

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 9

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2000 Regular Session
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By: **Delegates Weir, Owings, DeCarlo, and Hubers**

Introduced and read first time: February 9, 2000

Assigned to: Commerce and Government Matters

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A House Joint Resolution concerning

2 **Commission to Study Proportional Representation and Single-Member**
3 **Legislative Districting for the House of Delegates of the General Assembly**

4 FOR the purpose of establishing the Commission to Study Proportional
5 Representation and Single-Member Legislative Districting for the House of
6 Delegates of the General Assembly; providing for the membership of the
7 Commission; providing for the appointment of the chairman and for the staffing
8 of the Commission; requiring the Commission to study the feasibility and
9 desirability of establishing single-member legislative districts for the House of
10 Delegates of the General Assembly and to submit a report of its findings and
11 recommendations to the Governor and to the General Assembly by a certain
12 date; and generally relating to the establishment of a Commission to Study
13 Proportional Representation and Single-Member Legislative Districting for the
14 House of Delegates of the General Assembly.

15 WHEREAS, Evidence suggests that citizens increasingly are becoming
16 alienated from their government; and

17 WHEREAS, It is in government's interest to connect more closely with its
18 citizens and to engage citizens in the critical issues facing our State and nation; and

19 WHEREAS, A citizenry that has the opportunity to interact more directly with
20 its elected representatives likely will help foster a climate of cooperative engagement
21 that allows government to address in a more effective manner the critical issues
22 facing society; and

23 WHEREAS, Oftentimes the sheer geographical size of legislative districts
24 precludes direct interaction between citizens and their elected representatives; and

25 WHEREAS, The Constitution of Maryland currently provides that each State
26 legislative district contain one senator and three delegates, and that the delegate
27 districts may be subdivided into three single-member districts or one single-member
28 district and one two-member district; and

29 WHEREAS, Currently in Maryland, in 34 of the 47 State legislative districts the
30 three members of the House of Delegates of those districts are elected at large; in 10
31 legislative districts, the House members are elected from a combination of

1 single-member districts and two-member districts; and in only three of those
2 legislative districts are the House members subdivided into three single-member
3 districts; and

4 WHEREAS, Some 38 states currently have only single-member state legislative
5 districts; and

6 WHEREAS, The year 2000 census is near and, subsequent to the census, the
7 General Assembly must redistrict the State legislature for the year 2002 elections;
8 now, therefore, be it

9 RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That there shall
10 be a Commission to Study Proportional Representation and Single-Member
11 Legislative Districting for the House of Delegates of the General Assembly to assess
12 the feasibility and desirability of proposing that the voters of the State consider a
13 Constitutional amendment instituting a system of single-member legislative districts
14 for the House of Delegates of the General Assembly; and be it further

15 RESOLVED, That the Commission be composed of the following 11 members:

16 (1) Six members of the House of Delegates of Maryland, appointed by the
17 Speaker of the House, with two of the appointees being members of the minority party
18 designated by the Minority Leader; and

19 (2) Five members appointed by the Governor, reflecting a broad
20 spectrum of individuals from government, the academic community, public interest
21 groups, and the general public from throughout the State who possess interest and
22 knowledge about civic issues; and be it further

23 RESOLVED, That the Speaker of the House of Delegates shall designate the
24 Chairman of the Commission; and be it further

25 RESOLVED, That the Department of Legislative Services provide staff for the
26 Commission; and be it further

27 RESOLVED, That the members of the Commission serve without compensation,
28 but may be reimbursed for expenses in accordance with the Standard State Travel
29 Regulations; and be it further

30 RESOLVED, That the Commission report its findings and recommendations to
31 the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, to
32 the General Assembly by December 1, 2001; and be it further

33 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of
34 Legislative Services to the Honorable Parris N. Glendening, Governor of Maryland;
35 the Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr., President of the Senate of Maryland; and
36 the Honorable Casper R. Taylor, Jr., Speaker of the House of Delegates.