



2005 SENATE BILL 4

January 11, 2005 – Introduced by Senators KANAVAS, BROWN, KEDZIE and KAPANKE, cosponsored by Representatives UNDERHEIM, SUDER, GUNDRUM, KERKMAN, JESKEWITZ, LEMAHIEU, STONE, GUNDERSON, ALBERS, NASS, LOTHIAN, OTT and SHILLING. Referred to Committee on Veterans, Homeland Security, Military Affairs, Small Business and Government Reform.

1 **AN ACT** *to amend* 59.10 (3) (c) (title) and 62.08 (4); and *to create* 59.10 (3) (cm)
2 and 62.08 (4m) of the statutes; **relating to:** the size of the county board of
3 supervisors in certain counties and the common council in certain cities.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

Current law requires each county board to redistrict its supervisory districts once every ten years based on the results of the decennial federal census, except that in counties having a population of 500,000 or more (currently only Milwaukee County) the board may, after enactment of a decennial redistricting plan, redistrict to reduce the size of the board not more than once prior to November 15, 2010.

This bill permits the board of supervisors of any county with a population of less than 500,000, except a county having only one town (currently, all counties except Milwaukee and Menominee) to decrease the number of supervisors on the board and adopt a new redistricting plan during the ten-year period between the adoption of decennial redistricting plans. The bill requires the redistricting plan to satisfy certain criteria that also apply to decennial redistricting plans. For example, the bill requires the districts created under the redistricting plan to be substantially equal in population and in as compact a form as possible, and requires each district to contain whole contiguous municipalities or contiguous parts of the same municipality. The bill further requires the districts to consist of contiguous whole wards in existence at the time at which the redistricting plan is adopted and requires the original numbers of the districts in their geographic outlines, to the extent possible, to be retained.

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The bill also permits the electors of any county whose board is permitted to enact an intradecade redistricting plan to require the enactment of such a plan by petition and referendum at any time after the first election is held following enactment of a decennial redistricting plan. Before circulating a petition, the petitioner must register with the county clerk. Each signature on a petition must be obtained within the 60-day period following registration. A petition must be signed by a number of electors of the county equal to at least 25 percent of the total votes cast for the office of supervisor at the most recent supervisory election. If a valid petition is filed, a referendum must be held at the next regularly scheduled election in the county that follows by at least 42 days the date on which the county clerk determines that a sufficient petition has been filed. The question must specify the proposed number of members of the board. The bill also provides that within 14 days after the last day for filing of an original petition one or more alternative petitions may be filed specifying a different number of supervisors to be elected. In this case, the electors may first choose whether to support decreasing the size of the board and, if so, whether to support the proposed size of the board specified in one of the petitions. If the first question is approved, the size of the board must then conform to the choice winning a plurality of the votes cast. If a question is approved, the county board must enact an ordinance prescribing revised boundaries for the supervisory districts in the county in accordance with the approved question at the referendum. The districts are subject to the same requirements that apply to districts created by the board in an intradecade plan enacted by the board.

Under the bill, if a plan is enacted by the county board without a referendum, the plan takes effect on November 15 following its enactment and first applies at the next election immediately preceding the expiration of terms of office of supervisors in the county. If a plan is enacted pursuant to a referendum, the county board has until November 15 following the date of the referendum, or if the referendum is held at a November general election, until the second November 15 following the date of the referendum to enact a plan. The plan then applies to the election of supervisors at the next election following that November 15 immediately preceding the expiration of terms of office of supervisors in the county. The bill permits the number of supervisors in a county to be decreased by petition and referendum only one time after each federal decennial census.

The bill also provides that, if in a city that is solely contained within one county the aldermanic districts are coterminous with supervisory districts, the common council may revise the boundaries of aldermanic districts to maintain coterminous boundaries between aldermanic and supervisory districts, and may change the expiration date of the terms of any council member to an earlier date than the date provided under the current ordinance if required to implement the redistricting or to maintain staggered terms.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

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1 **SECTION 1.** 59.10 (3) (c) (title) of the statutes is amended to read:

2 59.10 (3) (c) (title) *Changes during decade; municipal boundary adjustments.*

3 **SECTION 2.** 59.10 (3) (cm) of the statutes is created to read:

4 59.10 (3) (cm) *Changes during decade; reduction in size.* 1. 'Number of
5 supervisors; redistricting.' The board may decrease the number of supervisors after
6 the enactment of a supervisory district plan under par. (b). In that case, the board
7 shall redistrict, readjust, and change the boundaries of supervisory districts, so that
8 the number of districts equals the number of supervisors, the districts are
9 substantially equal in population according to the most recent countywide federal
10 census, the districts are in as compact a form as possible, and the districts consist of
11 contiguous whole wards in existence at the time at which the redistricting plan is
12 adopted. In the redistricting plan, the board shall adhere to the requirements under
13 par. (b) 2. and 3. with regard to contiguity and shall, to the extent possible, place
14 whole contiguous municipalities or contiguous parts of the same municipality within
15 the same district. In redistricting under this subdivision, the original numbers of the
16 districts in their geographic outlines, to the extent possible, shall be retained. No
17 plan may be enacted under this subdivision during review of the sufficiency of a
18 petition filed under subd. 2. nor after a referendum is scheduled on such a petition.
19 However, if the electors of the county reject a change in the number of supervisory
20 districts under subd. 2., the board may then take action under this subdivision. The
21 county clerk shall file a certified copy of any redistricting plan enacted under this
22 subdivision with the secretary of state.

23 2. 'Petition and referendum.' The electors of a county may, by petition and
24 referendum, decrease the number of supervisors at any time after the first election
25 is held following enactment of a decennial supervisory district plan under par. (b).

