

House State, Civic, Military, & Veterans Affairs

03/02/2023 Upon Adjournment

HB23-1180 County Commissioner Elections

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Kelly Hegarty Amend themselves	<p>Dear Representatives</p> <p>RE: HB23-1180 County Commissioner Elections</p> <p>The sponsored bill reference above seems to be a fair way to maximize representation throughout a county. Is there a possibility to amend the language in your bill such that ALL counties, regardless of population size, have their first 3 county commissioners elected by district with any additional county commissioners able to be elected by the proposed election alternatives?</p> <p>Many Colorado counties have large physical boundaries and the population can be very spread out and cover very rural areas. And as you know, the needs of the rural voters can be quite different than those in the more urban areas within the same county. Our rural areas seem to lose their voting voice to the more urban areas. If amended to allow the first 3 county commissioners in ANY size county to be elected by district, with all other commissioners allowed to be elected by your proposed election alternatives, your bill would maximize the representation to all residents in ALL counties.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration,</p> <p>Kelly Hegarty Durango, CO La Plata County k.hegarty@me.com (505)320-4989</p>
Don Cameron	I support having a minimum of five commissioners. The inability of even two commissioners to speak to each other outside of public-noticed meetings creates myriad inefficiencies that do no good for the residents of

<p>For City Councilor, Ward 3 in Golden on behalf of my constituents</p>	<p>the counties with only three commissioners. I have literally seen commissioners at a social event hesitant to chat for fear of crossing some line. On the Golden City council with 7 members we have created several very effective subcommittees made of two councilors and one or more city staff liaisons. Large counties could gain some real efficiencies if working meetings could take place with just two commissioners and associated staff. Clearly Jefferson county has struggled for years with the current system which served a partisan majority well, but not the residents of the county. Please pass this out of the committee to the full house and vote yes.</p>
<p>Robin Mendelson For themselves</p>	<p>As a 25 year resident of Highlands Ranch in Douglas County, I support representative Robert Marshall's bill to add a proportional amount of commissioners to growing counties. Our current allotment is only 3, when our population is almost 370,000 and growing. But perhaps the greatest reason is the way it currently facilitates a small group of commissioners co-opting decisions for interests that suit their business affiliations, rather than the needs of citizens. For example, when the light rail system was expanded further south, the line along I-25 was extended past Lone Tree to a station where nothing exists. There's acres of empty land for a proposed development with a station that currently serves no one. Yet the line that was supposed to be completed west along Santa Fe into thriving Highlands Ranch, was unfortunately never built. Instead, two of Douglas County's Commissioners, with ties to real estate development businesses, advocated for the Lone Tree addition. The oversize influence of two commissioners negated the needs of over 110,000 Highlands Ranch citizens who would've greatly benefitted from attending downtown Denver universities, or gaining access to urban employment opportunities. Therefore, the situation in Douglas County exemplifies how a thriving county, that should have 5 commissioners instead of just 3, needs a more proportional number. It would circumvent political control of the board by one party, allow for more equal representation of citizen's needs, and facilitate sound economic decisions that enhance the metro area as a whole. Thanks for your consideration!</p>
<p>LESLIE ROBINSON For themselves</p>	<p>I am Leslie Robinson from Rifle, CO in Garfield County and I write in support of HB-1180. I ran for county commissioner in 1996 and 2020 in Garfield County. Although Garfield County does not have 70,000 population yet, our county is growing fast and within five years we could reach that threshold.</p> <p>There are several areas in our county like Carbondale and Parachute that haven't been represented on the commission for decades. If our county were divided into five districts, those areas could elect their own representatives on our board of county commissioners. For instance, the Carbondale area has consistently voted Democratic, but the conservative west end of the county like Rifle, has more voters, so Carbondale's</p>

	<p>governmental philosophies never permeate to the county commissioner level.</p> <p>HB-1180 would offer more minority representation on the county commission boards, as well, for counties like Garfield. Right now all the commissioners are voted “at large” so we end up with old white Republican men every time here on the Western Slope which does not reflect our population mix. HB-1180 would fix that.</p> <p>And expanding to five commissioners doesn’t mean expanding the budget either. The pay for the current three commissioners could be divided by five instead – most commissioners work as if it was a part-time job anyway.</p> <p>Thank you for considering supporting HB-1180.</p> <p>Leslie Robinson Rifle, CO</p>
<p>Darien Wilson For themselves</p>	<p>Under the current structure for county commissioners, too few people have too much power, and too many citizens have no voice. Choices made by county commissioners have huge repercussions for the future of Colorado, especially around land use and water. Under the current county commissioner structure, counties that are politically purple but vote at-large - this includes many of the large suburban counties along the front range - are in effect governed by only a single party. This bill would ensure that portions of these counties have actual representation. No matter which side of the aisle you're on, we should all want a functional representative government and local control.</p>