



**TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE RULES AND EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS  
COMMITTEE**

**HB 1460 Congressional Districts – Standards (Anti-Gerrymandering of Maryland’s  
Congressional Districts)**

**POSITION: Support**

**BY: Lois Hybl and Richard Willson, Co-Presidents**

**DATE: March 2, 2020**

We believe that a fair redistricting process produces districts which are substantially equal in population, compact, composed of contiguous territory, and give due regard to natural boundaries and political subdivisions. The standards laid out in this bill are the same as those the Maryland constitution applies to legislative districts, and we believe that they are equally appropriate for Congressional districts. If enacted, they would limit the ability of either party to predetermine the results of elections by grouping voters from widely scattered areas while subdividing counties and neighborhoods. Compact and contiguous districts give the voters a much better opportunity to know their representatives and to engage in political discussions with their fellow voters.

This bill also seeks to remove partisan influence from the redistricting process. Election maps are meant to be adjusted every ten years after the Census to account for population shifts and ensure each district has substantially equally populations so they can be effectively represented. However, throughout history, politicians on both sides of the aisle have found it difficult to resist the temptation to use the redistricting process to provide their party with an advantage in elections for the coming decade. With the increasingly effective technology our society has developed, politicians today can achieve that advantage with unprecedented precision. This provision of this bill would attempt to remove that temptation by completely removing consideration of political affiliation of voters from the equation.

We are all aware of the growing apathy of voters because they believe that the system is rigged, and their vote won’t matter. We believe improving Congressional districting standards and ignoring partisanship in the redistricting process would help to restore the faith of voters in their elected officials and benefit our democracy overall.

We urge a favorable report on HB 1460.