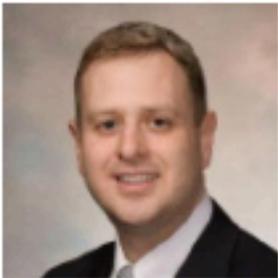


ARLINGTON'S DELEGATES AGREE VOTERS SHOULD OPPOSE THE REDISTRICTING AMENDMENT

We would put our redistricting reform bona fides up against anyone else's in the General Assembly. In fact, nonpartisan redistricting reform has been one of our top priorities for years. Among the four of us, we have introduced or copatroned numerous bills which would have taken politics out of the redistricting process. We have been pushing legislation that would have required the General Assembly to use objective, well-defined, and specific nonpartisan criteria in drawing Virginia's state and congressional legislative districts. Our bills were consistently killed by the Republican majority in a Privileges and Elections subcommittee.



DEL. PATRICK HOPE HD - 47

We have introduced bills that would have required nonpartisan criteria be used when drawing legislative maps, bills that would have removed partisanship from the redistricting process, and proposed constitutional amendments that would have created truly non-partisan redistricting. They all met the same fate.

We were not alone. Many of our colleagues introduced similar legislation and fought hard to advance the cause of redistricting reform, only to be thwarted at every turn by the then-Republican majority. That frustrating history is what made it particularly stomach-turning to listen to House Republicans this past session – now in the minority – give speeches lecturing Democrats on the importance of redistricting reform, expressing their great disappointment that they might not be able to vote for redistricting reform, and attempting to shame the majority for taking what they thought was too long to act on the issue. The hypocrisy and disingenuousness were knee deep in the House Chamber.



DEL. MARK LEVINE HD - 45

There was and is, as you know, disagreement within the House Democratic Caucus about the best way to accomplish redistricting reform this year. But there was NO disagreement about the need to accomplish redistricting reform. It is NOT the case that a vote against the constitutional amendment was a vote against reform, and neither is it the case that if the amendment does not pass at the ballot box this November, the Democrats will gerrymander in 2021.

Quite the contrary: every Democrat in the House and the Senate is on record committing to draw district lines in 2021 in a fair, apolitical, non-gerrymandered way. We passed legislation (HB1255) by a party-line vote to ban gerrymandering in Virginia and to set up detailed and fair criteria for drawing districts. That law just went into effect July 1. Democrats have talked the talk, and now that we are in the majority, we will walk the walk. And we will continue to do so, as long as we have power to do so.



DEL. ALFONSO LOPEZ HD - 49

The only question is how. Reform can happen if the voters reject the proposed amendment this November. We can then pass legislation in 2021 ensuring that the redistricting process is conducted by an independent commission. What the Republicans thwarted when they held the majority, we will be able to accomplish now that we are in the majority.

After a great deal of soul-searching, with some of us facing one of the toughest votes we have ever taken in the House, we voted against the proposed amendment when it came before us. We were persuaded that the better approach is to pass legislation next session creating an independent commission.



DEL. RIP SULLIVAN HD - 50

We stand by that vote, will vote against the constitutional amendment this November, and encourage you to vote NO as well.

As we have described above, though, we are as committed as we have ever been to doing everything in our power to ensure that, when the lines are drawn in 2021, we will finally move from a system in which the politicians choose their voters to one in which the voters choose their politicians.