

BACKGROUND

In 2019 and 2020, the Virginia General Assembly passed a bipartisan constitutional amendment proposal that will create Virginia's first redistricting commission if it is approved by voters. This is the most comprehensive redistricting reform to ever pass a state legislature.

Virginia's current redistricting process is broken. Politicians can pick their voters without any oversight, transparency or citizen involvement. This amendment will change that.

If voters approve Amendment 1, it will give Virginia fair maps and end partisan gerrymandering once and for all.

THE COMMISSIONERS

- Districts will be drawn by a bipartisan commission comprised of 8 citizens and 8 legislators, with one of the citizens serving as chair. There's an old saying: if you're not at the table, you're probably on the menu.
- The citizen selection process will be politically balanced and the final determination of who serves will be made by a panel of five retired circuit court judges. This process is similar to selecting an impartial jury.
- Prohibits citizen members from being an elected member of Congress or the Virginia General Assembly or a member of their staffs.

CHECKS AND BALANCES

- The amendment was created by a legislative conference committee, which combined provisions from several pieces of redistricting legislation being considered in 2019 – including the checks and balances outlined in the bipartisan proposal drafted with the help of OneVirginia2021's Citizens Constitutional Amendment Committee.
- A supermajority of commissioners are required to approve the final map, meaning political parties will be prohibited from colluding against one another. In other words, this amendment will ban partisan gerrymandering in Virginia.
- They will also have clear rules to follow – things like following city and county boundaries and protecting against anything that diminishes minority voting power.
- Provisions in the amendment prohibit the legislature and the Governor from amending the commission's map. No cherry-picking allowed!

THE BENEFITS

- This measure would amend Virginia's Constitution, thereby enshrining reform for generations to come.
- Virginia would effectively eliminate gerrymandering dominated by one party, moving ahead of states like Maryland and North Carolina.
- All meetings, minutes and data will be completely open to the public. This will serve as an important check on the commission's work and allow us all to be watchdogs on our government. No more funny business and backroom deals behind the scenes.

