SENATE BILL NO. 1195

December 05, 2024, Introduced by Senator WOJNO and referred to the Committee on Elections and Ethics.

A bill to amend 1966 PA 293, entitled

"An act to provide for the establishment of charter counties; to provide for the election of charter commissioners; to prescribe their powers and duties; to prohibit certain acts of a county board of commissioners after the approval of the election of a charter commission; to prescribe the mandatory and permissive provisions of a charter; to provide for the exercise by a charter county of certain powers whether or not authorized by its charter; and to prescribe penalties and provide remedies,"

by amending sections 4, 5, 12, and 14 (MCL 45.504, 45.505, 45.512, and 45.514), section 4 as amended by 2014 PA 309, section 5 as amended by 1980 PA 7, and section 14 as amended by 2021 PA 121.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN ENACT:

Sec. 4. (1) The county apportionment commission shall set 1 2 forth the number of charter commissioners to be elected as follows: Number of Charter Commissioners 3 County Population Under 5,001**100,000** Not more than 75 to 9 $\frac{5,001}{100,000}$ to 5 Not more than 119 to 15 6 10,000500,000 7 10,001 to 50,000 Not more than 15 50,001 to 600,000 Not more than 21 8 9 Over 600,000**500,000** $\frac{13}{15}$ to $\frac{35}{21}$

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- (2) The resolution shall must require that a candidate for election to the office of charter commissioner shall have been be a qualified elector in the candidate's district for not less than 6 months.
- (3) An elected county official shall not be a candidate for election to the office of charter commissioner unless the person individual has resigned from the elected position.
- (4) A member or former member of the county board of commissioners shall not serve as chief administrative officer of the county until at least 2 years after his or her the member or former member's termination from membership on the board.
- Sec. 5. (1) The resolution shall must provide for a partisan election of a charter commission, for the nomination of candidates for the charter commission by petitioning or filing a fee, and for a primary election of charter commission candidates. A charter commission candidate who elects to pay a filing fee shall pay the fee not less than 3 days before the final day upon which that petitions may be filed. The resolution shall must provide for the election of charter commissioners from districts established by the

county apportionment commission. The county apportionment 1 commission shall consist of the county clerk, the county treasurer, 2 the prosecuting attorney, and the statutory county chairperson of 3 each of the 2 major political parties, receiving the greatest 4 5 number of votes cast for the office of secretary of state in the 6 last general election in which a secretary of state was elected. 7 and 1 additional member from each major political party chosen by 8 the county board of commissioners from a list of 3 individuals submitted by the statutory county chairperson of each major 9 10 political party. If a county does not have a statutory county 11 chairperson of a major political party, the 2 additional members shall be a party representative from each of the 2 political 12 parties receiving the greatest number of votes cast for the office 13 14 of secretary of state in the last general election in which a 15 secretary of state was elected and appointed by the chairperson of 16 the state central committee for each of the political parties. The 17 county clerk shall convene the county apportionment commission and 18 the county apportionment commission shall adopt the rules of procedure. Three members of the county apportionment commission are 19 20 a quorum sufficient to conduct its business. chairperson of the major political party's state central committee shall appoint a 21 22 statutory county chairperson to perform the duties required under 23 this act. The county clerk shall convene the county apportionment commission, and the commission shall adopt rules of procedure. A 24 25 majority of the members of the commission is a quorum sufficient to conduct the commission's business. All action of the county 26 27 apportionment commission shall must be by majority vote of the 28 apportionment commission.

(2) The county apportionment commission, within 30 no later

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than 60 days after the adoption of the resolution by the county 1 board of commissioners, shall establish charter commission 2 districts equal to the number of charter commissioners to be 3 elected. All districts shall be single member districts and as equal in population as practicable. The latest official published 5 figures of the United States official census shall be used in this 6 7 determination, except that in cases requiring a division of 8 official census units to meet the population standard, an actual population count may be used to make the division. Other 9 10 governmental census figures of total population may be used if taken after the last decennial United States census and the United 11 12 States census figures are not adequate for the purposes of this act. The secretary of state shall furnish the latest official 13 14 published figures to the county apportionment commission within 15 15 days after publication of subsequent United States official census 16 figures. A contract may be entered into with the United States 17 census bureau to conduct a special census if the latest United 18 States decennial census figures are not adequate. Each district 19 shall be contiguous, compact, and as nearly square in shape as is 20 practicable, depending on the geography of the county area 21 involved, and shall be drawn without regard to partisan political advantage. Each city and township shall be apportioned so that it 22 shall have the largest possible number of complete districts within 23 24 its boundaries before any part of the city or township is joined to 25 territory outside the boundaries of the city or township to form a district. Townships, villages, cities, and precincts shall be 26 27 divided only if necessary to meet the population standard.