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1 A petition for a change in the number of supervisors may be filed with the county
2 clerk. Prior to circulating a petition to decrease the number of supervisors in any
3 county, a petitioner shall register with the county clerk, giving the petitioner's name
4 and address and indicating the petitioner's intent to file such a petition. No
5 signature on a petition is valid unless the signature is obtained within the 60-day
6 period following such registration. The petition shall specify the proposed number
7 of supervisors to be elected. Within 14 days after the last day for filing an original
8 petition, any other petitioner may file an alternative petition with the county clerk
9 proposing a different number of supervisors to be elected, and, if the petition is valid,
10 the alternative proposed in the petition shall be submitted for approval at the same
11 referendum. An alternative petition is subject to the same registration and
12 signature requirements as an original petition. Each petition shall be in the form
13 specified in s. 8.40 and shall contain a number of signatures of electors of the county
14 equal to at least 25 percent of the total votes cast in the county for the office of
15 supervisor at the most recent spring election preceding the date of filing. The county
16 clerk shall promptly determine the sufficiency of a petition filed under this
17 subdivision. Upon determination that a petition is sufficient, or if one or more valid
18 alternative petitions are filed, upon determination that the petitions are sufficient,
19 the county clerk shall call a referendum concurrently with the next spring or general
20 election in the county that is held not earlier than 42 days after the determination
21 is made. The question proposed at the referendum shall be: "Shall the board of
22 supervisors of County be decreased from members to members?". If one or
23 more alternative valid petitions are filed within 14 days after the last day that an
24 original petition may be filed, the question relating to the number of supervisors
25 shall appear separately. The first question shall be: "Shall the size of the county

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1 board of supervisors of County be decreased from its current membership of
2 members?”. Any subsequent question shall be: “If so, shall the size of the board be
3 decreased to members?”. Each elector may vote in the affirmative or negative on
4 the first question and may then vote in the affirmative on one of the remaining
5 questions. If the first question is not approved by a majority of the electors voting
6 on the question, any subsequent question is of no effect. If the question is approved
7 by a majority of the electors voting on the question, or, if more than one question is
8 submitted, if the first question is approved by a majority of the electors voting on the
9 question, the board shall enact an ordinance prescribing revised boundaries for the
10 supervisory districts in the county. The ordinance shall be enacted in accordance
11 with the approved question or, if more than one question is submitted, in accordance
12 with the choice receiving a plurality of the votes cast. The districts are subject to the
13 same requirements that apply to districts in any plan enacted by the board under
14 subd. 1. The county clerk shall file a certified copy of any redistricting plan enacted
15 under this subdivision with the secretary of state. If the number of supervisors in
16 a county is decreased by petition under this subdivision, no further petition may be
17 filed under this subdivision in that county until after enactment of the next decennial
18 supervisory district plan by the board under par. (b).

19 3. ‘Election; term.’ Any redistricting plan enacted under subd. 1. takes effect
20 on November 15 following its enactment and first applies to the election of
21 supervisors at the next spring election following the effective date that immediately
22 precedes the expiration of the terms of office of supervisors in the county. Any
23 reduction in the number of supervisory districts under subd. 2. that is approved at
24 a spring election shall be enacted in the form of a redistricting plan no later than
25 November 15 following that election and shall first apply to the election of

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1 supervisors at the next spring election immediately preceding the expiration of the
2 terms of office of supervisors in the county, and any reduction in the number of
3 supervisory districts under subd. 2. that is approved at a general election shall be
4 enacted in the form of a redistricting plan no later than the 2nd succeeding November
5 15 following that election and shall first apply to the election of supervisors at the
6 next spring election following that November 15 immediately preceding the
7 expiration of the terms of office of supervisors in the county. If a question is approved
8 at a referendum held under subd. 2., no subsequent plan under subd. 1. may take
9 effect before 2 years have elapsed after the first spring election at which supervisors
10 are elected pursuant to the plan. Any redistricting plan enacted under subd. 1. or
11 2. shall remain in effect until the effective date of a subsequent redistricting plan
12 enacted under subd. 1. or until the effective date of a redistricting plan subsequently
13 enacted under par. (b). Supervisors elected from the districts created under subd. 1.
14 or 2. shall serve for 2-year terms and shall take office on the 3rd Tuesday in April
15 following their election.

16 **SECTION 3.** 62.08 (4) of the statutes is amended to read:

17 62.08 (4) The common council of any city may, by a two-thirds vote of all its
18 members but not more frequently than once in 2 years, increase or decrease the
19 number of aldermanic districts or the number of members of the city council, and in
20 that case shall redistrict, readjust and change the boundaries of aldermanic districts,
21 so that they are as nearly equal in population according to the most recent city-wide
22 federal census as practicable by combining contiguous whole wards. In redistricting
23 such cities the original numbers of the aldermanic districts in their geographic
24 outlines shall as far as possible be retained, and the aldermanic districts so created
25 and those the boundaries of which are changed shall be in as compact form as

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1 possible. This subsection does not apply to changes in aldermanic districts
2 authorized under sub. (4m).

3 **SECTION 4.** 62.08 (4m) of the statutes is created to read:

4 62.08 (4m) If in a city that is solely contained within one county the aldermanic
5 districts are coterminous with the supervisory districts of the county and the county
6 board decreases the number of supervisors in the county after enactment of a
7 decennial redistricting plan under s. 59.10 (3) (cm), the common council of the city
8 may, by a majority vote of the council, no later than November 15 immediately
9 preceding the expiration of the terms of office of members of the council, decrease the
10 number of aldermanic districts and the corresponding number of members of the
11 council in the city to maintain coterminous boundaries between the aldermanic and
12 supervisory districts and may change the expiration date of the term of any council
13 member to an earlier date than the date provided under the current ordinance if
14 required to implement the redistricting or to maintain classes of members.

15 (END)