
SENATE BILL 5496

State of Washington

66th Legislature

2019 Regular Session

By Senators Zeiger and Hunt

Read first time 01/23/19. Referred to Committee on State Government,
Tribal Relations & Elections.

1 AN ACT Relating to modification of precinct and district boundary
2 lines; amending RCW 29A.16.050; and reenacting and amending RCW
3 29A.16.040.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 29A.16.040 and 2011 c 349 s 5 and 2011 c 10 s 26 are
6 each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

7 (1) The county legislative authority of each county in the state
8 shall divide the county into election precincts and establish the
9 boundaries of the precincts. The auditor of each county may propose
10 in writing any adjustment to the division of election precincts or
11 precinct boundaries to the county legislative authority at least
12 forty-five days prior to the date found in subsection (2) of this
13 section. If the county legislative authority does not formally reject
14 or adopt a modification to the auditor's proposed changes within
15 forty-five days, the proposal is adopted.

16 ~~((1))~~ (2) Precinct boundaries may be altered at any time as
17 long as sufficient time exists prior to a given election for the
18 necessary procedural steps to be honored. Except as permitted under
19 subsection ~~((3))~~ (4) of this section, no precinct changes may be
20 made during the period starting ~~(fourteen)~~ seven days prior to the

1 first day for candidates to file for the primary election and ending
2 with the day of the general election.

3 ~~((2))~~ (3) ~~The (county legislative authority may establish by~~
4 ~~ordinance a limitation on the))~~ maximum number of active registered
5 voters in each precinct ~~((within its jurisdiction. The number may be~~
6 ~~less than the number established by law, but in no case may the~~
7 ~~number exceed))~~ is one thousand five hundred ~~((active registered~~
8 ~~voters))~~.

9 ~~((3))~~ (4) The county auditor shall temporarily adjust precinct
10 boundaries when a city or town annexes unincorporated territory to
11 the city or town, or whenever unincorporated territory is
12 incorporated as a city or town. The adjustment must be made as soon
13 as possible after the approval of the annexation or incorporation.
14 The temporary adjustment must be limited to the minimum changes
15 necessary to accommodate the addition of the territory to the city or
16 town, or to establish the eligible voters within the boundaries of
17 the new city or town, and remains in effect only until precinct
18 boundary modifications reflecting the annexation or incorporation are
19 formally adopted by the county legislative authority or modifications
20 are adopted pursuant to subsection (1) of this section.

21 **Sec. 2.** RCW 29A.16.050 and 2003 c 111 s 405 are each amended to
22 read as follows:

23 (1) Every voting precinct must be wholly within a single
24 congressional district, a single legislative district, and a single
25 district of a county legislative authority ~~((, and, if applicable, a~~
26 ~~single city))~~. Every voting precinct must be either wholly outside of
27 any city or town, or wholly within a single city or town and, where
28 applicable, a single council district or ward of that city or town.

29 (2) Every voting precinct shall be composed, as nearly as
30 practicable, of contiguous and compact areas. Subject to the
31 restrictions on precinct boundaries in subsection (1) of this section
32 and the maximum registered voter count established in RCW
33 29A.16.040(3), the requirement for contiguity may be suspended in the
34 case of (a) an unincorporated area entirely surrounded by
35 incorporated territory, and (b) incorporated areas that are
36 geographically separated from the remainder of the city or town of
37 which they are a part.

38 (3) ~~((Except as provided in this subsection, changes to the~~
39 ~~boundaries of any))~~ Precinct ((shall)) boundaries must preferentially

1 follow local jurisdictional and electoral district boundaries and
2 visible, physical features (~~delineated on the most current maps~~
3 ~~provided by the United States census bureau. A change need not follow~~
4 ~~such visible, physical features if (a) it is necessitated by an~~
5 ~~annexation or incorporation and the proposed precinct boundary is~~
6 ~~identical to an exterior boundary of the annexed or incorporated area~~
7 ~~which does not follow a visible, physical feature; or (b) doing so~~
8 ~~would substantially impair election administration in the involved~~
9 ~~area)).~~

10 (4) (~~After a change to precinct boundaries is adopted by the~~
11 ~~county legislative authority, if the change does not follow visible~~
12 ~~physical features, the county auditor shall send to the secretary of~~
13 ~~state an electronic or paper copy of the description, a map or maps~~
14 ~~of the changes, and a statement of the applicable exception under~~
15 ~~subsection (3) of this section. For boundary changes made pursuant to~~
16 ~~subsection (3)(b) of this section, the auditor shall include a~~
17 ~~statement of the reasons why following visible, physical features~~
18 ~~would have substantially impaired election administration.~~

19 ~~(5))~~ Every voting precinct within each county shall be
20 designated by number for the purpose of preparation of maps and the
21 tabulation of population for apportionment purposes. These precincts
22 may be identified with names or other numbers for other election
23 purposes.

24 (~~(6) After a change to precinct boundaries in a city or town,~~
25 ~~the county auditor shall send one copy of the map or maps delineating~~
26 ~~the new precinct boundaries within that city or town to the city or~~
27 ~~town clerk.~~

28 ~~(7))~~ (5) Precinct maps are public records and shall be available
29 for inspection by the public during normal office hours in the
30 offices where they are kept. Copies shall be made available to the
31 public for a fee necessary to cover the cost of reproduction.

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