

Senate Bill Will Curtail Gerrymandering

Oct 2, 2020

Good news for voters in Pennsylvania: A Senate bill to ensure transparency and oversight in drawing voting districts has advanced from committee and should be voted on by the Senate.

PA SB1242 (Legislative and Congressional Redistricting Act) establishes open briefing and comment periods for new district maps created by the Legislature. The final determination of maps will be made at a public meeting. The bill gives voters an opportunity to curtail partisan gerrymandering.

When voting districts are gerrymandered to benefit one party, they become “safe” for legislators, who are unlikely to lose an election because voters are predetermined to be likely to support them. But this process is unsafe for voters like us, whose issues and needs are easily sidelined by career politicians, and who have an uphill fight to be heard on important issues like local schools, roads, and health care.

Pennsylvania voters have spoken clearly. We want to see reforms that create fair districts in which every vote counts equally. A survey from Franklin and Marshall finds that 67 percent of Pennsylvania voters support nonpartisan reforms in the process of drawing state and federal districts, including 66 percent of Democrats, 78 percent of Independents, and 63 percent of Republicans.

I urge Sen. Joe Pittman to support this bill for the good of everyone in Indiana County. The Senate will be back in session on Oct. 5, for just two weeks. Then they go home for the year. Time is very short.

Please join me in contacting Sen. Pittman’s office (senatorpittman.com) and asking that he vote to support SB1242 to bring about meaningful redistricting reform.

Sid Reger

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