THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 93   Session of 2021

INTRODUCED BY WEBSTER, ROWE, SANCHEZ, HOHENSTEIN, KINSEY, GALLOWAY, HILL-EVANS AND ISAACSON, APRIL 23, 2021

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, APRIL 23, 2021

A RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Joint State Government Commission to conduct a
2   study on the feasibility of computational redistricting in
3   Pennsylvania.

4   WHEREAS, Pennsylvania law requires that a five-member

5 commission be responsible for redrawing congressional and State

6 legislative district boundaries after each decennial census; and

7   WHEREAS, Congressional reapportionment plans are subject to

8 the strictest Federal requirements and must be approved through

9 the standard legislative process; and

10   WHEREAS, State legislative districts must be composed of

11 compact and contiguous territory with no division of counties or

12 municipalities unless absolutely necessary; and

13   WHEREAS, The General Assembly does not vote on State

14 legislative districts nor does the Governor have the power to

15 veto them; and

16   WHEREAS, Local-level districts are determined by each

17 municipality's governing body following each decennial census;

18 and

1   WHEREAS, The redistricting process is often politicized and

2 leads to gerrymandered districts; and

3   WHEREAS, Gerrymandering creates districts with complex shapes

4 that seek to dilute the vote of one party in favor of another;

5 and

6   WHEREAS, Both major political parties have practiced

7 gerrymandering nationwide; and

8   WHEREAS, Laws exist at the Federal and State levels to

9 safeguard the rights of residents during redistricting; and

10   WHEREAS, In practice, redistricting laws do little to reduce

11 the occurrence of gerrymandering; and

12   WHEREAS, One possible solution to partisan gerrymandering is

13 the use of computer algorithms, known as computational

14 redistricting, to draw legislative districts; and

15   WHEREAS, A transition to the use of computational

16 redistricting would minimize human involvement in the

17 redistricting process; therefore be it

18   RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives direct the Joint

19 State Government Commission to conduct a study on the

20 feasibility of computational redistricting in Pennsylvania; and

21 be it further

22   RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission study

23 shall include, at a minimum, the following:

24   (1) Cost-benefit analysis on the implementation of

25   computational redistricting.

26   (2) Analysis of the implementation and use of

27   computational redistricting in other states, if applicable.

28   (3) Analysis of the implementation and use of

29   computational redistricting in other countries, if

30   applicable.

1   (4)   Input from stakeholders and interest groups

2   detailing the possible positive and negative outcomes of

3   using computational redistricting.

4   (5)   Public comment on the potential implementation of

5   computational redistricting.

6   (6)   Recommendations for legislative action to implement

7   computational redistricting;

8   and be it further

9   RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission be

10 authorized to request information from the United States Census

11 Bureau for the study on behalf of the House of Representatives;

12 and be it further

13 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission be

14 authorized to request information from the Department of State

15 and the Secretary of the Commonwealth for the study on behalf of

16 the House of Representatives; and be it further

17 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission be

18 authorized to request information from government entities

19 outside of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for the study on

20 behalf of the House of Representatives; and be it further

21 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission report

22 its findings and recommendations to the House of Representatives

23 no later than one year after the adoption of this resolution.