

By: Puente

H.B. No. 88

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT

2 relating to the reapportionment of state legislative,  
3 congressional, and judicial districts and the creation, function,  
4 and duties of the Texas Redistricting Commission.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

6 SECTION 1. Subtitle A, Title 3, Government Code, is amended  
7 by adding Chapter 307 to read as follows:

8 CHAPTER 307. TEXAS REDISTRICTING COMMISSION

9 Sec. 307.001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

10 (1) "Commission" means the Texas Redistricting  
11 Commission established by Section 28a, Article III, Texas  
12 Constitution.

13 (2) "Plan" means a redistricting plan for the Texas  
14 Senate, Texas House of Representatives, or Texas congressional  
15 districts adopted as provided by Section 28a, Article III, Texas  
16 Constitution, and this chapter.

17 Sec. 307.002. OATH. Before serving on the commission, each  
18 person appointed shall take and subscribe to the constitutional  
19 oath of office.

20 Sec. 307.003. ELIGIBILITY. The eligibility of a person to  
21 serve on the commission is as prescribed by Section 28a, Article  
22 III, Texas Constitution.

23 Sec. 307.004. POLITICAL ACTIVITIES PROHIBITED. A member  
24 of the commission may not:

1                   (1) campaign for elective office while a member of the  
2 commission;

3                   (2) actively participate in or contribute to the  
4 political campaign of a candidate for a state or federal elective  
5 office while a member of the commission; or

6                   (3) serve as or be a candidate to be a member of the  
7 Texas Legislature before the second anniversary of the date the  
8 commission adopted a redistricting plan for that body during the  
9 member's service on the commission.

10                  Sec. 307.005. OPERATION OF COMMISSION.           (a)       The  
11 legislature shall appropriate sufficient money for the  
12 compensation and payment of the expenses of the commission members  
13 and any staff employed by the commission.

14                  (b) The commission shall be provided access to statistical  
15 or other information compiled by the state or its political  
16 subdivisions as necessary for the commission's reapportionment  
17 duties.

18                  (c) The Texas Legislative Council, under the direction of  
19 the commission, shall provide the technical staff and clerical  
20 services that the commission needs to prepare its plans.

21                  Sec. 307.006. DUTIES.    The commission shall:

22                  (1) adopt rules to carry out the constitutional duties  
23 of the commission and to administer this chapter;

24                  (2) act as the legislature's recipient of the official  
25 census data and maps from the United States Bureau of the Census  
26 pursuant to the federal decennial census; and

27                  (3) comply with Chapters 551 and 552.

1        Sec. 307.007. REDISTRICTING PLAN; FORM. (a) For each plan  
2        or modification of a plan adopted by the commission, the commission  
3        shall prepare and publish a report that includes:

4                (1) for each district in the plan, the total  
5        population and the percentage deviation from the average district  
6        population;

7                (2) an explanation of the criteria used in developing  
8        the plan, with a justification of any population deviation in a  
9        district from the average district population;

10                (3) a map or maps of all the districts; and

11                (4) the estimated cost to be incurred by the counties  
12        for changes in county election precinct boundaries required to  
13        conform to the districts adopted by the commission.

14                (b) The commission shall make a copy of a report prepared  
15        under this section available to the public.

16        Sec. 307.008. REDISTRICTING PLAN STANDARDS. A plan adopted  
17        by the commission must conform to the standards provided by  
18        Sections 25, 26, and 28a, Article III, Texas Constitution.

19        Sec. 307.009. SUBMISSION OF PLAN. On adoption of a plan or  
20        modification of a plan by the commission, the commission shall  
21        submit the plan or modification to the governor, the secretary of  
22        state, and the presiding officer of each house of the legislature.

23        Sec. 307.010. CESSATION OF OPERATIONS. (a) Following the  
24        initial adoption of all plans that the commission is required to  
25        adopt, the commission shall take all necessary steps to conclude  
26        its business and suspend operations until the commission reconvenes  
27        as provided by Section 28a, Article III, or Section 7a, Article V,

1       Texas Constitution, if it does reconvene.

2           (b) The commission shall prepare a financial statement  
3       disclosing all expenditures made by the commission. The official  
4       record of the commission shall contain all relevant information  
5       developed by the commission in carrying out its duties, including  
6       maps, data, minutes of meetings, written communications, and other  
7       information.

8           (c) After the commission suspends operations, the secretary  
9       of state becomes the custodian of its official records for purposes  
10       of election administration. Any unexpended money from an  
11       appropriation to the commission reverts to the general revenue  
12       fund.

