
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 169 Session of
1997

INTRODUCED BY CORMAN, HELFRICK, MOWERY, WOZNIAK AND DELP,
JANUARY 21, 1997

REFERRED TO JUDICIARY, JANUARY 21, 1997

A JOINT RESOLUTION

1 Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the Commonwealth
2 of Pennsylvania, providing for the election of justices and
3 judges of the Supreme Court, the Superior Court and the
4 Commonwealth Court from established judicial districts.

5 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
6 hereby resolves as follows:

7 Section 1. The following amendment to the Constitution of
8 Pennsylvania is proposed in accordance with Article XI:

9 That sections 2, 3, 4 and 11 of Article V be amended to read:

10 § 2. Supreme Court.

11 The Supreme Court (a) shall be the highest court of the
12 Commonwealth and in this court shall be reposed the supreme
13 judicial power of the Commonwealth;

14 (b) shall consist of seven justices, to be elected from
15 seven judicial districts which shall be established by law, one
16 of whom shall be the Chief Justice; and

17 (c) shall have such jurisdiction as shall be provided by
18 law.

1 § 3. Superior Court.

2 The Superior Court shall be a statewide court, and shall
3 consist of the number of judges, which shall be not less than
4 [seven] 15 judges, to be elected from 15 judicial districts
5 which shall be established by law, and have such jurisdiction as
6 shall be provided by this Constitution or by the General
7 Assembly. One of its judges shall be the president judge.

8 § 4. Commonwealth Court.

9 The Commonwealth Court shall be a statewide court, and shall
10 consist of the number of judges, which shall be not less than
11 nine judges to be elected from nine judicial districts which
12 shall be established by law, and have such jurisdiction as shall
13 be provided by law. One of its judges shall be the president
14 judge.

15 § 11. Judicial districts; boundaries.

16 [The number and boundaries of judicial districts shall be
17 changed by the General Assembly only with the advice and consent
18 of the Supreme Court.]

19 (a) The number of justices of the Supreme Court and the
20 number of judges of the Superior Court and the Commonwealth
21 Court elected from each judicial district fixed by law pursuant
22 to sections 2, 3 and 4 shall provide every resident of the
23 Commonwealth with approximately equal representation on a court.

24 (b) The General Assembly shall establish by law:

25 (1) The judicial districts from which justices of the
26 Supreme Court and judges of the Superior Court and the
27 Commonwealth Court are elected.

28 (2) A transition to an appellate court judiciary elected
29 from judicial districts.

30 (3) The effect of set judicial districts upon

1 eligibility to seek retention election.

2 (4) Residency qualification for election or appointment
3 to the appellate court judiciary.

4 (5) The order in which judicial districts shall elect
5 justices of the Supreme Court and judges of the Superior
6 Court and the Commonwealth Court.

7 (6) The decennial realignment of the appellate judicial
8 districts based on the Federal Census to begin in the year
9 2011 and each ten years thereafter.

10 Section 2. (a) Upon the first passage by the General
11 Assembly of this proposed constitutional amendment, the
12 Secretary of the Commonwealth shall proceed immediately to
13 comply with the advertising requirements of section 1 of Article
14 XI of the Constitution of Pennsylvania and shall transmit the
15 required advertisements to two newspapers in every county in
16 which such newspapers are published in sufficient time after
17 passage of this proposed constitutional amendment.

18 (b) Upon the second passage by the General Assembly of this
19 proposed constitutional amendment, the Secretary of the
20 Commonwealth shall proceed immediately to comply with the
21 advertising requirements of section 1 of Article XI of the
22 Constitution of Pennsylvania and shall transmit the required
23 advertisements to two newspapers in every county in which such
24 newspapers are published in sufficient time after passage of
25 this proposed constitutional amendment. The Secretary of the
26 Commonwealth shall submit this proposed constitutional amendment
27 to the qualified electors of this Commonwealth at the first
28 primary, general or municipal election occurring at least three
29 months after the proposed constitutional amendment is passed by
30 the General Assembly which meets the requirements of and is in

1 conformance with section 1 of Article XI of the Constitution of
2 Pennsylvania.