(3) If the apportionment of a county into charter commission districts is not finalized within the 60-day time limit under this

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- section, a panel of 3 judges who are selected as provided in this subsection shall apportion the county into charter commission districts. Five judges from the court of appeals in this state must be randomly selected. The statutory county chairperson of each of the 2 major political parties shall each strike 1 of the 5 selected judges, and the remaining 3 judges constitute the panel under this 7 subsection. When apportioning a county into charter commission districts, the panel of 3 judges must follow the guidelines under 8 9 this section and section 4.
 - (4) Except for a meeting or part of a meeting held in closed session, a meeting of the county apportionment commission must be transcribed or videorecorded with sound and picture and be made available to the public.
 - (5) If the county apportionment commission is for a county with a population greater than 250,000, the commission shall hold at least 3 public hearings to inform the public about the apportionment process and standards before preparing, considering, or adopting an apportionment plan. The hearings must be held on 3 different dates at 3 different locations within the county.
 - (6) A county apportionment committee shall not adopt an apportionment plan, partial apportionment plan, or district at the meeting in which the plan, partial plan, or district was proposed. Subject to subsection (5), before a proposed apportionment plan, partial apportionment plan, or district may be adopted, the proposed apportionment plan, partial apportionment plan, or district must be published for public review and available to the public for at least 7 days after the plan was proposed.
 - (7) In apportioning the county into charter commission districts, the county apportionment commission is governed by the

THS S07021'24 following guidelines in the stated order of importance so that higher ranked guidelines must be satisfied before lower ranked guidelines may be considered:

- (a) The plan and all districts must follow all applicable federal laws, including, but not limited to, the voting rights act of 1965, Public Law 89-110.
- (b) All districts must be single-member districts contiguous by land. An island is considered contiguous to the city or township of which the island is a part. If an island constitutes its own city or township, the island is considered contiguous to the nearest city or township. Areas that meet only at the points of adjoining corners are not contiguous.
- (c) A district's population must not exceed a 5% deviation from the target population, and the difference in population between the most and least populous districts must not exceed 10% of the target population. The secretary of state shall furnish to each county apportionment commission the latest official published figures by the United States Census Bureau. As used in this subsection, "target population" means the sum of the individuals counted in the United States Census for the county divided by the total number of districts in the county.
- (d) The apportionment of a county into charter commission districts must not result in a partisan advantage to any major political party. The standard under this subdivision requires that the county apportionment commission adopt the best plan. The best plan must apportion the county into charter commission districts in such a way as to provide the least degree possible of partisan advantage for a major political party without violating subdivision (a), (b), or (c).

- (e) A district must not be drawn to favor an incumbent elected official or candidate.
- (f) The commission may consider the compactness of districts and the boundaries of cities and townships in preparing districts.
- (8) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (9), partisan advantage must be determined in the following manner:
- (a) The difference between the actual number of minority party districts and the target number of minority party districts must not exceed 1.
- (b) The proportional number of minority party districts must be determined by multiplying the minority party vote share in the county by the number of districts in the county and must not be rounded to the nearest whole number.
- (c) If at least 1 member of the county apportionment commission demonstrates that it is possible to draw the proportional number of minority party districts while complying with the higher ranked criteria, the target number of minority party districts is equal to the proportional number of minority districts. If no member demonstrates that it is possible to draw the proportional number of minority party districts while complying with the higher ranked criteria, the target number of minority party districts is the maximum number of demonstrably possible minority party districts that comply with the higher ranked criteria.
- (9) In a county where the proportionality criterion results in an apportionment plan that results in each major political party having the same number of seats or that gives a major political party a 1- or 2-seat majority, partisan advantage must be determined by the mean-median difference. The apportionment plan

resulting in a mean-median difference with an absolute value closest to zero is the best map under this criterion.

