A JOINT RESOLUTION

Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, further providing for the Legislative Reapportionment Commission.

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

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

§ 17. [Legislative] Independent Reapportionment and Redistricting Commission.

(a) In each year [following the year] of the Federal decennial census [, a Legislative], but not later than July 1, an Independent Reapportionment and Redistricting Commission shall be constituted for the purpose of reapportioning and redistricting the [Commonwealth] Commonwealth's congressional, senatorial, representative and any other districts authorized under this Constitution. The commission shall act by a majority
of its entire membership.

(b) The commission shall consist of [five] 11 members[: four
of whom shall be the majority and minority leaders of both the Senate and the House of Representatives, or deputies appointed by each of them, and a chairman selected as hereinafter provided.] and the General Assembly shall prescribe by law:

  (1) The qualifications to serve as a member of the commission, provided that no person who has been registered as a lobbyist, held elective or appointive public office at the Federal or State level or elective judicial office in this Commonwealth, or any position of public service in aid or support of such a person, in the five years immediately preceding the date of appointment to the commission shall be eligible for appointment.

  (2) The manner by which the Secretary of the Commonwealth shall provide for an open and transparent process to:

    (i) Receive applications for appointment as a member of the commission.

    (ii) Determine eligibility of applicants.

    (iii) Ensure applicants to be considered reasonably reflect the geographic, gender and racial diversity of this Commonwealth.

  (3) Reasons for removing a member of the commission and the manner by which vacancies shall be filled.

  (4) The manner by which the Secretary of the Commonwealth shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly a list of qualified applicants by political party affiliation.

(b.1) Upon receipt of the list of qualified applicants from the Secretary of the Commonwealth, members of the commission shall be appointed as follows:
(1) The Governor shall recommend three individuals from the list of qualified applicants who are not registered with either of the two largest political parties in this Commonwealth based upon registration for approval by a two-thirds vote of the General Assembly.

(2) The Majority Leader and Minority Leader of the Senate shall each recommend two individuals from the list of qualified applicants for approval by a two-thirds vote of the Senate.

(3) The Majority Leader and Minority Leader of the House of Representatives shall each recommend two individuals from the list of qualified applicants for approval by a two-thirds vote of the House of Representatives.

(4) Each individual recommended for appointment shall have been continuously registered in this Commonwealth with the same political party, or continuously unaffiliated with a political party, in the three years immediately preceding the date of appointment to the commission.

(5) In making appointments to the commission, the General Assembly shall consider such factors as deemed appropriate so that the commission reasonably reflects the geographic, gender and racial diversity of this Commonwealth.

No later than [60 days following the official reporting of the Federal census as required by Federal law] July 1 in each year of the Federal decennial census, the [four] members approved under this section shall be certified by the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives to the elections officer of the Commonwealth who under law shall have supervision over elections.

[The four members within] Within 45 days after their certification, the members shall select [the fifth member, who
shall serve as a chairman of the commission, and shall immediately certify his name to such elections officer. The chairman shall be a citizen of the Commonwealth other than a local, State or Federal official holding an office to which compensation is attached.

If the four members fail to select the fifth member within the time prescribed, a majority of the entire membership of the Supreme Court within 30 days thereafter shall appoint the chairman as aforesaid and certify his appointment to such elections officer.

Any vacancy in the commission shall be filled within 15 days in the same manner in which such position was originally filled. If the 11 members fail to select a chairman within the time prescribed, the General Assembly, by a two-thirds vote of each chamber, shall appoint the chairman of the commission within 30 days.

(c) No later than 90 days after either the commission has been duly certified or the population data for the Commonwealth as determined by the Federal census are available, whichever is later in time, the commission shall file a preliminary reapportionment and redistricting plan with such elections officer based upon Federal census data for each geographic and political unit. The preliminary reapportionment and redistricting plan must be approved by at least seven affirmative votes that must include at least two votes of members registered from each of the two largest political parties in this Commonwealth based on registration and two votes of members not registered with either of the two largest political parties based upon registration. The commission shall schedule and conduct at least six public hearings on the...
preliminary reapportionment and redistricting plan in different geographic regions throughout this Commonwealth.

In addition to the requirements of section 16, the following shall apply:

(1) Senatorial districts shall be drawn with the fewest number of divisions to counties, municipalities and wards within the maximum population deviation permissible. A county may not contain more senatorial districts than the number required by the population plus one. The commission shall provide a written explanation for each division.

(2) Representative districts shall be drawn with the fewest number of divisions to counties, municipalities and wards within the maximum population deviation permissible. A county may not contain more representative districts than the number required by the population plus two. The commission shall provide a written explanation for each division.

(3) Congressional districts shall each have a population within the maximum population deviation permissible and shall be composed of compact and contiguous territory and, unless absolutely necessary, no county, city, incorporated town, borough, township or ward shall be divided in forming congressional districts. The commission shall provide a written explanation for each division.

