting plan reporting deadlines.

Hearing Date: 2/7/17

Staff: Megan Palchak (786-7105).

Background:

Members of the Redistricting Commission must deliver redistricting plans by January 1 of "the year ending in two". As practicable, plans must include, but are not limited to:
- districts composed of convenient contiguous and compact territories;
- district lines that coincide with local political subdivisions and areas recognized as communities of interest;
- counties and municipalities divided across districts as small as practicable; and
- precincts wholly within a single legislative district.

County legislative authorities may divide counties into precincts, and establish by ordinance the maximum number of active voters. Precinct boundaries may be altered at any time within certain limits. Precinct changes are not authorized during the two-week period prior to the first day candidates file for a primary election, through the first day of the general election.

Changes in precinct boundaries must follow visible, physical features delineated on current US Census Bureau maps, unless the proposed precinct boundaries align with the outer boundary of

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an annexed or incorporated area, or when doing so would impair the administration of elections in the involved area. If precinct changes do not follow visible physical features, the county auditor must send the Secretary of State a statement of the applicable exception and maps. The county auditor must also send a copy of new precinct maps to affected cities or towns.

Summary of Bill:

The county auditor may divide counties into election precincts, and must formally adopt boundary modifications after temporary adjustments related to annexed and incorporated areas are made. Precinct boundaries may be altered seven days prior to the first day candidates file for a primary election. Every precinct must be either wholly outside or within a single city or town, and its single council district or ward as applicable. In addition to visible physical features, precinct boundaries must preferentially follow local jurisdictional and electoral district boundaries. County auditors are no longer required to send maps the SOS and cities regarding annexed and unincorporated areas.
The deadline to submit the redistricting plan to the legislature is changed to November 20th "of the year ending in one". The maximum number of active registered voters in each precinct is one thousand five hundred.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 23, 2017.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.