

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1215 Session of
2025

INTRODUCED BY SOLOMON, MEHAFFIE, MADSEN, VENKAT, PROBST,
NEILSON, WARREN, KENYATTA, FREEMAN, OTTEN AND GREEN,
APRIL 15, 2025

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, APRIL 15, 2025

AN ACT

1 Providing for the establishment, conduct and composition of the
2 Independent Congressional Redistricting Commission, for
3 adoption of congressional district maps, for prioritized
4 redistricting criteria, for failure to adopt final
5 congressional district map and for judicial review.

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7 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
8 hereby enacts as follows:

9 CHAPTER 1

10 PRELIMINARY PROVISIONS

11 Section 101. Short title.

12 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Fair
13 Congressional Redistricting Act.

14 Section 102. Definitions.

15 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
16 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
17 context clearly indicates otherwise:

18 "Application." An application for a position as a
19 commissioner on the Independent Congressional Redistricting
20 Commission.

21 "Commission." The Independent Congressional Redistricting
22 Commission established under section 301(a).

23 "Secretary." The Secretary of the Commonwealth.

24 CHAPTER 3

25 INDEPENDENT CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING COMMISSION

26 Section 301. Establishment and conduct of commission.

27 (a) Establishment.--In each year ending in zero, an
28 Independent Congressional Redistricting Commission shall be
29 established for the purpose of drawing the congressional
30 district maps for this Commonwealth.

1 (b) Conduct.--The commission shall be convened no later than
2 May 1 in each year ending in one. The commission shall have the
3 following duties:

4 (1) Conduct an open and transparent process enabling
5 full public consideration of and comment on the drawing of
6 congressional district maps.

7 (2) Draw congressional district maps according to the
8 redistricting criteria specified in this act.

9 (3) Conduct itself with integrity and fairness.

10 Section 302. Composition of commission.

11 (a) Composition.--The commission shall consist of the
12 following commissioners:

13 (1) Five commissioners who are registered with the
14 largest political party in this Commonwealth.

15 (2) Five commissioners who are registered with the
16 second-largest political party in this Commonwealth.

17 (3) Five commissioners who are not registered with the
18 largest political party or second-largest political party in
19 this Commonwealth.

20 (b) Diversity.--The commission as a whole shall reflect the
21 Commonwealth's geographic and demographic diversity, including
22 racial, ethnic and gender diversity, to the greatest extent
23 practicable.

24 Section 303. Application process.

25 (a) Administration.--The secretary shall administer an
26 application process for individuals seeking appointment to the
27 commission.

28 (b) Process.--

29 (1) The application period shall begin on November 15 in
30 each year ending in zero and end on January 15 in each year

1 ending in one.

2 (2) The secretary shall design the application to obtain
3 all information necessary to determine each applicant's
4 qualifications, party registration, relevant experiences,
5 skills and commitments, including experiences with community
6 leadership, skills in strategic planning and commitments to
7 compromise and fairness. If the documentation submitted by an
8 applicant is insufficient to determine whether the applicant
9 is eligible to serve on the commission, the applicant shall
10 be deemed ineligible to serve on the commission.

11 (3) Beginning September 1 in each year ending in zero
12 and ending on January 15 in each year ending in one, the
13 secretary shall adequately provide public notice of the
14 application process, including the following:

15 (i) The application period, commissioner
16 qualifications and selection process in the 10 most
17 prominent print or online media outlets and in at least
18 one prominent print publication in each of the 67
19 counties in this Commonwealth as determined by
20 circulation or online readership.

21 (ii) The application period, commissioner
22 qualifications and the selection process on the home page
23 of all publicly accessible Commonwealth agency Internet
24 websites.

25 (iii) The application period, commissioner
26 qualifications and the selection process on local
27 television stations during local news broadcasts in this
28 Commonwealth.

29 (iv) The application period, commissioner
30 qualifications and the selection process in media outlets

1 that serve specific racial and ethnic communities in this
2 Commonwealth.

3 (4) The secretary shall continue to accept applications
4 until all of the following are satisfied:

5 (i) At least 60 individuals who are registered with
6 the largest political party in this Commonwealth have
7 applied.

