

Resolutions for Redistricting Reform

A resolution is a way for a local government to express its opinion in a public statement to a higher legislative or policy-making body. While the resolution is not binding and doesn't carry the weight of law, it's a good way to show the grassroots support that exists for redistricting reform and over the past couple of years, activists in Indiana have gotten 25 Hoosier communities to pass resolutions calling for the Indiana General Assembly to pass redistricting reform. If your community isn't on the list, we need your help getting a resolution passed because we'd like to have at least 30 communities on the list before the 2019 legislative session begins.

It's an easy process; here's what you need to do.

First, you need a member of the city council, town board or county commission to sponsor the resolution and introduce it to the elected body. You can ask anyone on the council, board or commission to sponsor the resolution, it doesn't have to be your own representative.

Sometimes, if the mayor of your community has a good relationship with the legislative body they can be helpful in finding a sponsor. And, in some communities the mayor is the presiding officer of the city council, so having their support is critical. If you're not sure of the structure of your local government it's wise to do a little research before you begin seeking a sponsor.

After the resolution is introduced it will be placed on the agenda for a public meeting and discussed. In most cases, public testimony can be offered. In the vast majority of cases a vote will be taken at the same meeting where the resolution is introduced – unlike the state legislative process resolutions are not required to have multiple hearings before a vote can be taken.

In the vast majority of cities where the redistricting reform resolution has passed it has not been controversial and, in fact, has usually passed with bipartisan and unanimous support. That hasn't always been the case though, so you may need to get your supporters to call members of the council, board or commission to support the resolution. Before the meeting where the resolution will be discussed, contact each member of the elected body to educate them about the issue and ask for their support. This way, you'll have a good idea of where people stand and can put pressure on those who may not have made up their minds.

This is also a good way to generate local media coverage about redistricting reform, so don't forget to let the media know when the resolution is being considered and that it is part of a large, statewide efforts. The Indiana Coalition for Independent Redistricting can supply a draft press release upon request.