

Measure U422

INSTRUCTIONS:

Please carefully read the following description of a ballot measure that was written by a disinterested expert. Feel free to take notes or outline passages as you read.

This should take you approximately 10 minutes.

BALLOT MEASURE U422

BACKGROUND

The State Constitution requires the Legislature to adjust the boundary lines of Assembly, State Senate, congressional, and Board of Equalization districts every 10 years, following publication of the federal census. This process is known as "reapportionment" or "redistricting." The primary purpose of reapportionment is to establish districts which are reasonably equal in population. Federal law and the State Constitution prescribe other objectives and standards which the Legislature must adhere to and consider in establishing the districts.

Following publication of the 1980 federal census, the California Legislature revised the boundaries of the Assembly, State Senate, and congressional districts. (The Board of Equalization districts were not revised.) At the June 8, 1982, primary election, three referendum measures appeared on the ballot, giving voters the opportunity to approve or reject these newly revised district plans. All three of the plans were rejected. Consequently, the Legislature must again revise the boundaries of the Assembly, State Senate, and congressional districts in time for the 1984 statewide elections. The Legislature would not otherwise reapportion districts again until 1991.

PROPOSAL

This measure amends the State Constitution to transfer from the Legislature to a newly established commission the responsibility for reapportioning Assembly, State Senate, congressional, and Board of Equalization districts. The commission, entitled the "Districting Commission," would be required to adopt, by October 1, 1983, districting plans for the 1984 through 1990 elections based on the 1980 decennial census. Thereafter, the commission, rather than the Legislature, would meet once each decade, beginning in 1991, to develop new reapportionment plans based on the latest census data.

The districting commission would consist of at least 10 appointed members. A panel of justices from the California courts of appeal would select four members, including the chairperson of the commission. The largest two political parties in California would each appoint three members, two of whom could be Members of the Legislature. In addition, any other political parties having 10 percent or more representation in the State Legislature (there are none at present) would be authorized to appoint a single member.

If this measure is approved by the voters, members of the first districting commission will be appointed in December of 1982. Thereafter, commission members generally would be appointed during December of the year in which the decennial census occurs. The commission would remain in existence “until there are final [redistricting] plans.”

Each commission member who is not an elected state official would receive compensation for each month during which the commission is active. The amount of compensation per month would be equal to the monthly salary of a state legislator. The commission as a whole, as well as individual commission members, would be authorized to employ staff as needed.

The commission would have to adopt final redistricting plans by October 1 of the year following the year in which the members were appointed, or 180 days after the commission has received the necessary census data, whichever date is later. Plans would have to be adopted by a two-thirds vote of the commission membership, including at least three votes from members appointed by the panel of justices and at least one vote from one of the members appointed by each of the largest two political parties.

The plans would have to conform to certain objectives and standards, some of which are as follows:

1. Each districting plan shall provide fair representation for all citizens, including racial, ethnic, and language minorities, and political parties.
2. Each Board of Equalization district shall be composed of 10 Senate districts, and each Senate district shall be composed of two Assembly districts.
3. The population of state legislative districts shall be within 1 percent of the average district population, but can vary by up to 2 percent to accomplish the objectives and standards specified in this measure. Congressional districts shall be as nearly equal in population as practicable.
4. Each district shall have only one representative.
5. There shall be no lapse of representation for a district because of district numbering.
6. To the extent practicable, districts:
 - Shall be geographically compact,
 - Shall not cross any common county boundary more than once,
 - Shall be comprised of whole census tracts, and
 - Shall minimize the division of cities, counties, and geographical regions.

If the commission is unable to adopt a redistricting plan or plans within the designated time frame, or if any plan is found unconstitutional or rejected by the voters through the referendum process, the measure would require the Supreme Court to adopt a plan or plans in accordance with the objectives and standards set forth in this measure.



STOP!

Please go to the online survey, enter the 4-character code for this ballot measure (printed at the top and bottom of this page) and answer the survey questions.