8 (ii) At least 60 individuals who are registered with
9 the second-largest political party in this Commonwealth
10 have applied.

11 (iii) At least 60 individuals who are not registered
12 with the largest political party or second-largest
13 political party in this Commonwealth have applied.

14 (5) If between November 15 and January 15 or the close
15 of the application period, the secretary has not received at
16 least 60 applications from the applicants specified under
17 paragraph (4)(i), (ii) and (iii), the secretary shall
18 continue to accept applications until all of the following
19 are satisfied:

20 (i) At least 60 individuals who are registered with
21 the largest political party in this Commonwealth have
22 applied.

23 (ii) At least 60 individuals who are registered with
24 the second-largest political party in this Commonwealth
25 have applied.

26 (iii) At least 60 individuals who are not registered
27 with the largest political party or second-largest
28 political party in this Commonwealth have applied.

29 (c) Required disclosures.--

30 (1) An applicant must disclose, under the penalty of

perjury, the following information pertaining to the six years before the submission of an application:

(i) Party registration.

(ii) Relevant leadership and community experiences.

(iii) All political contributions over \$250 to Federal, State or municipal candidates or to any committee supporting or opposing the election of candidates to Federal, State or municipal office.

(iv) Contractual and other financial interests with the Commonwealth and with any other government-related entity.

(2) Information disclosed under paragraph (1) shall be made publicly available on the commission's publicly accessible Internet website under section 307(c).

Section 304. Qualifications and terms of commissioners.

(a) Qualifications.--

(1) An individual shall be eligible to serve as a commissioner if, during the three years before submission of an application, the individual has met all of the following criteria:

(i) The individual has been continuously registered as a voter in this Commonwealth.

(ii) The individual has voted in one of the last three Statewide elections.

(iii) The individual has been continuously registered to vote in this Commonwealth and is unaffiliated with a political party in this Commonwealth or the individual has been continuously registered with any of the following:

(A) The largest political party in this

1 Commonwealth.

2 (B) The second-largest political party in this
3 Commonwealth.

4 (C) A political party that is not the largest
5 political party or second-largest political party in
6 this Commonwealth.

7 (2) An individual may not serve as a commissioner if,
8 during the six years before submission of an application, the
9 individual:

10 (i) has been a candidate for or has been elected or
11 appointed to any Federal, State, county or first class or
12 second class city office or judgeship;

13 (ii) has served as an elected or appointed member of
14 the Federal, State or county committee of a political
15 party;

16 (iii) has served as an officer, employee or paid
17 consultant to a political party, a political action
18 committee or a campaign committee of a candidate for
19 Federal or State public office; or

20 (iv) has been registered as a lobbyist as defined in
21 65 Pa.C.S. § 13A03 (relating to definitions) or a
22 lobbyist under the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995
23 (Public Law 104-65, 2 U.S.C. § 1601 et seq.).

24 (3) Any of the following may not serve as a
25 commissioner:

26 (i) A staff member of, consultant to, contractor for
27 or any individual with an immediate family relationship
28 with an elected or appointed official or judge
29 disqualified under paragraph (2)(i).

30 (ii) A member of Congress.

1 (iii) A member of the General Assembly.

2 (iv) An employee of the secretary.

3 (b) Terms.--A commissioner's term shall expire upon the
4 appointment of the succeeding commission.

5 Section 305. Selection and appointment of commissioners.

6 (a) Selection.--

7 (1) From the applications received, the secretary shall
8 select 120 applicants who meet the requirements under this
9 act to serve on the commission by February 15 of each year
10 ending in one. The secretary shall give due consideration to
11 promoting the racial, ethnic, demographic and gender
12 diversity of the selected applicants.

13 (2) The secretary shall divide the 120 applicants
14 selected under paragraph (1) into the following categories:

15 (i) Forty applicants who are registered with the
16 largest political party in this Commonwealth.

17 (ii) Forty applicants who are registered with the
18 second-largest political party in this Commonwealth.

19 (iii) Forty applicants who are not registered with
20 the largest political party or second-largest political
21 party in this Commonwealth.

