

New redistricting system taking shape

INDIANAPOLIS - A plan is taking shape to consider putting a citizen commission in charge of redrawing legislative district boundaries in Indiana, a change that lawmakers and others say would make the process less political.

Members of a special committee created to study the issue have started discussing how such a commission would work, The (Northwest Indiana) Times reported. The committee is expected to endorse a plan at its final meeting Oct.17. It would still need to be approved by the General Assembly.

Right now, Indiana lawmakers redraw U.S. House, U.S. Senate and all legislative districts every 10 years, using updated census population data. The system allows the political party in power to draw the maps to their benefit, helping that party keep its majority.

Lawmakers created the special committee last year to study whether Indiana should move to an independent redistricting commission, as several other states have done.

State Rep. Jerry Torr, a Republican from Carmel who is chairman of the committee, suggested that legislation he proposed and that passed the House in 2014 could serve as a starting point.

The measure, which died in the Senate, called for creating a five-person commission. The Republican and Democratic leaders in the state House and Senate would each appoint one member. The fifth member would be selected by the other four commissioners.

The panel would draw the new maps in 2021, present them to Indiana residents that summer and submit them to the General Assembly for approval in a special session later that year.



Rep. Jerry Torr is chairman of a committee created to study independent redrawing of Indiana's legislative district boundaries.

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