

Senate Joint Resolution No.

# 8210

The legislature has proposed a constitutional amendment on the deadline for completing state legislative and congressional redistricting.

This amendment would require the state redistricting commission to complete redistricting for state legislative and congressional districts by November 15 of each year ending in a one, 46 days earlier than currently required.

Should this constitutional amendment be:

Approved

Rejected

<b>Explanatory Statement</b>	. . . . .	<b>54</b>
<b>Arguments For and Against</b>	. . . . .	<b>55</b>



The Secretary of State is not responsible for the content of statements or arguments (WAC 434-381-180).

## Explanatory Statement

Written by the Office of the Attorney General

### The Constitutional Provision as it Presently Exists

Article II, section 43 of the Washington State Constitution requires that a commission be established every ten years to redistrict state legislative and congressional districts. Redistricting means determining the geographic boundaries of state legislative and congressional districts for election purposes. The commission must be established in January of each year ending in a one. The commission is required to approve a redistricting plan by no later than January 1 of each year ending in a two. If the commission does not approve a plan by January 1 of a year ending in a two, the Washington Supreme Court must adopt a plan by April 30 of that year. The Legislature may amend the redistricting plan by two-thirds vote within the first 30 days of the first legislative session convened after the commission submits its plan to the Legislature.

### The Effect of the Proposed Amendment if Approved

The amendment would require the state redistricting commission to approve a redistricting plan for state legislative and congressional districts by November 15 of each year ending in a one. This would, in effect, shorten the time for the commission to complete a redistricting plan by 46 days (for example, the commission would need to approve the next redistricting plan by November 15, 2021, rather than the current deadline of January 1, 2022). All other deadlines for redistricting would remain the same.

## Fiscal Impact Statement

Not required by law

## Final Votes Cast by the Legislature

**Senate:** Yeas, 46; Nays, 0; Absent, 1; Excused, 2

**House:** Yeas, 97; Nays, 0; Absent, 0; Excused, 1

## Argument for

### **Washington has one of the nation's best redistricting systems – SJR 8210 makes it better**

Thirty years ago, Washington voters established a bipartisan commission to redraw political boundaries every ten years as the population grows and shifts. This system avoids controversial, partisan redistricting and has become a model followed by numerous states.

SJR 8210 acknowledges that digital technology now enables the commission to work more efficiently. This simple yet important change shortens a year-long process by six weeks, offering benefits to voters and taxpayers alike.

### **Increased Public Input: SJR 8210 ensures new boundaries are adopted before busy year-end holidays**

The public plays a vital role in the drawing of legislative and congressional districts. Yet the past three redistricting plans were adopted during year-end holidays, limiting public feedback and input. SJR 8210 sets a final deadline of November 15, ensuring the plan is adopted when the public is better able to provide feedback.

### **Good Government: SJR 8210 allows adequate time to implement new boundaries, saves taxpayer dollars**

The current January 1 deadline leaves county officials little time to implement new boundaries before spring elections; a November 15 deadline resolves this and closes the redistricting office many weeks sooner, saving taxpayers thousands of dollars.

### **Common Sense: Overwhelming bipartisan support for SJR 8210**

This common-sense reform passed the Legislature unanimously this year. Please Vote Yes!

---

## Written by

**Mark Schoesler**, State Senator, Republican, Ritzville; **Sharon Nelson**, State Senator, Democrat, Maury Island; **Sam Hunt**, State Representative, Democrat, Olympia; **Jeff Holy**, State Representative, Republican, Spokane; **Ralph Munro**, former State Secretary of State

**Contact:** [SJR8210ballot@gmail.com](mailto:SJR8210ballot@gmail.com)

## Argument against

State law requires that the arguments against a constitutional amendment be written by one or more members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President of the State Senate, and the Secretary of State. No individual or group known to oppose Senate Joint Resolution 8210 consented to write an argument against the measure for publication in this pamphlet.

## Complete Text

### Senate Joint Resolution No. 8210

BE IT RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON, IN LEGISLATIVE SESSION ASSEMBLED:

THAT, At the next general election to be held in this state the secretary of state shall submit to the qualified voters of the state for their approval and ratification, or rejection, an amendment to Article II, section 43 of the Constitution of the state of Washington to read as follows:

Article II, section 43. (1) In January of each year ending in one, a commission shall be established to provide for the redistricting of state legislative and congressional districts.

(2) The commission shall be composed of five members to be selected as follows: The legislative leader of the two largest political parties in each house of the legislature shall appoint one voting member to the commission by January 15th of each year ending in one. By January 31st of each year ending in one, the four appointed members, by an affirmative vote of at least three, shall appoint the remaining member. The fifth member of the commission, who shall be nonvoting, shall act as its chairperson. If any appointing authority fails to make the required appointment by the date established by this subsection, within five days after that date the supreme court shall make the required appointment.

(3) No elected official and no person elected to legislative district, county, or state political party office may serve on the commission. A commission member shall not have been an elected official and shall not have been an elected legislative district, county, or state political party officer within two years of his or her appointment to the commission. The provisions of this subsection do not apply to the office of precinct committee person.

(4) The legislature shall enact laws providing for the implementation of this section, to include additional qualifications for commissioners and additional standards to govern the commission. The legislature shall appropriate funds to enable the commission to carry out its duties.

(5) Each district shall contain a population, excluding non-resident military personnel, as nearly equal as practicable to the population of any other district. To the extent reasonable, each district shall contain contiguous territory, shall be compact and convenient, and shall be separated from adjoining districts by natural geographic barriers, artificial barriers, or political subdivision boundaries. The commission's plan shall not provide for a number of legislative districts different than that established by the legislature. The commission's plan shall not be drawn purposely to favor or discriminate against any political party or group.

(6) The commission shall complete redistricting as soon as possible following the federal decennial census, but no later than ~~((January 1st))~~ November 15th of each year ending in ~~((two))~~ one. At least three of the voting members shall approve such a redistricting plan. If three of the voting members of the commission fail to approve a plan within the time

limitations provided in this subsection, the supreme court shall adopt a plan by April 30th of the year ending in two in conformance with the standards set forth in subsection (5) of this section.

(7) The legislature may amend the redistricting plan but must do so by a two-thirds vote of the legislators elected or appointed to each house of the legislature. Any amendment must have passed both houses by the end of the thirtieth day of the first session convened after the commission has submitted its plan to the legislature. After that day, the plan, with any legislative amendments, constitutes the state districting law.

(8) The legislature shall enact laws providing for the reconvening of a commission for the purpose of modifying a districting law adopted under this section. Such reconvening requires a two-thirds vote of the legislators elected or appointed to each house of the legislature. The commission shall conform to the standards prescribed under subsection (5) of this section and any other standards or procedures that the legislature may provide by law. At least three of the voting members shall approve such a modification. Any modification adopted by the commission may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the legislators elected and appointed to each house of the legislature. The state districting law shall include the modifications with amendments, if any.

(9) The legislature shall prescribe by law the terms of commission members and the method of filling vacancies on the commission.

(10) The supreme court has original jurisdiction to hear and decide all cases involving congressional and legislative redistricting.

(11) Legislative and congressional districts may not be changed or established except pursuant to this section. A districting plan and any legislative amendments to the plan are not subject to Article III, section 12 of this Constitution.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the secretary of state shall cause notice of this constitutional amendment to be published as least four times during the four weeks next preceding the election in every legal newspaper in the state.

--- END ---