- (10) The mean-median difference under subsection (9) must be calculated in the following manner:
- (a) Sum the votes cast for each major political party's candidate for state board of education within each district for the 2 most recent general elections in which county commissioners were elected, excluding special elections for partial terms.
- (b) Find the district-level vote share in each district by dividing the total votes cast for candidates of 1 major political party in the district by the summed votes for both major political parties in the district.
- (c) Calculate the mean of the district-level vote share by summing the district-level vote shares for all districts in the county and dividing by the number of districts in the county. The district-level vote share must be calculated in the following manner:
 - (i) Sort the district vote shares from lowest to highest.
- (ii) If the number of districts is odd, the median is the vote share of the middle district, where an equal number of districts have higher and lower vote shares.
 - (iii) If the number of districts is even, the median is the average of the 2 middle district vote shares, where an equal number of districts have higher and lower vote shares than the 2 middle districts.
 - (d) Subtract the mean from the median.
- (11) (3) In a county having a population of less than
 1,500,000, the date of the primary election for charter
 commissioners may be the same as the date for the submission

 submission of the question as provided in section 3. Otherwise, the date of the primary election for charter commissioners shall must be the same as the date for the submission of the question as provided in section 3. The election of the charter commission shall must be at the next primary or general election occurring not less than 60 days after the primary election for charter commissioners. If a regular primary or general election does not occur within 180 days after the date of the primary, the county board of commissioners shall provide, in the resolution, for a date on which the final election of the commission shall be held.

- (12) (4)—The apportionment plan approved by the apportionment commission shall must be filed in the office of the county clerk. at which time On filing, the plan shall become becomes effective, and copies of the plan immediately shall must be forwarded by the county clerk to the secretary of state for filing. The plan shall must be made available at cost to any registered voter of the county.
- (13) (5) Any registered voter of the county, within no later than 30 days after the filing of the plan for his or her the registered voter's county, may petition the court of appeals to review the plan to determine if the plan meets the requirements of the laws of this state. A finding of the court of appeals may be appealed to the supreme court of this state as provided by law.
- (14) (6) If the apportionment commission has failed to submit a plan for its county within 60 days but not less than 30 days after the latest official published census figures are available or within an additional time as may be granted by the court of appeals for good cause shown on petition from the apportionment commission, any registered voter of the county may submit a plan to the

- commission for approval. The apportionment commission shall choose, from among those plans submitted, a plan meeting the requirements of the laws of this state and shall file the plan in the office of the county clerk as provided in this section within 30 days after the deadline for filing of the apportionment commission's own plan or any extension granted on the filing of the plan. A reviewing court shall review de novo the following county apportionment commission actions and decisions:
- (a) The decisions as to how many districts a county has under section 4.
 - (b) Compliance with section 4.

- (c) The adopted plan's compliance with this section.
- (15) The county apportionment commission has the burden of proof on the issues to be considered under subsection (14).
- (16) Except for federal court decisions concerning questions of federal law, a reviewing court shall not use or apply any standard of review, test, or analysis taken from, based on, or derived from a judicial decision made before the effective date of the amendatory act that added this subsection.
- (17) (7)—Once an apportionment plan has been found constitutional and not in violation of this act and all appeals have been exhausted or, if an appeal has not been taken, when the time for appeal has expired, that plan shall be is the official apportionment plan for the county until the next United States official decennial census figures are available. When the next United States official decennial census figures are available, a new apportionment plan under this act shall must be established by the county apportionment commission.
- 29 (18) (8) The electors of each district established pursuant to

this act shall elect 1 charter commissioner. There shall must not be representation other than that set forth by this act.

(19) As used in this section:

- (a) "Major political party" means each of the 2 political parties receiving the greatest number of votes cast for the office of secretary of state in the most recent preceding general election.
- (b) "Minority party" means the major political party in a given county receiving the second highest number of total votes cast for the party's candidates for state board of education in the 2 most recent general elections in which county commissioners were elected, excluding any special elections for partial terms.
- (c) "Minority party district" means a district in which total number of votes cast for the minority party's candidates for state board of education in the 2 most recent general elections in which county commissioners were elected, excluding any special elections for partial terms, exceeds the total number of votes cast for the other major political party's candidates in the same elections.
- Sec. 12. (1) A vacancy in the office of any commissioner shall be filled by a qualified elector selected by the commission. If the commission fails to fill the vacancy within a period of 7 days, the chairman of the board of supervisors shall fill the vacancy forthwith. The new appointee shall be a qualified elector from the same district as the commissioner vacating the office and from the same party. If a vacancy occurs in the office of commissioner by death, resignation, removal from the district, or removal from office, the vacancy must be filled by appointment within 30 days by the charter commission of a resident and registered voter of that district from a list of 3 individuals submitted by the statutory

