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# Voters may adopt new form of gov't

**(Editor's note: Voters of Glacier County will be given the opportunity to adopt an alternative form of county government on Tuesday, Nov. 4. The following information has been condensed from the "Final Report of the Glacier County Study Commission.")**

The Glacier County Local Government Study Commission, whose members were elected by the voters on Nov. 6, 1984, or appointed at a later date, recommends that Glacier County should adopt, effective June 5, 1987, the commission form of government. A commission, or elected legislative body, of five (5) or three (3) members shall be elected for four (4) year terms of office. All members shall be elected from districts in which they reside and which are apportioned by population.

The Study Commission based their recommendations on almost two years of intensive study of the structure and power of county government. Problem areas were identified during the course of the study by research, discussion, public hearings, testimony of public officials and citizen surveys. One of the problem areas that emerged was unequal representation. It was believed if the government is to enjoy support of its citizens, it must be more representative.

Citizen response to the survey, and testimony at public hearings, indicated that citizens are concerned about local decisions not being made at the local level, the level of taxes, and the lack of leadership and citizen participation in county government. In order to achieve the goals of making government more responsive to its citizens, efficient and structured so that all citizens may participate equally, the study commission recommends to the voters an alternative form of government.

The following are key provisions of this proposed form:

The commission form consists of an elected commission and other elected officers. All legislative, executive, and administrative powers and duties of the local government not specifically reserved by law or ordinance to other elected officers shall reside in the commission. The commission shall appoint the heads of departments and other employees except those appointed by other elected officials.

Local governments that adopt this form shall have general government powers.

The chairman of the commission shall be the presiding officer of the commission. The chairman shall be recognized as the head of the local government unit and may vote as other members of the commission.

The commission shall be elected by districts in which candidates must reside and which are apportioned by population.

Local government elections shall be conducted on either a partisan or a non-partisan basis.

The chairman of the commission shall be elected by the members of the commission from their own number for a term established by ordinance.

Commission members shall be elected for overlapping terms of office.

Community councils to advise commissioners may be authorized by ordinance.

The term of office of elected officials may not exceed four (4) years.

All other county officers shall be elected.

The offices of surveyor and administrator shall not be included in this form as a separate office.

The number of elected county commissioners shall be either three (3) or five (5).

County commissioners shall hire an administrative assistant.

The alternative form recommended is in essence the same as the present form, with some very subtle changes.\*