

# **Alaska Redistricting Legislation**

Alaska Constitution Article 6, Legislative Apportionment

## **§ 1. House Districts**

Members of the house of representatives shall be elected by the qualified voters of the respective house districts. The boundaries of the house districts shall be set under this article following the official reporting of each decennial census of the United States.

## **§ 2. Senate Districts**

Members of the senate shall be elected by the qualified voters of the respective senate districts. The boundaries of the senate districts shall be set under this article following the official reporting of each decennial census of the United States.

## **§ 3. Reapportionment of House and Senate**

The Redistricting Board shall reapportion the house of representatives and the senate immediately following the official reporting of each decennial census of the United States. Reapportionment shall be based upon the population within each house and senate district as reported by the official decennial census of the United States.

## **§ 4. Method of Redistricting**

The Redistricting Board shall establish forty house districts, with each house district to elect one member of the house of representatives. The board shall establish twenty senate districts, each composed of two house districts, with each senate district to elect one senator.

§ 5. Repealed by 1998 Ballot Measure No. 3; 1998 Legis. Res. 74 (HJR 44), approved Nov. 3, 1998, eff. Jan. 3, 1999

## **§ 6. District Boundaries**

The Redistricting Board shall establish the size and area of house districts, subject to the limitations of this article. Each house district shall be formed of contiguous and compact territory containing as nearly as practicable a relatively integrated socio-economic area. Each shall contain a population as near as practicable to the quotient obtained by dividing the population of the state by forty. Each senate district shall be composed as near as practicable of two contiguous house districts. Consideration may be given to local government boundaries. Drainage and other geographic features shall be used in describing boundaries wherever possible.

§ 7. Repealed by 1998 Ballot Measure No. 3; 1998 Legis. Res. 74 (HJR 44), approved Nov. 3, 1998, eff. Jan. 3, 1999

## **§ 8. Redistricting Board**

(a) There shall be a redistricting board. It shall consist of five members, all of whom shall be residents of the state for at least one year and none of whom may be public employees or officials at the time of or during the tenure of appointment. Appointments shall be made without regard to political affiliation. Board members shall be compensated.

(b) Members of the Redistricting Board shall be appointed in the year in which an official decennial census of the United States is taken and by September 1 of that year. The governor shall appoint two members of the board. The presiding officer of the senate, the presiding officer of the house of representatives, and the chief justice of the supreme court shall each appoint one member of the board. The appointments to the board shall be made in the order listed in this subsection. At least one board member shall be a resident of each judicial district that existed on January 1, 1999. Board members serve until a final plan for redistricting and proclamation of redistricting has been adopted and all challenges to it brought under Section 11 of this article have been resolved after final remand or affirmation.

(c) A person who was a member of the Redistricting Board at any time during the process leading to final adoption of a redistricting plan under Section 10 of this article may not be a candidate for the legislature in the general election following the adoption of the final redistricting plan.

## **§ 9. Board Actions**

The board shall elect one of its members chairman and may employ temporary assistants. Concurrence of three members of the Redistricting Board is required for actions of the board, but a lesser number may conduct hearings. The board shall employ or contract for services of independent legal counsel.

## **§ 10. Redistricting Plan and Proclamation**

(a) Within thirty days after the official reporting of the decennial census of the United States or thirty days after being duly appointed, whichever occurs last, the board shall adopt one or more proposed redistricting plans. The board shall hold public hearings on the proposed plan, or, if no single proposed plan is agreed on, on all plans proposed by the board. No later than ninety days after the board has been appointed and the official reporting of the decennial census of the United States, the board shall adopt a final redistricting plan and issue a proclamation of redistricting. The final plan shall set out boundaries of house and senate districts and shall be effective for the election of members of the legislature until after the official reporting of the next decennial census of the United States.

(b) Adoption of a final redistricting plan shall require the affirmative votes of three members of the Redistricting Board.

## **§ 11. Enforcement**

Any qualified voter may apply to the superior court to compel the Redistricting Board, by mandamus or otherwise, to perform its duties under this article or to correct any error in redistricting. Application to compel the board to perform must be filed not later than thirty days following the expiration of the ninety-day period specified in this article. Application to compel correction of any error in redistricting must be filed within thirty days following the adoption of the final redistricting plan and proclamation by the board. Original jurisdiction in these matters is vested in the superior court. On appeal from the superior court, the cause shall be reviewed by the supreme court on the law and the facts. Notwithstanding Section 15 of Article IV, all dispositions by the superior court and the supreme court under this section shall be expedited and shall have priority over all other matters pending before the respective court. Upon a final judicial decision that a plan is invalid, the matter shall be returned to the board for correction and development of a new plan. If that new plan is declared invalid, the matter may be referred again to the board.

