

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 6

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1998 Regular Session
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By: **Delegate Weir**
Introduced and read first time: February 5, 1998
Assigned to: Commerce and Government Matters

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A House Joint Resolution concerning

2 **Commission to Study Single-Member Legislative Districting for the General**
3 **Assembly**

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

12 WHEREAS, Evidence suggests that citizens increasingly are becoming
13 alienated from their government; and

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

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

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

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

26 WHEREAS, Currently in Maryland, in 34 of the 47 State legislative districts the
27 three members of the House of Delegates of those districts are elected at-large; in 10
28 legislative districts, the House members are elected from a combination of
29 single-member districts and two-member districts; and in only three of those
30 legislative districts are the House members subdivided into three single-member
31 districts; and

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

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

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

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

12 (1) Three members of the House of Delegates of Maryland, appointed by
13 the Speaker of the House, with one of the appointees being a member of the minority
14 party designated by the Minority Leader;

15 (2) Three members of the Senate of Maryland, appointed by the
16 President, with one of the appointees being a member of the minority party
17 designated by the Minority Leader;

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

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

25 RESOLVED, That the Commission report its findings and recommendations to
26 the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, to
27 the General Assembly by December 1, 1999; and be it further

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