

State of Arkansas
94th General Assembly
Regular Session, 2023

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1531

By: Representative G. Hodges

By: Senator J. Dotson

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO AMEND THE LAW TO ALLOW QUALIFIED ELECTORS OF A SCHOOL DISTRICT TO HAVE PLACED ON A BALLOT OF AN ANNUAL SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION THE ISSUE AS TO WHETHER TO ELECT THE SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS FROM SINGLE-MEMBER ZONES, AT LARGE, OR A COMBINATION OF SINGLE-MEMBER ZONES AND AT LARGE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO AMEND THE LAW TO ALLOW QUALIFIED ELECTORS TO DETERMINE THE ISSUE AS TO WHETHER TO ELECT THE SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS FROM SINGLE-MEMBER ZONES, AT LARGE, OR A COMBINATION OF SINGLE-MEMBER ZONES AND AT LARGE.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 6-13-615 is amended to read as follows:

6-13-615. Local option to elect directors from single-member zones, at large, or combination of single-member zones and at large.

(a)(1) Qualified electors of a school district may, by petition, have placed on the ballot of any annual school election the issue to determine whether to elect the school district board of directors ~~from:~~

(A) From single-member zones;

(B) At large; or



(C) A combination of single-member zones and at large.

(2) The petitions calling for ~~such an~~ the issue under subdivision (a)(1) of this section to be placed on the ballot shall be signed by not less than ten percent (10%) of the qualified electors of ~~the a~~ school district, based upon the total number of registered voters in the school district.

(3) The petitions may be circulated between ninety (90) days and forty-five (45) days before the election date.

(4) The petitions shall be filed with the county election commission of the county in which the largest portion of the school district lies.

(b)(1) Within ten (10) days of the receipt and verification of the sufficiency of the petitions required under subsection (a) of this section, the county election commission shall notify the board of directors of the affected school district that the issue shall be placed on the ballot of the next school board election.

(2) The county election commission shall specify the wording of the ballot to be used to determine whether to elect the school district board of directors from single-member zones, at large, or a combination of single-member zones and at large.

(c) If a majority of the qualified electors of ~~the a~~ school district ~~shall~~ vote for the election of the school district board of directors from single-member zones or a combination of single-member zones and at large, the county election commission of the county in which the largest portion of the school district lies shall establish, within the school district, boundaries for the election of directors of the school district board of directors, which shall have substantially equal population based on the most recent available census ~~information and from which racial minorities may be represented on the board of directors in proportions reflected in the school district population as a whole.~~

(d)(1) ~~The~~ members of the school district board of directors ~~of the school district~~ shall be elected for a ~~three-year~~ four-year term.

(2) ~~Provided, any~~ A member of the school district board of directors shall hold office until his or her successor has been elected and qualified.

(3) A member of the school district board of directors who is

qualified to serve the zone he or she represents may succeed himself or herself.

(e)(1) Following ~~the~~ a school board election, ~~the~~ a new school district board of directors at ~~their~~ the initial meeting shall, by lot, establish ~~their~~ initial terms so that, as closely as possible, an equal number of positions are filled during each year ~~and not more than three (3) members' terms expire each year~~ school board election.

(2) The regular term of office for ~~the~~ a school district board of directors elected after the initial election following the decision to elect from single-member zones shall be the same as the term of the school district board of directors of the school district before the change in the method of election of the school district board of directors.

APPROVED: 4/11/23