



# HOUSE BILL 1014: 2020 Census VTD Verification Program.

2019-2020 General Assembly

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| <b>Committee:</b>     |              | <b>Date:</b>        | December 18, 2019 |
| <b>Introduced by:</b> |              | <b>Prepared by:</b> | Erika Churchill   |
| <b>Analysis of:</b>   | S.L. 2019-16 |                     | Staff Attorney    |

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**OVERVIEW:** *Effective May 29, 2019, S.L. 2019-16 requires the Legislative Services Officer to be responsible for submissions in the Phase 2, Voting District Project, portion of the 2020 federal decennial census.*

**CURRENT LAW:** Each decade, the federal government engages in a census count, to count each person who lives in the United States. In advance of that count, as required by federal law, the U.S. Bureau of the Census provides states with the opportunity to specify the small geographic areas for which that state wishes to receive population counts for the purposes of reapportionment and redistricting.

For the 2020 federal decennial census, the input from the states is divided into two phases:

- Phase 1, Block Boundary Suggestion Project. This phase allows states to submit their suggestions for the 2020 Census tabulation block inventory. Divided into two deadlines, one for initial submissions and one for verification of updates, this phase ended May 31, 2017.
- Phase 2, Voting District Project. This phase allows the states to submit their voting districts (i.e. voting precincts) for inclusion in the 2020 Census redistricting data tabulations. Divided into three deadlines, this phase remains ongoing with the next submission due May 31, 2019. The first two deadlines are an initial identification of the voting districts and a verification stage to ensure the suggested updates were accurately applied. The third is an additional round of verification, for those states participating in the first two stages, to further review and adjust the voting districts. The submission due May 31, 2019, must be made before or on this date in order for the State to preserve its right to participate in the remainder of the phase.

In 2016, the General Assembly enacted G.S. 163A-1065, declaring the State's intent to participate in Phase 2, and submit the State's voting precincts as of January 1, 2018, as the voting districts for this phase. At that same time, the General Assembly instructed the State Board of Elections to develop a proposed voting district map by September 1, 2016, to be submitted to the Joint Legislative Elections Oversight Committee and the Legislative Services Office by December 1, 2016. The county boards of elections were, by November 1, 2017, to report any requested changes to their voting precinct boundaries to be used on and after January 1, 2018. Also at that same time, in S.L. 2016-109, the General Assembly established criteria for changing voting precinct boundaries after January 1, 2020. At this time, the State Board has not submitted a proposed voting district map, nor has any submission of the voting precincts been completed with the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

**BILL ANALYSIS:** The act provides that the Legislative Services Officer will make the remaining submissions required in Phase 2, Voting District Project, in preparation for the 2020 Census. Submissions

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were due May 31, 2019, and the voting precincts submitted were based upon the 2010 Census block boundaries. The act required that a copy of that submission be provided to the Executive Director of the State Board of Elections, who in turn was required to provide each county board of elections a copy of the submission related to that county. The county boards of elections had until October 1, 2019, to submit requested changes. The Legislative Services Officer would then consult with the Executive Director, and make the final submission in the Phase 2 Voting District Project.

The act also does the following:

- Repeals the requirement that the State Board of Elections develop and submit to the Joint Legislative Elections Oversight Committee and the Legislative Services Office a proposed voting district map.
- Amends the criteria for changing voting precinct boundaries after January 1, 2020, to clarify that the voting precinct boundaries are to coincide with Census block boundaries as set forth in the TIGER files of the **most recent** Census.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** May 29, 2019.