

CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS

CSA1 Bill Id:AB 1441 Author:(Soria)

As Amended Ver:July 10, 2025

Majority vote

SUMMARY

Creates a Citizens Redistricting Commission (Commission) in Merced County.

Senate Amendments

- 1) Require members of the Commission to be present for all public hearings and internal meetings of the Commission, to the extent practicable.
- 2) Prohibit a Commission member from communicating with any individual or organization regarding redistricting matters outside of a public meeting. Provide that this restriction does not prohibit a Commission member from communicating with the staff of the county board of supervisors regarding administrative matters of the Commission, nor does it prohibit a Commission member from directly communicating with another Commission member, Commission staff, legal counsel, or consultants retained by the Commission.
- 3) Reduce, from 10 years to eight years, the period of time prior to a person's application to the Commission that the person, or an immediate family member, must not have engaged in specified activities, including running for or serving in public office; serving as an employee or paid consultant for an elected official representing Merced County or a candidate for such an office; serving as an officer, employee, or paid consultant of a political party; or being registered as a state or local lobbyist.
- 4) Make technical changes.

COMMENTS

"Redistricting" is the process by which the boundaries of districts of a governmental body are adjusted. Redistricting generally occurs at the beginning of each decade following the decennial federal census, when new district lines are adopted based on the census data so that the populations of each district of a governmental body are roughly equal.

The authority to establish district boundaries for a local jurisdiction generally is held by the governing body. Prior to 2017, state law generally permitted a county or a city to create an *advisory* redistricting commission (described in state law at the time as a "committee" of residents of the jurisdiction), but did not expressly permit local jurisdictions to create commissions that had the authority to establish district boundaries. In 2016, the Legislature passed and the Governor signed SB 1108 (Allen), Chapter 784, Statutes of 2016, which permits a county or a general law city to establish a redistricting commission, subject to certain conditions. SB 1018 (Allen), Chapter 462, Statutes of 2018, built upon SB 1108 by allowing all local governmental entities to establish redistricting commissions, and by modifying some of the rules governing local redistricting commissions.

Separately, the Legislature has enacted a number of bills to require specified counties to establish redistricting commissions. SB 958 (Lara), Chapter 781, Statutes of 2016, required the establishment of a Citizens Redistricting Commission in Los Angeles County. Similarly, AB 801

(Weber), Chapter 711, Statutes of 2017, required the establishment of a Citizens Redistricting Commission in San Diego County. These commissions were in place for redistricting following the 2020 federal decennial census, and drew the district lines for those counties' supervisorial districts.

Since the 2020 redistricting process, the Legislature has enacted bills to create redistricting commissions in Riverside County (AB 1307 (Cervantes), Chapter 403, Statutes of 2022), Fresno County (AB 2030 (Arambula), Chapter 407, Statutes of 2022), Kern County (AB 2494 (Salas), Chapter 411, Statutes of 2022), Orange County (AB 34 (Valencia), Chapter 315, Statutes of 2023), Sacramento County (SB 314 (Ashby), Chapter 389, Statutes of 2023), and San Luis Obispo County (SB 977 (Laird), Chapter 450, Statutes of 2024). All of those commissions will be created for the next redistricting process following the 2030 census.

The Senate amendments add provisions to the bill related to participation by members in Commission meetings and hearings and related to ex parte communications by members that are similar to provisions that have been included in prior bills that established independent redistricting commissions in specified counties. This bill, as amended in the Senate, is generally consistent with prior Assembly actions.

Please see the policy committee analysis for a full discussion of this bill.

According to the Author

"Over the last several decades, Californians have been moving redistricting away from elected officials and placing that responsibility in the hands of independent citizens to ensure a fairer process...Both urban and rural counties, including Los Angeles, San Diego, Fresno, and San Luis Obispo have either already established redistricting commissions or are slated to...after the next US Census in 2030. As a continuation of these past efforts to improve representation and engagement in local elections, AB 1441 calls for the establishment of a redistricting commission for the County of Merced. This will be a major step in ensuring that the residents of Merced County live in districts created in a fair and impartial process that promotes transparency, accountability, and public trust in county government."

Arguments in Support

In support of this bill, the League of Women Voters of California writes, "We believe that responsibility for redistricting should be vested in an independent commission with diverse membership that is representative of the public at large and protective of minority group interests. We applaud your work to establish the County of Merced Redistricting Commission to institute an independent process designed to protect voting rights, promote fair representation, and draw fair maps."

Arguments in Opposition

In opposition to this bill, the Merced County Board of Supervisors writes, "Merced County has a spotless record when it comes to meeting redistricting requirements, and the current system—which includes substantial community outreach and involvement—has served our residents well. Our last redistricting process included multiple forms of public outreach, including five town halls, four community workshops, four public hearings, map-drawing tools for residents to submit their own suggested districts, and various other forms of outreach. All meetings included Spanish and Hmong interpretation services...By imposing an independent redistricting commission on the County, Assembly Bill 1441 seeks to usurp control from local government, while imposing a new level of bureaucracy at a significant cost to taxpayers."

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee, by requiring Merced County to create and operate a redistricting commission as specified, this bill creates a state-mandated local program. To the extent the Commission on State Mandates determines that the provisions of this bill create a new program or impose a higher level of service on Merced County, the County could claim reimbursement of those costs (General Fund). The magnitude of these costs is unknown, but minimally in the hundreds of thousands of dollars on a decennial basis.

VOTES:

ASM ELECTIONS: 5-2-0

YES: Pellerin, Bennett, Berman, Solache, Stefani

NO: Macedo, Tangipa

ASM LOCAL GOVERNMENT: 7-2-1

YES: Carrillo, Pacheco, Ramos, Blanca Rubio, Stefani, Ward, Wilson

NO: Ta, Hoover

ABS, ABST OR NV: Ransom

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 11-3-1

YES: Wicks, Arambula, Calderon, Caloza, Elhawary, Fong, Mark González, Hart, Pacheco, Pellerin, Solache

NO: Dixon, Ta, Tangipa

ABS, ABST OR NV: Sanchez

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 60-19-0

YES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Connolly, Elhawary, Fong, Gabriel, Garcia, Gipson, Mark González, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Irwin, Jackson, Kalra, Krell, Lee, Lowenthal, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Valencia, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

NO: Alanis, Castillo, Chen, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Ellis, Flora, Gallagher, Jeff Gonzalez, Hadwick, Hoover, Lackey, Macedo, Patterson, Sanchez, Ta, Tangipa, Wallis

UPDATED

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