- county chairperson of the same political party as the vacating commissioner. Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, the individual appointed to fill a vacancy shall serve for the remainder of the unexpired term. If the remainder of the unexpired term is greater than 2 years, the charter commission shall call a special primary election at the next regular election date and a special general election at the next regular election date after the primary. The individual appointed to fill the vacancy may be a candidate at the special election. The individual elected at the special general election shall serve for the remainder of the unexpired term.
 - (2) If the charter commission fails to fill the vacancy under subsection (1), the charter commission shall call a special primary election at the next regular election date and a special general election at the next regular election date after the primary to fill the vacancy. The individual elected at the special general election shall serve for the remainder of the unexpired term.
 - Sec. 14. (1) A county charter adopted under this act must provide for all of the following:

- (a) In a county that has a population of less than 1,500,000, for a salaried county executive, who is elected at large on a partisan basis, and for the county executive's authority, duties, and responsibilities. In a county that has a population of 1,500,000 or more, a county charter adopted under this act must provide for a form of executive government described and adopted under section 11a.
- (b) The election of a legislative body to be known as the
 county board of commissioners, and for their authority, duties,
 responsibilities, and number, that must be not less than 5 or more

than 21. complies with the number of charter commissioners for that 1 county as provided in section 4. Until December 31, 2024, the term 2 of office of members of the county board of commissioners is 3 concurrent with that of state representatives. Beginning January 1, 2025, the term of office of members of the county board of 5 6 commissioners is as specified in section 10(2) of 1966 PA 261, MCL 7 46.410. The county board of commissioners shall provide by ordinance for their compensation and may increase or decrease their 8 compensation. A change in compensation is not effective during the 9 10 term of office for which the legislative body making the change was 11 elected. The charter must also provide for the partisan election of members of the legislative body from single-member districts to be 12 established by the county apportionment commission as created in 13 14 section 5 and under the standards and guidelines established in 15 section 5 for reapportionment based on the last official federal 16 decennial census, effective at the first regular general election 17 of the members of the legislative body occurring not less than 12 months after the completion and certification of the federal 18 decennial census. Each city and township must be apportioned so 19 20 that it has the largest possible number of complete districts within its boundaries before any part of the city or township is 21 joined to territory outside the boundaries of the city or township 22 23 to form a district.

(c) The partisan election of a sheriff, a prosecuting attorney, a county clerk, a county treasurer, and a register of deeds, and for the authority of the county board of commissioners to combine the county clerk and register of deeds into 1 office as authorized by law.

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29 (d) Except as provided in subdivision (c), the continuation of

all existing county offices, boards, commissions, and departments whether established by law or by action of the county board of commissioners; the performance of their respective duties by other county offices, boards, commissions, and departments; or the discontinuance of these county offices, boards, commissions, and departments. Notwithstanding this subdivision in relation to existing county offices, boards, commissions, and departments, a county charter must insure the following:

- (i) Except as otherwise provided under subsection (2), in a county that has a population of less than 1,500,000, the charter must not be in derogation of the powers and duties of the county road commission in the exercise of its statutory duties concerning the preservation of a county road system. The charter for these counties must provide for the creation of a commission that consists of not fewer than 3 or more than 5 members. Not less than 1 member of the commission must be a resident of a township within the county.
- (ii) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (2), in a county that has a population of 1,500,000 or more, the charter must provide for the continuation of a county road system within the county. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this act, the charter described in this subparagraph must provide that responsibility for the determination of the expenditure of all funds for road construction and road maintenance and for carrying out the powers and duties pertaining to a county road system as provided in sections 9 to 32 of chapter IV of 1909 PA 283, MCL 224.9 to 224.32, is vested in a commission that consists of not fewer than 3 or more than 5 members. The charter must provide that 1 member of the commission is a resident of the most populous city

in the county, 1 member is a resident of a city other than the most 1 populous city within the county, and 1 member is a resident of a 2 township within the county. The charter must provide that the 3 commission is appointed by either the elected county executive or 4 the chief administrative officer. Appointment to the commission 5 6 requires advice and consent by a majority of the county board of 7 commissioners elected and serving not more than 60 days after the appointment. If the county board of commissioners does not vote on 8 the appointment within 60 days, the appointment is final. The 9 10 charter may provide for the number of members and a fixed term of 11 years for the members of the commission, but the charter must provide that the members of the commission may be removed at the 12 pleasure of the elected county executive or the chief 13 14 administrative officer. The charter must specify duties and 15 procedures to assure that administrative decisions made for road 16 construction are coordinated with administrative decisions made for 17 other programs which that relate to roads. As used in this 18 subparagraph, "road construction" means all of the following:

- (A) The building of a new road or street and the improving of an existing road or street by correction grades, drainage structures, width, alignment, or surface.
- (B) The building of bridges or grade separations and the repair of these structures by strengthening, widening, and the replacement of piers and abutments.