22 (3) After selecting and dividing the applicants under
23 paragraphs (1) and (2), the secretary shall transmit their
24 applications to the chair and minority chair of the State
25 Government Committee of the Senate and the chair and minority
26 chair of the State Government Committee of the House of
27 Representatives. Upon receipt of the applications, the chair
28 and minority chair the State Government Committee of the
29 Senate and the chair and minority chair of the State
30 Government Committee of the House of Representatives shall

1 reduce each category of applicants under paragraph (2) by
2 five applicants for a total of 60 reductions by March 1 of
3 each year ending in one. No more than one chair or minority
4 chair of the State Government Committee of the Senate or the
5 State Government Committee of the House of Representatives
6 may remove an individual applicant from consideration. In
7 reducing the size of each category of applicants under
8 paragraph (2), the chair and minority chair of the State
9 Government Committee of the Senate and the chair and minority
10 chair of the State Government Committee of the House of
11 Representatives shall give due consideration to promoting the
12 racial, ethnic, demographic and gender diversity of the
13 commission.

14 (b) Appointments.--

15 (1) From the applicants remaining after the reduction of
16 applicants under subsection (a), the Majority Leader and
17 Minority Leader of the Senate and the Majority Leader and
18 Minority Leader of the House of Representatives shall each
19 appoint one commissioner who belongs to the appointer's
20 political party by April 1 of each year ending in one. In
21 making the appointments, the Majority Leader and Minority
22 Leader of the Senate and the Majority Leader and Minority
23 Leader of the House of Representatives shall give due
24 consideration to promoting the overall racial, ethnic,
25 demographic and gender diversity of the commission.

26 (2) No later than April 7 of each year ending in one
27 after the appointments are made under paragraph (1), the
28 secretary shall, at a public meeting, randomly appoint the
29 following:

30 (i) One commissioner who is registered with the

1 largest political party in this Commonwealth.

2 (ii) One commissioner who is registered with the
3 second-largest political party in this Commonwealth.

4 (iii) Three commissioners who are not registered
5 with the largest political party or second-largest
6 political party in this Commonwealth.

7 (3) After the appointments are made under paragraph (2),
8 the nine commissioners appointed shall meet publicly,
9 promptly review the remaining applications and by majority
10 vote, including the vote of at least one commissioner
11 appointed from each category of applicants under subsection
12 (a)(2), appoint the final six commissioners. The final six
13 commissioners shall consist of two commissioners appointed
14 from each category of applicants under subsection (a)(2). The
15 final six commissioners shall be appointed in a manner that
16 ensures that the commission is as representative of the
17 Commonwealth's geographic, racial, gender, ethnic and other
18 demographic diversity as possible and possesses the relevant
19 skills to perform the duties specified under this act.

20 Section 306. Removal of commissioners and vacancies.

21 (a) Removal.--

22 (1) A commissioner may be removed by a majority vote of
23 the other commissioners, comprised of no less than the
24 following:

25 (i) One commissioner who is registered with the
26 largest political party in this Commonwealth.

27 (ii) One commissioner who is registered with the
28 second-largest political party in this Commonwealth.

29 (iii) One commissioner who is not registered with
30 the largest political party or the second-largest

1 political party in this Commonwealth.

2 (2) A commissioner may be removed after the commissioner
3 receives proper notice and an opportunity to be heard if the
4 commissioner:

5 (i) exhibits a substantial neglect of duty or gross
6 misconduct or is otherwise unable to discharge the
7 commissioner's duties; or

8 (ii) missed three consecutive meetings at which a
9 vote is taken unless the absence is due to serious
10 illness of the commissioner or death of the
11 commissioner's immediate family member.

12 (3) Any vote to remove a commissioner under paragraph
13 (1) shall be in accordance with section 307(a).

14 (4) As used in this subsection, the term "substantial
15 neglect of duty" means any conduct that demonstrates a
16 commissioner's inability to act with integrity and fairness,
17 including the failure to comply with the communications
18 disclosure required specified under section 307(d).

19 (b) Vacancies.--The commission shall fill a vacancy created
20 under subsection (a) by appointing a qualified individual who is
21 willing to serve from the applicants selected under section
22 305(a)(1) and the same category of applicants under section
23 305(a)(2) that the commissioner who created the vacancy was
24 appointed from before the vacancy was created.

