

Date of Hearing: January 15, 2020

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Cecilia Aguiar-Curry, Chair

AB 1276 (Bonta) – As Amended January 6, 2020

SUBJECT: Local redistricting.

SUMMARY: Makes a number of technical and clarifying changes to law governing local government redistricting. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Clarifies that county websites dedicated to redistricting shall include the recording or written summary of each public hearing and workshop held pursuant to existing law governing the redistricting process.
- 2) Clarifies that criteria for district boundaries of charter cities do not apply to a charter city that has adopted comprehensive or exclusive redistricting criteria in its city charter. For purposes of this provision, “comprehensive or exclusive” means either that the city’s charter excludes consideration of redistricting criteria other than those that are identified in the city charter or that the city’s charter provides two or more traditional criteria for redistricting other than the requirement that districts be equal in population.
- 3) Clarifies that charter cities may establish an advisory body to hold public hearings required under existing law governing the redistricting process.
- 4) Clarifies that, if a charter city council assigns the responsibility to recommend or to adopt new district boundaries to an advisory, hybrid, or independent redistricting commission as defined in existing law, the charter city is subject to the redistricting deadlines, requirements, and restrictions that apply to the council under that law. Clarifies that such a redistricting commission may perform associated duties regarding public hearings and public participation, as specified.
- 5) Clarifies that the definition of “local jurisdiction” for the purposes of existing law governing advisory and independent redistricting commissions does not include a charter city.
- 6) Provides that 4) and 5), above, do not constitute a change in, but are declaratory of, existing law.
- 7) Provides that this bill and existing law governing state and local reapportionment shall not be construed as limiting the ability of a charter city to create an advisory, hybrid, or independent redistricting commission.
- 8) Makes additional technical and clarifying corrections.

FISCAL EFFECT: None

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Bill Summary and Author’s Statement.** AB 849 (Bonta), Chapter 557, Statutes of 2019, revised and standardized redistricting criteria, procedures, and requirements that counties and cities must follow when they adopt or adjust the boundaries of electoral districts used to elect

members of the jurisdictions' governing bodies. This bill makes a number of clarifying and technical changes that were inadvertently left out of AB 849. This bill is sponsored by Asian Americans Advancing Justice – California.

According to the author, “AB 849 (Bonta, 2019), also known as the Fair And Inclusive Redistricting for Municipalities And Political Subdivisions (FAIR MAPS) Act, codified a number of critically important reforms to California’s local redistricting process, including new requirements for transparency, new requirements for public outreach and education, and new criteria that will bring fairness to the drawing of district lines and eliminate gerrymandering. AB 1276 fixes minor errors in the now codified AB 849 in order for it to be the most effective in its reforming of our redistricting processes.”

- 2) **Arguments in Support.** Asian Americans Advancing Justice – California, sponsor of this measure, states, “AB 849 dramatically reformed California’s local redistricting process to be more fair, transparent, and accessible to the public. For the first time, it mandated that cities and counties draw their maps using ranked criteria that prioritize neighborhoods and communities of interest, placed new transparency and public outreach requirements on local governments, and prohibited partisan gerrymandering. AB 1276 simply adds back negotiated language that was inadvertently deleted during the drafting of AB 849 and clarifies existing law around the creation of redistricting commissions in charter cities.”
- 3) **Arguments in Opposition.** None on file.
- 4) **Double-Referral.** This bill is double-referred to the Elections and Redistricting Committee, where it will be heard on January 15, 2020.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Asian Americans Advancing Justice – California [SPONSOR]

Opposition

None on file

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