



**Princeton Gerrymandering Project**  
Princeton, New Jersey 08544

February 26, 2020

The Honorable Eileen Filler-Corn  
Pocahontas Building, Room E605  
900 East Main Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Speaker Filler-Corn:

We are a coalition of nonpartisan advocacy groups that have worked for years to ensure that redistricting reform is successful nationwide. In particular, we have worked to support reform efforts in the Commonwealth. We are writing to implore you to bring the constitutional amendment, SJ18, to the House floor for a vote. The nation's eyes are on Virginia, and it is too close to the finish line to give up now.

With Delegate Price's HB1256 potentially being reworked by the Senate to operate alongside SJ18, introducing the amendment to the House floor now represents the clearest path toward redistricting reform in the Commonwealth. Not bringing it to the floor when it is likely to pass may end any chance at reform before 2021. In 2018, a number of states joined the movement to end gerrymandering by reforming their redistricting processes. In 2020, Virginia has the opportunity to make historic progress on this front as the first state without an initiative process to pass meaningful redistricting reform.

The constitutional amendment and enabling legislation will create good reform. The amendment places Voting Rights Act language into the Virginia constitution that will protect minority communities for years to come. The enabling legislation expands protection for racial and language groups by requiring that the commission protect communities of interest, ensure that the voting power of racial and language groups are not weakened, and provide for robust public input into the final map. The enabling legislation also responds to other concerns about the Supreme Court of Virginia by requiring both major parties to appoint qualified special masters to draw the maps if the commission fails. The constitutional amendment and enabling legislation have broad support in the House of Delegates, and they have already passed in the Senate.

We respectfully request that SJ18 be brought up for a vote so that Virginians have a chance to make their voices heard on the issue in November. Just as voters should be able to choose their representatives in fair districts, so too should they be able to have a say in the process by which those districts are drawn. This outcome only occurs if you bring SJ18 to the House floor. Virginia can, and should, act as a leader in redistricting reform by relinquishing some of its line-drawing power, adding to the Commonwealth's collection of good democracy reforms passed this session.

Sincerely,

Princeton Gerrymandering Project  
Common Cause  
League of Women Voters of the United States  
RepresentUs