25 Section 307. Actions by commission.

26 (a) Actions.--Actions by the commission shall be in a public
27 meeting by the affirmative vote of no less than nine
28 commissioners, including the following:

29 (1) At least two commissioners registered with the
30 largest political party in this Commonwealth.

1 (2) At least two commissioners registered with the
2 second-largest political party in this Commonwealth.

3 (3) At least two commissioners who are not registered
4 with the largest political party or second-largest political
5 party in this Commonwealth.

6 (b) Chair and vice chair.--At the first meeting of the full
7 commission, the commissioners shall select one of the
8 commissioners to serve as a chair and one of the commissioners
9 to serve as a vice chair. The chair and vice chair may not be
10 registered with the same political party.

11 (c) Internet website.--

12 (1) No later than September 1 of each year ending in
13 zero, the secretary shall establish a publicly accessible
14 Internet website for the commission. Once the commissioners
15 have been appointed under section 305 and a web manager has
16 been hired by the secretary, the commission shall assume
17 responsibility for managing and updating the Internet
18 website.

19 (2) The Internet website shall include all of the
20 following information:

21 (i) A description of the role of the commission.

22 (ii) Timely information about the application
23 process and public bidding process.

24 (iii) Timely information about the time, place and
25 purpose of commission meetings.

26 (iv) A portal for the submission of proposed
27 congressional district maps.

28 (v) All congressional district maps drawn by the
29 commission or submitted by the public.

30 (vi) The underlying data used to create or evaluate

1 maps in a format easily usable for analysis.

2 (vii) Precinct-level shapefiles and census block
3 equivalency.

4 (viii) Precinct-level results from Statewide primary
5 and general elections for the past 10 years.

6 (ix) All reports analyzing the maps and transcripts
7 of the commission.

8 (x) A video archive of all meetings of the
9 commission.

10 (3) The commission shall post any data regarding
11 congressional redistricting on the publicly accessible
12 Internet website at the same time the data is made available
13 to the commission and the data shall be considered public
14 record as defined in section 102 of the act of February 14,
15 2008 (P.L.6, No.3), known as the Right-to-Know Law.

16 (d) Communications.--

17 (1) The commission shall be considered a public body
18 subject to 65 Pa.C.S. Ch. 7 (relating to open meetings), the
19 Right-to-Know Law and mileage reimbursement as provided by
20 the laws of this Commonwealth.

21 (2) Except for documents or communications subject to
22 attorney-client privilege, documents or communications
23 created or received by a commissioner, a commission staff
24 member or a consultant to the commission as a part of the
25 commission's duties under this act shall not be exempt by any
26 privilege.

27 (3) Records pertaining to a commission's action on a
28 preliminary congressional district map or the analysis of a
29 preliminary congressional district map shall be publicly
30 disclosed on the commission's publicly accessible Internet

1 website under subsection (c) as soon as practicable after the
2 records are created.

3 (4) A commissioner, commission staff member or
4 consultant to the commissioner may not communicate with any
5 outside persons attempting to influence the congressional
6 district map drawing process outside of public meetings and
7 public comment periods. To the extent that a commissioner,
8 commission staff member or consultant to the commissioner
9 receives a communication described under this paragraph, the
10 communication shall be publicly disclosed on the commission's
11 publicly accessible Internet website under subsection (c) as
12 soon as practicable after the communication is received.

13 (e) Public hearings.--

14 (1) To identify communities of interest and obtain other
15 information relevant to the drawing of congressional
16 districts, the commission shall seek public input. Before any
17 proposed congressional district maps are drawn, the
18 commission shall hold no less than nine public hearings
19 across this Commonwealth to solicit testimony from a
20 representative cross-section of this Commonwealth's
21 population. The commission shall provide at least 14 days'
22 notice before a public hearing is held as specified under
23 paragraph (2).

24 (2) The commission shall adequately advertise a public
25 hearing and schedule a public hearing in a manner to
26 encourage attendance, including scheduling the public hearing
27 outside of regular work hours and using technology that
28 allows for real-time, virtual participation and feedback in
29 the public hearing. The commission shall record a public
30 hearing and post a video of the public hearing on the

1 commission's publicly accessible Internet website under
2 subsection (c) within three days of the public hearing.

