BACKGROUND

Every ten years, all 50 states redraw their electoral district lines. And in Virginia, this important responsibility is entrusted to members of the General Assembly.

This conflict of interest has led to politicians picking their voters, when it should be the other way around. For centuries, elected officials have drawn maps to keep themselves in power.

**There's a better way to draw fair districts.**

And this year, Virginia voters have a chance to approve Amendment One, which would end partisan gerrymandering through the creation of our first-ever commission on redistricting. If passed, it would be the most significant improvement on the Commonwealth’s outdated and discriminatory redistricting laws in our history. The Commission will:

**END UNFAIR REDISTRICTING LAWS.**
By voting to support the amendment, Virginians will finally create a fair and inclusive process that will replace our outdated and discriminatory redistricting laws. This will ensure that legislative district lines are drawn fairly and do not favor one party over the other.

**BE LED BY CITIZENS.**
Politicians will no longer have free rein to choose whoever they want to represent. Not only will citizens be part of this process for the first time in our history, but a citizen will also serve as chair of the commission itself.

**PROTECT CIVIL RIGHTS.**
Historic voting rights protections for minority communities will be added to the Virginia Constitution for the first time. In fact, Justin Levitt, a former Obama administration Justice Department official said that the “amendment requires adherence to the Voting Rights Act ... and then goes beyond,” and former Attorney General Eric Holder said that he “support(s) - and will work to make effective - the Commission in Virginia to do the redistricting in 2021.”

**BE TRANSPARENT.**
Instead of shady backroom deals, the new system will be completely transparent to voters and watchdogs. Public meetings will be held across Virginia, with all data and notes from the meetings being completely open to the public.
ENDORSEMENTS

That’s why Amendment One has been endorsed by anti-gerrymandering groups and advocacy organizations in Virginia and across the country.

FAQ

Q: Why is a constitutional amendment necessary?

A: Because amending the constitution is the only way to have a legally-binding solution. While some legislators have proposed alternative solutions, Article II, Section 6 of the Virginia Constitution is crystal clear: “electoral districts (are) established by the General Assembly.” Period. No stand-alone legislation can undo those words. Any commission created without a constitutional amendment will simply advise the General Assembly, but would not be legally-binding. In other words, a constitutional amendment is the only way to take map-drawing power away from partisan politicians who want to protect their own re-election prospects.

Q: What happens if the amendment fails?

A: Virginia’s unfair laws remain in place. Politicians will continue to have free rein to pick their voters behind closed doors, regardless of which party is in charge. Nothing can legally require them to change the status quo in 2021. In fact, the Senate Privileges and Elections Committee unanimously approved an explanation of the amendment that said: A ‘no’ vote will leave the sole responsibility for drawing the districts with the General Assembly.