

February 28, 2020

The Honorable Eileen Filler-Corn
The Honorable Joseph Lindsey
900 East Main Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Honorable Delegates,

We are a coalition of nonpartisan groups who advocate for a better democracy across Virginia and the country. Together, we respectfully ask the House of Delegates to pass the fair maps constitutional amendment and pair it with strong enabling legislation. It is time for Virginia to move past its history of gerrymandering and ensure that voters are able to choose their politicians and not the other way around.

Next year, it will be time for Virginia to begin the process of redrawing electoral maps. Today, the Virginia House of Delegates can vote to put the amendment, which will ensure that the process is done in a fair and transparent manner, before voters in November 2020.

For far too long, Virginia has been plagued by gerrymandering. Politicians have drawn electoral maps in ways that ensured their seats were safe, shielding them from transparency and accountability at voters' expense. The electoral maps that were created during the 2011 cycle were so badly gerrymandered along racial lines that they were recently struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court.

The General Assembly has the opportunity to put all of this in the past.

Passing SJ18 with the already passed enabling legislation in HB758 would put a bipartisan redistricting commission before voters while pairing it with strong enabling legislation that helps to ensure guardrails for the Supreme Court of Virginia and provide protections for Virginia's communities of color. While the amendment is not perfect, it is a major step forward.

A December 2019 survey conducted by Christopher Newport University shows that Virginia voters strongly support the second passage of the redistricting reform constitutional amendment, by a 70%-15% margin.

Relying on either the status quo or a statutory fix will not give Virginians sufficient protections from another cycle of gerrymandered districts that will ultimately be challenged in court. SJ18 and HB758 will.

The Virginia House of Delegates should leave Virginia's gerrymandered history in the past and give voters an opportunity to ensure fair maps by approving the bipartisan gerrymandering solution.

Respectfully,

Campaign Legal Center
ACLU of Virginia
Arnold Ventures
Fair Elections Project
League of Women Voters of the United States
League of Women Voters of Virginia

One Virginia 2021
The Redistrict Network
Represent Us
Unite America
Voters Not Politicians