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TTY USERS CALL VIA MD RELAY

SB 284 Redistricting Reform Act of 2020

&

SB 266 Redistricting Reform Act of 2020 – Constitutional Amendment

Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

Ali Keane, Governor's Legislative Office

Walter Olson, Co-Chair, Maryland Redistricting Reform Commission

Judge Alexander Williams, Co-Chair, Maryland Redistricting Reform Commission

Maryland's congressional districts have been recognized by national publications to have some of the most gerrymandered districts in the country. On August 5, 2015, Governor Hogan issues Executive Order 01.01.2015.21, which created the Maryland Redistricting Reform Commission. The work of the commission is incorporated in Senate Bill 284 & Senate Bill 266. This bill proposes a constitutional amendment that repeals existing constitutional provisions relating to the legislative redistricting process. The current provisions would be replaced by an independent General Assembly and Congressional Legislative Redistricting and Apportionment Commission. This independent commission would be appointed in the year following each decennial census of the United States or when required by the United States or by court order.

The bill establishes new standards that require the commission to divide the State into consecutively numbered state legislative districts and to divide the State to create as many congressional districts as there are representatives in Congress apportioned to Maryland. The bill also includes implementing provisions related to the appointment of members to the commission, and the process for developing redistricting plans.

A summary of the bill's provisions includes:

- Legislative intent that district lines not be drawn for partisan advantage, or to favor or disfavor an incumbent.
- An independent non-person citizen commission of Maryland residents to draw congressional and state legislative districts.
- Appointments to the commission will be screened on the basis of their independence from political bias and skills to create a pool for random-selection.

- Established objective criteria for the creation of legislative districts including:
 - Equal population as required by the U.S. Constitution and federal law
 - Compliance with the Voting Rights Act
 - Pay due regard to county and municipal boundaries
 - Compactness
 - Continuity: adjoining territory conveniently connected for purposes of travel and communication
 - Forbid population deviation of more than 2%
 - Single-member districts