Alaska Statutory Code

**§ 15.10.200. Definition of “decennial census of the United States” and use of census numbers by redistricting board**

(a) In art. VI, Constitution of the State of Alaska, reference to the official decennial census of the United States is a reference to the census enumeration used to establish apportionment among the several states.

(b) In adopting a redistricting plan under art. VI, Constitution of the State of Alaska, the redistricting board may not adjust the census numbers by using estimates, population surveys, or sampling for the purpose of excluding or discriminating among persons counted based on race, religion, color, national origin, sex, age, occupation, military or civilian status, or length of residency.

(c) A qualified voter may bring an action in the superior court against the redistricting board to enforce the provisions of (b) of this section.

**§ 15.10.210. Expenditures for population surveys or sampling prohibited**

An expenditure of public funds may not be made for a population survey or sampling conducted for purposes of redistricting the legislature without an express appropriation by the legislature for that purpose.

**§ 15.10.220. Voting Rights Act review and legal representation**

(a) The independent legal counsel for the Redistricting Board provided for in art. VI, sec. 9, Constitution of the State of Alaska, shall

(1) submit the board’s redistricting plan for preclearance to the United States Department of Justice or the United States District Court for the District of Columbia under 42 U.S.C. 1973c; and

(2) defend the plan and board in all matters concerning redistricting until a final plan for redistricting and a proclamation of redistricting have been adopted and all challenges to them brought under art. VI, sec. 11, Constitution of the State of Alaska, have been resolved after final remand or affirmation; the board shall have sole discretion to enter a settlement agreement and control litigation strategy that

affects the final proclamation issued under art. VI, sec. 10, Constitution of the State of Alaska.

(b) Nothing in this section denies or creates standing in the governor, the legislature, or another person to be a party to the proceedings described in subsection (a).

#### **§ 15.10.300. Preparation for legislative redistricting**

(a) There is created as an independent agency of the state the Redistricting Planning Committee. The committee shall be composed of five members. One member shall be appointed by the president of the senate, one member shall be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives, one member shall be appointed by the chief justice of the Alaska Supreme Court, and two members shall be appointed by the governor.

(b) Four members of the committee constitute a quorum to transact business. Meetings of the committee are subject to AS 44.62.310.

(c) The committee may make necessary preparations and arrangements for the Redistricting Board provided for in art. VI, sec. 8, Constitution of the State of Alaska. The committee may arrange for office space for the board and its staff before the convening of the board, including the leasing of appropriate facilities and office equipment.

(d) The committee may compile or contract for the compilation of information necessary for the Redistricting Board to begin its work, including

(1) paper maps or a computer data base received from the United States Bureau of the Census describing all units of census geography;

(2) a computer data base of election and voter registration information from the division of elections to assist the Redistricting Board in determining compliance with 42 U.S.C. 1973-1973I (Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended) and other statutory and constitutional requirements;

(3) information indicating the location of cultural, economic, geographic, demographic, and trade area factors in the state; and

(4) information or analysis of state and federal court decisions concerning reapportionment.

(e) The committee shall develop and issue a request for competitive sealed proposals to procure a

computerized system that uses census data and maps to prepare plans for state senate and house districts in conformity with statutory and constitutional criteria and within applicable time constraints. The committee may award a contract for the acquisition of computer software and hardware and for the provision of computer services to the responsible and responsive offeror whose proposal is determined to be the most advantageous to the state, taking into consideration price and evaluation factors set out in the request for proposals. The computer system must be developed so that it is available for use by the Redistricting Board immediately upon the board's convening.

(f) The committee may seek assistance as necessary from the legislative council, the Department of Administration, the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the Department of Law, and the division of elections.

(g) In the event that the committee is determined to be unlawful, the legislative council shall assume the committee's responsibilities and perform its duties as described in this section.

(h) In this section, "committee" means the Redistricting Planning Committee.

#### **§ 44.62.310. Government meetings public**

(a) All meetings of a governmental body of a public entity of the state are open to the public except as otherwise provided by this section or another provision of law. Attendance and participation at meetings by members of the public or by members of a governmental body may be by teleconferencing. Agency materials that are to be considered at the meeting shall be made available at teleconference locations if practicable. Except when voice votes are authorized, the vote shall be conducted in such a manner that the public may know the vote of each person entitled to vote. The vote at a meeting held by teleconference shall be taken by roll call. This section does not apply to any votes required to be taken to organize a governmental body described in this subsection.

(b) If permitted subjects are to be discussed at a meeting in executive session, the meeting must first be convened as a public meeting and the question of holding an executive session to discuss matters that are listed in (c) of this section shall be determined by a majority vote of the governmental body. The motion to convene in executive session must clearly and with specificity describe the subject of the proposed executive session without defeating the purpose of addressing the subject in private. Subjects may not be considered at the executive session except those mentioned in the motion calling for the executive session unless auxiliary to the main question. Action may not be taken at an executive session, except to give direction to an attorney or labor negotiator regarding the handling of a specific legal matter or pending labor negotiations.

