



Two Bills/One Commission

Summary of House Bills 22 and 23

House Bill 23 will create an independent citizens commission to handle the drawing of federal Congressional districts and does not require a constitutional amendment. The bill was introduced by Representative Steve Samuelson (D-135) with Rep. Tom Murt (R-152) as the second sponsor.

The other bill (HB-22) will establish the commission model for drawing state legislative districts which does require a constitutional amendment. That means HB-22 must pass two consecutive sessions of the House (this session and within the first two months of the next session) and then go to the voters in May 2021. While the calendar is very tight, it can be done. Representative Tom Murt is the prime sponsor of this bill with Representative Samuelson as the second sponsor.

The elegance of this two-bill approach is that the Commission put in place by HB-23 to handle Congressional redistricting will be the same Commission to oversee state legislative redistricting once voters pass HB-22. Thus, by the time of HB-22's approval, there will be no need to assemble a new Commission. A quick summary of both bills follows:

House Bill 23: Statute to Change the Congressional Redistricting Process

- Creates an 11-person commission to oversee redistricting.
- Four commissioners from each major party, three not affiliated with either major party.
- Three applicant pools, one for each party and the non-affiliated group (No Politicians!)
- Diversity required.
- Transparency including public input before and after the maps are drawn.
- Maps must comply with Voting Rights Act provisions.
- Compact and contiguous districts – No Cracking! A county may not contain more Congressional Districts than the number required by population plus one. Written explanations required for exceptions.
- If commission deadlocks, elimination voting is used to resolve it (commissioners vote to rank the maps under consideration. The map receiving the lowest rank is dropped following each round of voting until one map remains.).
- No partisan favoring for anyone!

House Bill 22: Amendment to the Pennsylvania Constitution to Change State Legislative Redistricting Process

- Uses the same commission created by passage of HB 22
- Same safeguards as HB 22
- Same fail safe in the event of a deadlock – Elimination voting
- Different approval timeline (must pass in two consecutive sessions, then voter referendum)

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