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- (C) The initial signing of newly constructed roads or streets, major resigning of projects, and the installation, replacement, or improvement of traffic signals.
- (e) Subject to section 15c, the continuation and implementation of a system of pensions and retirement for county

- officers and employees in those counties that have a system in effect at the time of the adoption of the charter. The system provided under the charter must recognize the accrued rights and benefits of the officers and employees under the system then in effect. The charter must not infringe on or be in derogation of those accrued rights and benefits. Subject to section 15c, the charter must not preclude future modification of the system.
- (f) The continuation and implementation of a system of civil service in those counties having a system at the time of the adoption of the charter. The system of civil service provided under the charter must recognize the rights and status of persons under the civil service system then in effect. The charter must not infringe on or be in derogation of those rights and that status. The charter must not preclude future modification of the system. Except as provided in subdivision (d), the charter must provide that the system of civil service be coordinated among the county offices, boards, commissions, and departments.
- (g) That the general statutes and local acts of this state regarding counties and county officers will continue in effect except to the extent that this act permits the charter to provide otherwise, if the charter does in fact provide otherwise.
- (h) That all ordinances of the county will remain in effect unless changed by the charter or an ordinance adopted under the charter.
- (i) The power and authority to adopt, amend, and repeal any ordinance authorized by law or necessary to carry out any power, function, or service authorized by this act and by the charter.
- (j) The power and authority to enter into anyintergovernmental contract that is not specifically prohibited by

1 law.

- (k) The power and authority to join, establish, or form with any other governmental unit an intergovernmental district or authority for the purpose of performing a public function or service, that each is authorized to perform separately and the performance of which is not prohibited by law.
- (l) A debt limit of not to exceed 10% of the state equalized value of the taxable property within the county.
- (m) The levy and collection of taxes, the fixing of an ad valorem property tax limitation of not to exceed 1% of the state equalized value of the taxable property within the county, and that the levy of taxes from within this ad valorem property tax limitation must not exceed, unless otherwise approved by the electors, the tax rate in mills, equal to the number of mills allocated to the county either by a county tax allocation board or by a separate tax limitation under the property tax limitation act, 1933 PA 62, MCL 211.201 to 211.217a, in the year immediately preceding the year in which the county adopts a charter.
- (n) Initiative and referendum on all matters within the scopeof the county's power and authority; and for the recall of allcounty officials.
 - (o) Amendment or revision of the charter initiated either by action of the legislative body of the county or by initiatory process. An amendment or revision is not effective unless the amendment or revision is submitted to the electorate of the county and approved by a majority of those voting.
 - (p) That the acquisition, operation, and sale of public utility facilities for furnishing light, heat, or power are subject to the same restrictions as imposed on cities and villages by the

state constitution of 1963 and applicable law.

- (q) Annual preparation, review, approval, and adherence to a balanced budget in a manner which that assures coordination among the county offices, boards, commissions, and departments, except as provided in subdivision (d).
- (r) An annual audit by an independent certified public accountant of all county funds.
- (s) That a county that incurs a budget deficit in any fiscal year shall prepare and submit a detailed and specific 5-year plan for short-term financial recovery and long-range financial stability to the governor and the legislature, before adoption of the next annual county budget, for review. The 5-year plan must include, but not be limited to, a projection of annual revenues and expenditures, an employee classification and pay plan, a capital improvements budget, and equipment replacement schedules.
- (2) Subsection (1)(d) does not apply to a county in which the charter is amended to provide for an alternative method of carrying out the powers and duties that are otherwise provided by law for a board of county road commissioners.
- 20 (3) The county board of commissioners may by resolution 21 provide for staggered terms of office for the road commissioners 22 under subsection (1)(d) so that not more than 2 road commissioners' 23 terms of office expire in the same year.