(c) The following subjects may be considered in an executive session:

(1) matters, the immediate knowledge of which would clearly have an adverse effect upon the finances of the public entity;

(2) subjects that tend to prejudice the reputation and character of any person, provided the person may request a public discussion;

(3) matters which by law, municipal charter, or ordinance are required to be confidential;

(4) matters involving consideration of government records that by law are not subject to public disclosure.

(d) This section does not apply to

(1) a governmental body performing a judicial or quasi-judicial function when holding a meeting solely to make a decision in an adjudicatory proceeding;

(2) juries;

(3) parole or pardon boards;

(4) meetings of a hospital medical staff;

(5) meetings of the governmental body or any committee of a hospital when holding a meeting solely to act upon matters of professional qualifications, privileges, or discipline;

(6) staff meetings or other gatherings of the employees of a public entity, including meetings of an employee group established by policy of the Board of Regents of the University of Alaska or held while acting in an advisory capacity to the Board of Regents;

(7) meetings held for the purpose of participating in or attending a gathering of a national, state, or regional organization of which the public entity, governmental body, or member of the governmental body is a member, but only if no action is taken and no business of the governmental body is conducted at the meetings; or

(8) meetings of municipal service area boards established under AS 29.35.450--29.35.490 when meeting solely to act on matters that are administrative or managerial in nature.

(e) Reasonable public notice shall be given for all meetings required to be open under this section. The notice must include the date, time, and place of the meeting and if, the meeting is by teleconference, the location of any teleconferencing facilities that will be used. Subject to posting notice of a meeting on the Alaska Online Public Notice System as required by AS 44.62.175(a), the notice may be given using print or broadcast media. The notice shall be posted at the principal office of the public entity or, if the public entity has no principal office, at a place designated by the governmental body. The governmental body shall provide notice in a consistent fashion for all its meetings.

(f) Action taken contrary to this section is voidable. A lawsuit to void an action taken in violation of this section must be filed in superior court within 180 days after the date of the action. A member of a governmental body may not be named in an action to enforce this section in the member's personal capacity. A governmental body that violates or is alleged to have violated this section may cure the

violation or alleged violation by holding another meeting in compliance with notice and other requirements of this section and conducting a substantial and public reconsideration of the matters considered at the original meeting. If the court finds that an action is void, the governmental body may discuss and act on the matter at another meeting held in compliance with this section. A court may hold that an action taken at a meeting held in violation of this section is void only if the court finds that, considering all of the circumstances, the public interest in compliance with this section outweighs the harm that would be caused to the public interest and to the public entity by voiding the action. In making this determination, the court shall consider at least the following:

- (1) the expense that may be incurred by the public entity, other governmental bodies, and individuals if the action is voided;
  - (2) the disruption that may be caused to the affairs of the public entity, other governmental bodies, and individuals if the action is voided;
  - (3) the degree to which the public entity, other governmental bodies, and individuals may be exposed to additional litigation if the action is voided;
  - (4) the extent to which the governing body, in meetings held in compliance with this section, has previously considered the subject;
  - (5) the amount of time that has passed since the action was taken;
  - (6) the degree to which the public entity, other governmental bodies, or individuals have come to rely on the action;
  - (7) whether and to what extent the governmental body has, before or after the lawsuit was filed to void the action, engaged in or attempted to engage in the public reconsideration of matters originally considered in violation of this section;
  - (8) the degree to which violations of this section were wilful, flagrant, or obvious;
  - (9) the degree to which the governing body failed to adhere to the policy under AS 44.62.312(a).
- (g) Subsection (f) of this section does not apply to a governmental body that has only authority to advise or make recommendations to a public entity and has no authority to establish policies or make decisions for the public entity.

(h) In this section,

- (1) "governmental body" means an assembly, council, board, commission, committee, or other similar body of a public entity with the authority to establish policies or make decisions for the public entity or with the authority to advise or make recommendations to the public entity; "governmental body" includes the members of a subcommittee or other subordinate unit of a governmental body if the subordinate unit consists of two or more members;
- (2) "meeting" means a gathering of members of a governmental body when

(A) more than three members or a majority of the members, whichever is less, are present, a matter upon which the governmental body is empowered to act is considered by the members collectively, and the governmental body has the authority to establish policies or make decisions for a public entity; or

(B) more than three members or a majority of the members, whichever is less, are present, the gathering is prearranged for the purpose of considering a matter upon which the governmental body is empowered to act, and the governmental body has only authority to advise or make recommendations for a public entity but has no authority to establish policies or make decisions for the public entity;

(3) “public entity” means an entity of the state or of a political subdivision of the state including an agency, a board or commission, the University of Alaska, a public authority or corporation, a municipality, a school district, and other governmental units of the state or a political subdivision of the state; it does not include the court system or the legislative branch of state government.