

**House Joint Resolution 2008 - Introduced**

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 2008  
BY HUNTER

**HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION**

1 A Joint Resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution  
2 of the State of Iowa relating to the boundary lines of  
3 counties.

4 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

1 Section 1. The following amendment to the Constitution of  
2 the State of Iowa is proposed:

3 1. Section 30 of Article III of the Constitution of the  
4 State of Iowa is amended to read as follows:

5 **Local or special laws — general and uniform —**~~boundaries of~~  
6 **counties.** SEC. 30. The General Assembly shall not pass local  
7 or special laws in the following cases:

8 For the assessment and collection of taxes for State,  
9 County, or road purposes;

10 For laying out, opening, and working roads or highways;

11 For changing the names of persons;

12 For the incorporation of cities and towns;

13 For vacating roads, town plats, streets, alleys, or public  
14 squares;

15 For locating or changing county seats.

16 In all the cases above enumerated, and in all other cases  
17 where a general law can be made applicable, all laws shall be  
18 general, and of uniform operation throughout the State;~~and~~  
19 ~~no law changing the boundary lines of any county shall have~~  
20 ~~effect until upon being submitted to the people of the counties~~  
21 ~~affected by the change, at a general election, it shall be~~  
22 ~~approved by a majority of the votes in each county, cast for~~  
23 ~~and against it.~~

24 2. Section 2 of Article XI of the Constitution of the State  
25 of Iowa is repealed and the following adopted in lieu thereof:

26 **Counties.** SEC. 2. On or before July 1, 2015, the General  
27 Assembly shall by law reduce the aggregate number of the  
28 several Counties to not more than fifty unless the aggregate  
29 number of Counties has otherwise been reduced to not more  
30 than fifty prior to July 1, 2015. Such reduction shall be  
31 accomplished by the merger, in whole or in part, of presently  
32 existing Counties. Newly created Counties shall be composed of  
33 contiguous territory and shall be reasonably compact.

34 The General Assembly shall by law name the Counties created  
35 hereunder and shall by law select the place for the seat of the

1 County government for each newly created County. The General  
2 Assembly may by law provide such newly created Counties with  
3 authority to create such offices of County Government within a  
4 County as a County deems reasonable and necessary.

5 In the event the General Assembly fails to reduce the number  
6 of Counties, select a County seat of government for each newly  
7 created County, and name each newly created County as required  
8 herein by July 1, 2015, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court  
9 shall do so or cause to have the same done.

10 After the reduction in the number of Counties has been  
11 effectuated as herein required, the number or boundaries of  
12 such newly created Counties shall not thereafter be changed.

13 The General Assembly shall enact all laws necessary to  
14 effectuate this section.

15 3. Section 8 of Article XI of the Constitution of the State  
16 of Iowa is amended to read as follows:

17 **Seat of government established — state university. SEC.**

18 8. The seat of Government is hereby permanently established,  
19 as now fixed by law, at the City of Des Moines, ~~in the County~~  
20 ~~of Polk~~; and the State University, at Iowa City, ~~in the County~~  
21 ~~of Johnson~~.

22 Sec. 2. REFERRAL AND PUBLICATION. The foregoing amendment  
23 to the Constitution of the State of Iowa is referred to the  
24 General Assembly to be chosen at the next general election  
25 for members of the General Assembly, and the Secretary of  
26 State is directed to cause the same to be published for three  
27 consecutive months previous to the date of that election as  
28 provided by law.

29

EXPLANATION

30 This joint resolution proposes an amendment to the  
31 Constitution of the State of Iowa relating to the boundary  
32 lines of counties. The joint resolution proposes new section  
33 2 of Article XI requiring the general assembly to reduce the  
34 aggregate number of counties to not more than 50 by statute on  
35 or before July 1, 2015, unless the aggregate number of counties

1 has otherwise been reduced to not more than 50 prior to July  
2 1, 2015. The joint resolution allows such reduction to be  
3 accomplished by the merger in whole or in part of presently  
4 existing counties. Newly created counties, however, must be  
5 composed of contiguous territory and be reasonably compact.

6 The joint resolution requires the general assembly to name  
7 each new county created and to select the place for the seat of  
8 the county government for each new county created. The joint  
9 resolution allows the general assembly to authorize the newly  
10 created counties to create offices of county government as a  
11 county deems reasonable and necessary. The joint resolution  
12 requires the general assembly to enact all laws necessary to  
13 effectuate new section 2 of Article XI of the Constitution of  
14 the State of Iowa.

15 The joint resolution provides that in the event the general  
16 assembly fails to reduce the number of counties, select a  
17 county seat of government for each newly created county,  
18 or name each newly created county as required, the chief  
19 justice of the supreme court is required to do so. The joint  
20 resolution also provides that after the reduction in the number  
21 of counties has been effectuated, the number and boundaries of  
22 such newly created counties may not be changed.

23 The joint resolution strikes provisions requiring any law  
24 that changes boundary lines of a county to first be approved  
25 at a general election by the people of the counties affected  
26 by the change.

27 The joint resolution proposes a corresponding amendment to  
28 section 8 of Article XI of the Constitution of the State of  
29 Iowa, which establishes the city of Des Moines in Polk County  
30 as the seat of government and establishes the state university  
31 at Iowa City in Johnson County, by removing the references to  
32 Polk County and Johnson County.

33 The resolution, if adopted, would be referred to the next  
34 General Assembly (Eighty-fourth) for adoption before being  
35 submitted to the electorate for ratification.