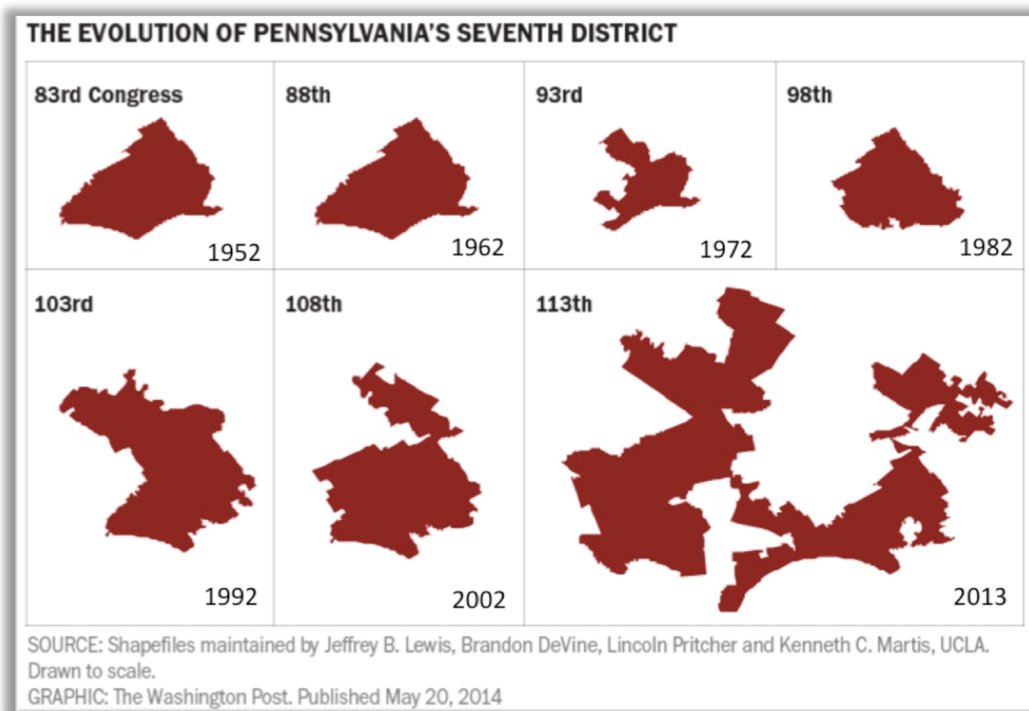


Fair Districts Pa Urges Support of an Amendment to the Pennsylvania Constitution: Senate Bill 22 and House Bill 722

Gerrymandering has been part of the American political process for at least two centuries. What's changed? With sophisticated data and mapping technologies, the practice of partisan redistricting has become increasingly more damaging to democratic engagement and effective governance.



PA is regularly listed as one of the most gerrymandered states in the nation. Faith in government will be enhanced if an independent, impartial citizens commission designs districts which

- Encourage public involvement and input.
- Minimize the distance of citizens from their representatives.
- Reduce the potential for partisan manipulation of district lines.

Fair Districts PA leaders were part of a group of legislators, policy staff and good government advocates who met in late 2016 to review past legislation and draft a strong redistricting reform bill. Senate Bill 22 and House Bill 722 are the products of extended conversation which drew

on analysis from national redistricting experts, input from champions of reform in other states and concerns expressed by Pennsylvania legislators.

These bills would amend the Pennsylvania constitution to assign the process of redrawing the Commonwealth's legislative and congressional districts to an impartial and independent redistricting commission. The commission would be composed of a politically diverse group of qualified members of the voting public, independent of elected officials, lobbyists and political party officials.

The 11 commission members would be selected through a randomized computer algorithm from lists composed of three separate groups – registered members of the largest political party by voter registration, registered members of the second largest party, and registered voters affiliated with neither major party. Applicants would have to meet requirements for education and experience set by the legislature in enabling legislation. The selection process would be designed to ensure that commission membership reflects the state's racial, gender and geographic diversity, with four from each of the two major parties and three from the pool of unaffiliated or third party applicants.

The commission would adhere to a strict timetable for completing its work. The process would be transparent, with all information used in creating plans available on a publicly accessible website. Meaningful opportunity for public input would be provided prior to the drawing of preliminary plans and again before adoption of final plans. Final plans would need approval from at least 7 of the commission's 11 members, including at least one vote from each of the pools represented in its membership. Citizens with objections to a final plan could appeal directly to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

Both bills would prohibit districts from being drawn for the purpose of favoring or discriminating against any political party or person.

SB 22 was introduced by Senators Lisa Boscola (D) and Mario Scavello (R). HB 722 was introduced by Steven Samuelson (D) and Eric Roe (R). Both bills have received support from legislators and past legislators across the political spectrum.

All power is inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority and instituted for their peace, safety and happiness. For the advancement of these ends they have at all times an inalienable and indefeasible right to alter, reform or abolish their government in such manner as they may think proper.

Pennsylvania Constitution, Section 1, Article 2

Fair Districts PA urges your support of redistricting reform:

- Co-sponsor SB 22 or HB 722.
- Push for the bills to clear committee and win approval by the full House and Senate.
- Oppose any efforts to weaken the bills.
- Encourage your party leaders to take a stand in support of accountable, transparent government.

Fair Districts PA is a non-partisan coalition formed in January of 2016 to support redistricting reform in Pennsylvania. Initial leadership and support came from the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania, Common Cause PA, the Pennsylvania Council of Churches, Committee of Seventy, Pennsylvanians for Fair Elections and the Black Political Empowerment Project. The coalition now includes dozens of organizations, hundreds of volunteers and thousands of supporters from across the state. All funding has been from the organizations named above or from individual donors within the state of Pennsylvania. Fair Districts PA is an entirely volunteer organization, with administrative support and financial oversight from the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania, which serves FPDA as fiscal sponsor.