In May, Ohio voters will decide on plan to require bipartisan redistricting

Tim Anderson [1]

Ohio already has a plan in place that will change how the state’s legislative lines are drawn after the next U.S. census, and voters will have the chance in May to change the process for congressional districts. SJR 5 [2] was passed by the General Assembly earlier this year, culminating months of bipartisan legislative negotiations, The (Cleveland) Plain Dealer reports [3].

Under the proposed constitutional amendment, congressional districts would be drawn by either the General Assembly (it gets the first crack) or the Ohio Redistricting Commission — a seven-member panel made up of the governor, secretary of state, state auditor and four legislative representatives from both parties. Any congressional redistricting plan will require “yes” votes from some representatives of both parties. SJR 5 also would establish new state-level redistricting standards for map makers to follow.

In 2015, Ohio voters approved a change [4] requiring bipartisan support of any plan developed by the Redistricting Commission for state legislative districts. (The full General Assembly does not have a role in drawing or voting on these lines.) In other Midwestern states, legislatures themselves draw state and federal districts — though Iowa employs a unique approach in which lawmakers vote, without amendment, on a plan developed by the nonpartisan Legislative Services Agency.

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