(4) The boundaries of each district shall be a single non-intersecting continuous line.

(5) In establishing districts, the commission shall not consider the following data:

(i) Addresses of any individual.

(ii) Political affiliation of registered voters.

(iii) Previous election results, unless required by Federal
law.

(6) All meetings of the commission at which a quorum is present held for the purpose of deliberating official business or taking official action shall be conducted in an open forum and in a manner by which the public may contemporaneously observe the proceedings.

(7) Commission members and commission employees and advisors may not communicate with or receive communications from any other person about reapportionment or redistricting matters unless during an open public meeting or under such exceptions as the General Assembly may prescribe by law.

The commission shall have 30 days after filing the preliminary plan and completing the six public hearings on the plan to make corrections in the plan.

Any person aggrieved by the preliminary plan shall have the same 30-day period to file exceptions with the commission in which case the commission shall have 30 days after the date the exceptions were filed to prepare and file with such elections officer a revised reapportionment and redistricting plan. If no exceptions are filed within 30 days, or if filed and acted upon, the commission's plan shall be final and have the force of law.

(c.1) The final reapportionment and redistricting plan must be approved by at least seven affirmative votes that must include at least two votes of members registered from each of the two largest political parties in this Commonwealth based on registration and two votes of members not registered with either of the two largest political parties based upon registration.

(d) Any aggrieved person may file an appeal from the final plan directly to the Supreme Court within 30 days after the filing thereof. Upon receipt of an appeal, the Supreme Court...
shall immediately direct the appointment of a special master. The special master shall hold a hearing and take testimony on the final plan, and return the record and a transcript of the testimony together with a report and recommendations as prescribed by general rules of procedure. If the appellant establishes that the final plan is contrary to law, the Supreme Court shall issue an order remanding the plan to the commission and directing the commission to reapportion and redistrict the Commonwealth in a manner not inconsistent with such order.

(e) When the Supreme Court has finally decided an appeal or when the last day for filing an appeal has passed with no appeal taken, the reapportionment and redistricting plan shall have the force of law and the districts therein provided shall be used thereafter in elections [to the General Assembly] until the next reapportionment and redistricting as required under this section 17.

(f) Any district which does not include the residence from which a member of the Senate was elected whether or not scheduled for election at the next general election shall elect a Senator at such election.

(g) The General Assembly shall appropriate sufficient funds for the compensation and expenses of members and staff appointed by the commission, and other necessary expenses. The members of the commission shall be entitled to such compensation for their services as the General Assembly from time to time shall determine, but no part thereof shall be paid until a preliminary plan is filed. If a preliminary plan is filed but the commission fails to file a revised or final plan within the time prescribed, the commission members shall forfeit all right to compensation not paid.
(h) If a preliminary, revised or final reapportionment and redistricting plan is not filed by the commission [within the time prescribed by this section unless the time be extended by the Supreme Court for cause shown, the Supreme Court shall immediately proceed on its own motion to reapportion the Commonwealth.] by October 1 of each year ending in one, the following shall apply:

(1) The commission shall consider the proposed reapportionment and redistricting plan under this section.

(2) Not later than October 15 of each year ending in one, the commission shall submit at least two, but not more than three, maps for reapportionment and redistricting of congressional, senatorial and representative districts to the General Assembly. All maps submitted to the General Assembly under this paragraph shall be made available for review by the public for a period of not less than 10 days prior to any vote by the General Assembly.

(3) The General Assembly shall approve one map submitted in each category by a two-thirds vote of each chamber.

(4) If the General Assembly fails to approve the maps under paragraph (3) by December 31 of each year ending in one, the General Assembly shall submit the same sets of maps for each category to the Supreme Court within seven days, which shall approve one map submitted in each category. Upon receipt of the maps submitted under this paragraph, the Supreme Court shall immediately direct the appointment of a special master. The special master shall hold a hearing and take testimony on the maps submitted by the General Assembly and return the record and a transcript of the testimony together with a report and recommendations as prescribed by general rules of procedure.
Any plan approved by the commission finally shall supersede all previous plans.

(i) Any reapportionment and redistricting plan filed by the commission, or ordered or prepared approved by the Supreme Court General Assembly or Supreme Court upon the failure of the commission to act, shall be published by the elections officer once in at least one newspaper of general circulation in each senatorial and representative district. The publication shall contain a map of the Commonwealth showing the complete reapportionment [of the General Assembly] and redistricting by districts, and a map showing the reapportionment reapportioned and redistricted districts in the area normally served by the newspaper in which the publication is made. The publication shall also state the population of the senatorial and representative districts having the smallest and largest population and the percentage variation of such districts from the average population for senatorial and representative districts.

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

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