

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 5

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1999 Regular Session
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By: **Delegates Weir, Owings, DeCarlo, and Hubers**

Introduced and read first time: February 10, 1999

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 legislative districts are the House members subdivided into three single-member
2 districts; and

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

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

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

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

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

18 (2) 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 Speaker of the House of Delegates shall designate the
23 Chairman of the Commission; and be it further

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

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

29 RESOLVED, That the Commission report its findings and recommendations to
30 the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, to
31 the General Assembly by December 1, 2000; and be it further

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