



# FAIR DISTRICTS PA

Working to Ensure Fair Districts & Fair Elections

## Summary of Senate Bill 22

Fair Districts PA is supporting state Senate Bill 22, a bipartisan proposal to put an independent citizens commission in charge of both legislative and congressional redistricting. The bill was jointly introduced February 27 by Sens. Lisa Boscola, a Democrat, and Mario Scavello, a Republican. Eight additional senators signed on as co-sponsors: Patrick Browne, Judith Schwank, John Blake, Andrew Dinniman, Daylin Leach, Anthony Williams, John Yudichak and Art Haywood. The bill now awaits action by the Senate State Government Committee, chaired by Mike Folmer.

The new bill is modeled after a similar plan in California. It would begin the process of changing the state constitution to create a new 11-member redistricting commission, composed of citizen volunteers without ties to elected officials who meet additional criteria to be specified by the legislature. Using those criteria, the Pennsylvania Secretary of State would create three pools of qualified candidates, with one pool representing each of the major parties and a third composed of third-party or independent voters. No elected officials, candidates, political party officials, their aides or spouses would be eligible to serve, nor would anyone who has recently served in such a capacity. Legislative leaders from both houses and parties would be able to strike a designated number of candidates from each pool.

Redistricting commissioners would be chosen at random from the three pools of eligible candidates, with four from each major party and three from the group of independent or third-party voters. Approval of a final plan would require at least seven votes, including at least one from each group.

The commission would establish transparent procedures and adhere to a strict timetable for its work, providing meaningful opportunity for public input prior to drawing plans and again before adopting final plans. All information used in creating plans would be available on a publicly accessible website. By law, in developing new district boundaries, the commission would not consider prior election results, the party affiliations of registered voters or the addresses of incumbents or any other individuals.

Once approved by the commission, the new district maps would not be subject to approval by the General Assembly or the governor. Citizens aggrieved by a final plan could appeal it directly to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

No other nation allows the conflict of interest created by politicians drawing lines that directly govern their own elections. The proposed amendment provides multiple safeguards for a more fair, less partisan process and would reduce the ability of either party to manipulate district lines to its own advantage.

Fair Districts PA and allied organizations are deeply concerned with the pending proposal to reduce the size of the state House without this additional amendment to ensure a more impartial, independent and transparent redistricting process.