3 (f) Public participation.--

4 (1) The commission shall provide a meaningful
5 opportunity for all persons to participate in the
6 congressional redistricting process, including the following:

7 (i) Issuing the notice under subsection (e)(1) in
8 multiple languages.

9 (ii) Ensuring that adequate translation services are
10 available at public hearings.

11 (iii) Complying with all Federal and State law
12 protections for individuals with disabilities.

13 (2) If the initial public input during the commission's
14 public hearings does not appear to represent the diversity of
15 this Commonwealth, the commission shall take remedial steps,
16 including conducting additional outreach, holding additional
17 public hearings and identifying underrepresented communities.

18 Section 308. Adoption of congressional district maps.

19 (a) Public submissions.--During the proposed congressional
20 district map drawing process, a member of the public may submit
21 maps, portions of maps or other comments for consideration by
22 the commission. Submissions under this subsection shall be made
23 publicly available on the commission's publicly accessible
24 Internet website under section 307(c) and open to comment.

25 (b) Proposed and final maps.--

26 (1) The commission shall release a proposed
27 congressional district map and display the proposed
28 congressional district map for a minimum of 30 days for
29 public comment in a manner designed to achieve the widest
30 public access reasonably possible before acting to approve a

1 final congressional district map.

2 (2) The commission shall hold no fewer than six public
3 hearings in different regions of this Commonwealth after the
4 release of a proposed congressional district map under
5 paragraph (1) and accept comments on the commission's
6 publicly accessible Internet website under section 307(c) and
7 through paper submissions. The commission may not hold more
8 than one hearing in a congressional district.

9 (3) Upon releasing a proposed congressional district map
10 under paragraph (1), the commission shall release population
11 data, geographic data, election data and any other data used
12 to create or evaluate the proposed congressional district
13 map.

14 (4) Before approving a final congressional district map,
15 the commission must make the final congressional district map
16 available for public view and comment for at least seven
17 days. No later than October 15 of each year ending in one,
18 the commission shall act to approve a final congressional
19 district map. Upon approval, the commission shall certify the
20 final congressional district map to the secretary.

21 (5) The commission shall release with a proposed
22 congressional district map and the final congressional
23 district map written evaluations that measure the maps
24 against external metrics. The metrics shall include the
25 following information:

26 (i) The impact of the congressional district maps on
27 the ability of racial or language minorities to elect
28 candidates of choice.

29 (ii) Measures of partisan fairness using multiple
30 accepted methodologies.

1 (iii) The degree to which the congressional district
2 maps preserve or divide communities of interest and
3 counties.

4 Section 309. Prioritized redistricting criteria.

5 (a) Map drawing criteria.--The commission shall establish
6 single-member congressional districts using the following
7 criteria specified in the following order of priority:

8 (1) Congressional districts shall comply with the
9 Constitution of the United States and all applicable Federal
10 laws.

11 (2) Congressional districts shall comply with the
12 Constitution of Pennsylvania.

13 (3) Congressional districts shall be geographically
14 contiguous.

15 (4) Congressional districts shall provide racial and
16 language minorities with an equal opportunity to participate
17 in the political process and shall not dilute or diminish
18 their ability to elect candidates of choice by themselves or
19 in a coalition with others.

20 (5) Congressional districts shall respect the integrity
21 of communities of interest to the extent practicable. Absent
22 compelling evidence to the contrary, respecting communities
23 of interest shall include minimizing county, city, borough
24 and township boundary splits to the extent practicable. As
25 used in this paragraph, the term "community of interest"
26 shall not include common relationships with political parties
27 or political candidates.

28 (b) Prohibitions.--The commission shall comply with all of
29 the following when drawing a final congressional district map:

30 (1) A final congressional district map shall not, when

1 considered on a Statewide basis, unduly favor or disfavor any
2 political party, candidate or incumbent.

3 (2) A congressional district in a final congressional
4 district map shall not dilute or diminish the ability of
5 racial and language minorities to elect candidates of their
6 choice by themselves or in a coalition with others.

