



Michigan's Government Sliced and Diced?

Reform Michigan Now Ballot Proposal

July 4, 2008

A potential ballot proposal for the November election could change Michigan's government substantially. A group called Reform Michigan Now have taken it upon themselves to streamline the state's government in every area and branch.

The highlights of the proposal include a reduction of state legislators (the House of Representatives would decrease from 110 to 82 and the Senate would decrease from 32 to 22), a redrawing of districts for legislative representation, two state Supreme Court Justices would be eliminated.

The group behind the proposal says that they have taken several legislative initiatives brought forth by both Republicans and Democrats over the last several years and incorporated them all into this plan in an effort to cut back on the budget woes Michigan has become so accustomed to, as well as bureaucracy.

Along with the personnel cuts in both chambers of the legislature, would be substantial pay cuts to members of both chambers. Although the legislature would remain full-time and term-limited, Senators and State Reps would be forced to go back to the \$57,000 annual salary they had before they voted to up it to almost \$80,000 in 2004. Lawmakers would also have to disclose personal financial and credit information, and would have to be out of office a minimum of two years before they could be lobbyists.

Accompanying the size reduction of the state Supreme Court would be cut back in the Court of Appeals from 28 judges down to 21, and the salaries of judges would be cut by 15%.

There would be significant trimming of salaries in the executive offices, and a threshold of 18 would be placed on the amount of state departments allowed. Many state boards, commissions, and advisory groups would be eliminated.

The RMGN says they have the 380,000 necessary petition signatures for the initiative to be placed on the ballot (which are due July 7), but the group still needs state election officials to approve the form of their petitions.

Early on, the Republican party leaders attacked the idea while Democrat leaders seemed to be more open to it. As of now, several of the Democratic Legislators have joined the Republican Caucuses in doubting the necessity and value of the proposal.



Michigan Supreme Court



Michigan House of Representatives



Michigan Senate



Michigan Executive Offices