13       Sec. 307.011. CHALLENGES TO PLAN. (a) After a plan or  
14       modification of a plan is adopted by the commission or supreme court  
15       under Section 28a, Article III, Texas Constitution, any person  
16       aggrieved by the plan or modification may file a petition with the  
17       supreme court challenging the plan.

18       (b) The supreme court may consolidate any or all petitions  
19       and shall give the petitions precedence over all other matters.

20       (c) This section does not limit the remedies available under  
21       other law to any person aggrieved by a plan.

22       Sec. 307.012. RECONVENING                   OF                   COMMISSION                   FOR  
23       REAPPORTIONMENT OF JUDICIAL DISTRICTS. (a) If the Judicial  
24       Districts Board fails to make a statewide reapportionment of  
25       judicial districts under Subchapter F, Chapter 24, unless the  
26       commission is already reconvened, the commission shall reconvene on  
27       September 1 of the year provided by Section 7a(e), Article V, Texas

1     Constitution, to make the statewide reapportionment as required by  
2     Section 24.946(a).

3         (b) The commission shall complete the reapportionment of  
4         judicial districts as soon as possible within the time provided by  
5         Section 7a(e), Article V, Texas Constitution.

6         (c) The commission's reapportionment of judicial districts  
7         becomes effective as provided by Sections 24.948 and 24.949.

8         (d) Following the effective date of a reapportionment of  
9         judicial districts, the commission shall take all necessary steps  
10         to conclude its business and suspend operations in accordance with  
11         Section 307.010. The commission shall suspend operations after the  
12         90th day after the September 1 on which the commission's authority  
13         to adopt a reapportionment plan for the judicial districts begins,  
14         unless the supreme court grants the commission additional time to  
15         conduct its activities.

16             SECTION 2. Section 24.945(e), Government Code, is amended  
17         to read as follows:

18         (e) The legislature, the Judicial Districts Board, or the  
19         Texas [Legislative] Redistricting Commission [Board] may not  
20         redistrict the judicial districts to provide for any judicial  
21         district smaller in size than an entire county except as provided by  
22         this subsection. Judicial districts smaller in size than the  
23         entire county may be created subsequent to a general election in  
24         which a majority of the persons voting on the proposition adopt the  
25         proposition "to allow the division of \_\_\_\_\_ County  
26         into judicial districts composed of parts of \_\_\_\_\_  
27         County." A redistricting plan may not be proposed or adopted by the

1 legislature, the Judicial Districts Board, or the Texas  
2 ~~Legislative~~ Redistricting Commission ~~Board~~ in anticipation of  
3 a future action by the voters of any county.

4 SECTION 3. Section 24.946(a), Government Code, is amended  
5 to read as follows:

6 (a) The board shall meet in accordance with its own rules.  
7 The board shall meet at least once in each interim between regular  
8 sessions of the legislature and shall exercise its reapportionment  
9 powers only in the interims between regular legislative sessions.  
10 Meetings of the board shall be subject to the provisions of Chapter  
11 551, except as otherwise provided by this subchapter. A  
12 reapportionment may not be ordered in the interim immediately  
13 following a regular session of the legislature in which a valid and  
14 subsisting statewide reapportionment of judicial districts is  
15 enacted by the legislature. Unless the legislature enacts a  
16 statewide reapportionment of the judicial districts following each  
17 federal decennial census, the board shall convene not later than  
18 the first Monday of June of the third year following the year in  
19 which the federal decennial census is taken to make a statewide  
20 reapportionment of the districts. The board shall complete its  
21 work on the reapportionment and file its order with the secretary of  
22 state not later than August 31 of the same year. If the Judicial  
23 Districts Board fails to make a statewide apportionment by that  
24 date, the Texas ~~Legislative~~ Redistricting Commission ~~Board~~  
25 established by Article III, Section 28a ~~28~~, of the Texas  
26 Constitution shall make a statewide reapportionment of the judicial  
27 districts not later than the 90th ~~150th~~ day after the final day

H.B. No. 88

1 for the Judicial Districts Board to make the reapportionment, and  
2 that apportionment takes effect as provided by Sections 24.948 and  
3 24.949.

4 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect January 1, 2005, but only  
5 if the constitutional amendment proposed by the 78th Legislature,  
6 1st Called Session, 2003, establishing the Texas Redistricting  
7 Commission to redistrict the Texas Legislature and Texas  
8 congressional districts and revising constitutional redistricting  
9 procedures is approved by the voters. If that proposed  
10 constitutional amendment is not approved by the voters, this Act  
11 has no effect.