

By: Davis

H.B. No. 151

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to establishing principles to govern redistricting plans enacted by the legislature.

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

SECTION 1. Subtitle B, Title 3, Government Code, is amended by adding Chapter 319A to read as follows:

CHAPTER 319A. REDISTRICTING LEGISLATION

Sec. 319A.001. PRINCIPLES GOVERNING LEGISLATIVE

REDISTRICTING. (a) In enacting legislation adopting or modifying a redistricting plan for the election of the Texas Senate, the Texas House of Representatives, or the members of the United States House of Representatives elected from this state, the legislature shall ensure that the plan, including any modifications to the plan, conforms to the following principles:

(1) a plan shall respect the integrity of the state's basic geographic regions to the extent practicable;

(2) a plan shall avoid unnecessarily dividing counties and municipalities in the formation of districts, and district boundaries shall to the extent practicable be coterminous with the boundaries of counties and municipalities, but if division of a county or municipality is unavoidable, district lines must follow boundaries such as rivers, mountains, state highways, or residential subdivisions to the extent practicable;

(3) a plan shall to the extent practicable keep intact

1 communities of interest defined by social, economic, racial,
2 ethnic, cultural, industrial, commercial, and geographic
3 commonalities;

4 (4) a district shall be geographically compact and
5 composed of convenient contiguous territory;

6 (5) a plan may not be drawn with consideration to
7 partisan political effect or with intent to favor or disfavor any
8 specific person, political party, or other organization;

9 (6) a plan must comply with applicable state and
10 federal constitutional and statutory requirements, including the
11 federal Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. Section 10101 et seq.);

12 (7) the districts in a plan must be equal in population
13 as nearly as practicable in accordance with the other principles
14 described by this subsection; and

15 (8) in addition to the requirements of federal law,
16 districts must be drawn in a manner that does not discriminate on
17 the basis of race, color, or membership in a language minority group
18 by ensuring the voting strength of racial, ethnic, and language
19 minorities in the districts is not intentionally or inadvertently
20 diluted in a manner that deprives minority voters of an equal
21 opportunity to elect a candidate of their choice.

22 (b) The principle described by Subsection (a)(2) applies to
23 a plan for the election of the Texas House of Representatives in
24 addition to the requirements of Section 26, Article III, Texas
25 Constitution. District lines shall to the extent practicable be
26 coterminous with the boundaries of counties and municipalities.

27 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect on the 91st day after the

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1 last day of the legislative session.