

Federation Resolution

**in support of the
2020 Redistricting Commission Amendment
to the
Virginia Constitution**

Approved by the Federation Membership

October 22, 2020

BACKGROUND: In the November 3, 2020, general election, Fairfax County voters will decide YES or NO on a legislative amendment to the Virginia Constitution transferring the power to draw the state's congressional and legislative districts from the state legislature to a redistricting commission composed of eight state legislators and eight citizens. On the ballot, this amendment is listed as:

Virginia Question 1, Redistricting Commission Amendment (2020)

WHEREAS the constitutional amendment, if passed, will empower Virginia's first-ever Redistricting Commission, and is the most significant improvement to defining legislative district boundaries in the history of the Commonwealth. Benefits of this amendment will:

- End unfair districting boundaries - A fair and inclusive districting process will replace Virginia's outdated and discriminatory redistricting laws and boundaries;
- Protect civil rights - Voter rights protections for minority communities will be included in the Virginia Constitution for the first time. In fact, Justin Levitt, a former Justice Department official in the Obama administration, said this "amendment requires adherence to the Voting Rights Act ... and then goes beyond.";
- Require citizens to lead the redistricting process - A non-partisan citizen, not an elected politician, will serve as chair of the Redistricting Commission;
- Ensure redistricting transparency - The new Redistricting Commission's meetings, notes, records, and data will be completely transparent to the public and to watchdog organizations; and

WHEREAS, gerrymandered districts are so notorious for their torturous and obscure shapes that the United States Supreme Court ordered Virginia to redraw four unconstitutional Congressional districts because they didn't adhere to the accepted standards of compactness, contiguity, and balanced citizen representation; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Senate ranks tenth in the Nation for the most torturous and obscure boundaries shape factor; and

WHEREAS, the 2019 Federation Survey showed 76% of Fairfax residents support a comprehensive redistricting effort via a non-bipartisan, unbiased Redistricting Commission; and

WHEREAS, Federation Legislative Issues packages in previous years and in 2020 (Ref: <http://www.fairfaxfederation.org/resolutions/ResolutionLegislativeProgram2020Approved20181024.pdf#Page=9>);

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- Identified the current redistricting process for Virginia legislative boundaries as biased and unfair and
- Recommended that a Commission be authorized to perform redistricting duties, as approved by 2019 General Assembly legislation and this constitution amendment implements; and

WHEREAS, many other non-partisan organizations have also have endorsed the passage of this amendment, including the League of Woman Voters, the Washington Post, the Virginia chapter of the ACLU, the Virginian-Pilot, Common Cause, the Virginia League of Conservation Voters, AARP Virginia, the Roanoke Times, the Danville Register and Bee, the Richmond Times-Dispatch and the Washington Business Journal; and

WHEREAS, the full text of the amendment and the Ballot question is at [https://ballotpedia.org/Virginia_Redistricting_Commission_Amendment_\(2020\);](https://ballotpedia.org/Virginia_Redistricting_Commission_Amendment_(2020);)

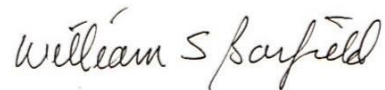
THEREFORE

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations hereby supports passage of the Redistricting Commission Amendment and recommends in this November 2020 general election that Federation member communities and District Councils members vote

YES for the **Virginia Question 1, Redistricting Commission Amendment (2020).**



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William S. Barfield
President

This Resolution is posted at:

<http://www.fairfaxfederation.org/resolutions/ResolutionSupportingRedistrictingConstitutionalAmendmentApproved20201022.pdf>