7 (3) The commission shall not consider the addresses of
8 incumbent members of Congress in the drawing of a final
9 congressional district map and may only consider election
10 data after the nine hearings soliciting public input on
11 communities of interest have been conducted under section
12 307(e).

13 (4) The commission shall not split precincts unless
14 necessary to satisfy the congressional district map drawing
15 criteria specified under subsection (a). If the commission
16 finds it is necessary to split a precinct, the commission
17 shall explain its decision in its written evaluation and
18 inform the secretary.

19 Section 310. Failure to adopt final congressional district map.

20 (a) Transmission to General Assembly.--If the commission
21 fails to adopt a final congressional district map by October 15
22 of each year ending in one, the final congressional district map
23 made available for public view under section 308(b)(4) shall
24 be transmitted to the General Assembly with the written
25 evaluations under section 308(b)(5) no later than October 21 of
26 each year ending in one. A commissioner may submit additional
27 written comments with the final congressional district map
28 transmitted under this subsection.

29 (b) Approval of final map.--No later than December 1 of each
30 year ending in one, the Senate and the House of Representatives

1 must approve the same congressional district map transmitted
2 under subsection (a) by a majority vote before the congressional
3 district map can be certified as the final congressional
4 district map by the secretary.

5 (c) Process.--Within seven calendar days, the President pro
6 tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of
7 Representatives shall promptly bring the congressional district
8 map transmitted under subsection (a) to the floor of the
9 appropriate chambers for a floor vote. If the congressional
10 district map does not garner votes totaling 50% plus one of the
11 total number of voting members of the General Assembly in both
12 chambers, the commission shall submit a new congressional
13 district map to the General Assembly within seven days. The
14 General Assembly shall vote on the new congressional district
15 map in accordance with this section and the process specified
16 under this subsection shall continue until a congressional
17 district map garners a majority vote in the Senate and the House
18 of Representatives.

19 Section 311. Judicial review.

20 (a) Legal standing.--The commission shall be the only entity
21 with standing to defend a legal action regarding a final
22 congressional district map from money appropriated by the
23 General Assembly funding to defend an action. The commission
24 shall select the legal counsel to defend a legal action
25 regarding a final congressional district map.

26 (b) Jurisdiction.--The Supreme Court shall have original
27 jurisdiction in all proceedings in which a final congressional
28 district map is subject to a legal action.

29 (c) Petitions.--A registered voter in this Commonwealth may
30 file a petition for legal action within 45 days after the final

1 congressional district map has been certified by the secretary
2 or approved by the General Assembly under section 310(b). The
3 Supreme Court shall consolidate legal actions if multiple
4 petitions are filed and prioritize redistricting-related
5 petitions.

6 Section 312. Funding of commission.

7 (a) Compensation.--Commissioners shall be compensated at the
8 rate of \$300 for each day the commissioner is engaged in
9 commission business. The compensation under this subsection
10 shall be adjusted for inflation for each commission. Employees
11 of the Department of State and commissioners shall be reimbursed
12 for reasonable personal expenses incurred in connection with
13 duties performed in accordance with this act and as otherwise
14 prescribed by the laws of this Commonwealth for employees of
15 this Commonwealth.

16 (b) Funding.--The General Assembly shall allocate sufficient
17 funding for the commission to meet estimated expenses for a
18 three-year period, including expenses incurred in the selection
19 of commissioners, hiring staff and a Statewide public education
20 and outreach program.

21 (c) Office space.--The Department of General Services shall
22 make adequate office space available for the operation of the
23 commission.

24 (d) Commission staff.--

25 (1) The commission shall hire technical staff,
26 administrative staff, legal counsel, a web manager and other
27 technical consultants as necessary through a public bid
28 process in accordance with 62 Pa.C.S. (relating to
29 procurement).

30 (2) A person employed by the commission shall act in the

1 public interest of the residents of this Commonwealth and not
2 any individual, entity or special interest.

3 CHAPTER 21

4 MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

5 Section 2101. Severability.

6 The provisions of this act are severable. If any provision of
7 this act or its application to any person or circumstance is
8 held invalid, the invalidity shall not affect other provisions
9 or applications of this act which can be given effect without
10 the invalid provision or application.

11 Section 2102. Effective date.

12 This act shall take effect immediately.