



MARYLAND CITIZENS REDISTRICTING COMMISSION

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Hearing Date: January 18, 2022

Bill No: SJ3/HJ1

Committees: Senate Reapportionment and Redistricting Committee
House Rules and Executive Nominations Committee

Position: Favorable

Testimony from: The Maryland Citizens Redistricting Commission

Dr. Kate Heatherington - Co-Chair

Walter Olson - Co-Chair

The Honorable Alexander Williams, Jr. - Co-Chair

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The Maryland Citizens Redistricting Commission (Citizens Commission) is pleased to offer this testimony about the work of our group and the resulting legislative maps we provided to Governor Hogan. We respectfully request a favorable committee report on the maps now before you and we would like to provide you with more detailed information about the Citizens Commission's process and procedures.

The Citizens Commission is extremely proud of our work and the maps we have produced.

- The Citizens Commission's maps create new district boundaries that are free from political influence and offer the opportunity for fair and free elections in Maryland.
- The Citizens Commission's maps offer minimal splits of counties and municipalities.
- The Citizens Commission's legislative district maps are very straightforward and understandable.
- The Citizens Commission worked closely with a renowned national expert, Professor Nate Persily, to ensure maps would be in compliance with the Voting Rights Act.
- The Citizens Commission's plans comply with Equal Protection.
- The Citizens Commission's maps satisfy all elements of redistricting law and the Executive Order.

- The Citizens Commission's plan used a stricter population equality than required by federal law, which has permitted a deviation of 5% in drawing the districts.
 - Each Senate district is within less than 2% of equal population and each House district within less than 3%.
 - The 2020 Census (with prisoner adjustment) population for Maryland is 6,175,403.
 - To create equality among 47 State Senate districts there should be 131,391.553 people per district.
 - In the Citizens Commission's Senate plan, the largest district has 133,871 people (1.89% over ideal value) and the smallest district has 128,867 people (1.92% under ideal value).
 - Among 141 House of Delegates districts, it would be 43,797 people per district.
 - In the Citizens Commission's House of Delegates plan, the largest district has 45,092 people (2.96% over ideal value) and the smallest district has 42,545 people (2.86% under ideal value).
- Both the Senate and House of Delegates plans avoid diluting the vote of racial minorities and accurately represent minority communities in Maryland.

How the Commission went about accomplishing its mission.

- On January 12, 2021, Governor Hogan issued an Executive Order forming the Maryland Citizens Redistricting Commission to consist of three co-chairs and six commissioners.
- The Governor appointed the three co-chairs who then chose the additional six members, two from each party, from over 400 citizen applications.
- The Citizens Commission was charged with revising the congressional and legislative district lines in a fair and impartial manner.
- As an equal mix of Democrats, Republicans, and Independents, our members embraced our mission to create new district boundaries that are free from political influence and offer the opportunity for fair elections in Maryland.
- To accomplish our mission, the Citizens Commission developed a transparent process, allowing Marylanders not only to observe the group's work, but also to engage in the process.
- The Citizens Commission opened a website so the public could become more familiar with the redistricting process and stay informed as to the events of the Commission.
- Draft maps were posted to the site throughout the process and allowed for the public to comment on them before we held final votes.

The public engaged in the process and was an integral part of the Citizens Commission's final decisions.

- The Citizens Commission's public meetings began on May 5, 2021, and included numerous working sessions among members to learn about the process, discuss the data and draft maps.
- Most of the meetings included testimony from the public. Aside from the public meetings we also held numerous working sessions for the Citizens Commission to conduct our work.
- Three rounds of public meetings were held to receive valuable input from the public as to the redistricting process. Due to the continuing issues with COVID, these meetings virtually through Zoom.
- The Citizens Commission heard 231 separate testimony accounts from members of the public.
- Round One occurred between June 9 and July 28, 2021.
 - Included eight regional meetings during which members of the public could share their thoughts and concerns regarding redistricting in advance of the release of 2020 Census data.
 - 163 separate testimonies from members of the public and elected officials.
 - Viewership on Zoom and Youtube was over 2,100 people.
- Round Two was held from September 9–20, 2021.
 - Included four statewide virtual meetings during which Marylanders were able to submit their own maps through a portal on the website and present them to the Citizens Commission with live testimony; written testimony was also accepted.
 - The Citizens Commission heard 21 separate testimonies.
 - Over 1,000 people viewed the meetings on either Zoom or Youtube.
 - During Round 2, the Citizens Commission received 70 citizen map submissions.
 - Each was posted to the public website and reviewed by the Citizens Commission.
- The Citizens Commission held six public working sessions during the month of September to draft maps for public review and comment.
 - This was done along with the Citizens Commission's Voting Rights Act and American election law and redistricting expert, Professor Nathaniel Persily of Stanford Law School.
- Round Three was held each Wednesday evening in October, between October 6 and 27, 2021
 - Included four public meetings at which Marylanders could present testimony regarding the maps drawn by the Citizens Commission, maps submitted by citizens or their own map submissions.

- The Citizens Commission heard 46 separate testimonies.
 - The total viewership online was almost 1,000.
- In total, the Citizens Commission received 86 public map submissions via the portal and through email.
- Commissioners also held public working sessions at the completion of public testimony in order to suggest and address modifications to maps, including discussions regarding the Voting Rights Act, Communities of Interest, and other matters of importance to district boundaries.
- The Citizens Commission was responsive to public reaction and modified maps in the areas of Southeast Baltimore County, St. Mary's County, Towson, southern Montgomery County and others in response to public requests.
 - Addressed issues for “Communities of Interest,” including modifying the boundary lines impacting a Jewish community (Eruv) in Baltimore County.
- As the Citizen Commission voted upon “final proposed draft maps,” each map was posted to the website.
- The website included a map viewer to allow residents to enter an address and determine in which district it was located.

A summary of the Citizens Commission’s outreach efforts and public engagement:

- The Citizens Commission had over 4,127 attendees at the public meetings, including organizational leaders and elected officials.
- The Citizens Commission was supported by the Maryland Department of Planning, which facilitated social media, updating the s website and the distribution of meeting alerts and press releases.
- Social media posts resulted in more than 100,061 impressions on Twitter and a reach of more than 92,607 on Facebook.
- For each meeting, notifications were sent out via press release to more than 46,000 contacts, including the media, local, county, and state elected officials (MACo and MML), and many other organizations and individuals.
- Promotional materials were translated in Spanish and distributed to the Latino community by the Commission’s Hispanic advisor, Gloria Aparicio Blackwell, Founder and Director of the University of Maryland Office of Community Engagement.
- Public virtual meetings at which testimony was offered provided live Spanish translation done in partnership with the University of Maryland Spanish Department.
- Closed-captioning for the hearing-impaired was also provided.

As a volunteer commission, we worked closely as a group with a common goal. Even though we disagreed on multiple matters, we were able to talk things through for the best possible outcome for all of Maryland. These outcomes resulted in the final maps presented to

you from the Maryland Citizens Redistricting Commission, and of which we are extremely proud. Common themes were expressed by each of our members at the close of our work as a group.

- A sense of pride in the dedication and commitment of the Citizens Commissioners.
- A sense of overcoming challenges in the spirit of compromise to achieve fair results.
- Pride in our responsiveness to the communities that voiced their concerns to our Citizens Commission.

At the completion of our last meeting, Professor Nate Persily with whom our Citizens Commission worked diligently to ensure our maps would be in compliance with the Voting Rights Act told us that our work should be held out as a model for the way things should be done across the nation. He is nationally renowned as an expert in redistricting law and the American democratic process and advises state and local jurisdictions across the country. This accolade is meaningful and solidifies the notion that this process can be completed successfully with input from the public and a transparent process.

We are proud of the work we accomplished and thank you for the opportunity to share our official redistricting maps for your consideration. For the foregoing reasons, we respectfully request a favorable committee report of SJ3/HJ1. Detailed map books have been distributed to all committee members and we are happy to answer any questions you may have.