H.R. 1: Independent Redistricting Commissions

H.R. 1 would require every state to establish an independent citizen redistricting commission to draw the state’s congressional districts using impartial and nonpartisan redistricting standards.

1 Nonpartisan State Agency
Each state designates a nonpartisan agency of the legislature or establishes one to screen applicants to the Independent Redistricting Commission (IRC).

2 Eligibility to Serve
Applicants must be:
✓ Registered to vote in the state’s federal elections
✓ Registered to vote with the same party affiliation for three consecutive years

Ineligible applicants include anyone who has been, anytime within the last 5 years, a:
× Candidate for office or elected official
× Political party officer, campaign employee, or consultant
× Registered lobbyist
× Employee of an elected official, a contractor with the legislature, or campaign donor who donated over $20,000 to any campaigns
× Family members of any of the above

3 Further Screening
The nonpartisan agency narrows the applicant pool to 12 Democrats, 12 Republicans, and 12 not registered with either of the two major parties. This pool should represent the demographics and geography of the state with emphasis on relevant analytical skills and ability to be impartial. Legislative leaders of both major parties must approve the pool.

12 Democrats
12 Republicans
12 Other

4 Final Selection
The nonpartisan agency randomly selects 4 Democrats, 4 Republicans, and 4 Others to serve on the state’s Independent Redistricting Commission.

5 Engaging the Public and Drawing Districts
The Independent Redistricting Commission must hold at least three public hearings to solicit and consider public comments before and after developing a preliminary map. The maps must be drawn according to ranked criteria. The map can be approved by a majority vote of seven commissioners, with at least one vote from each political party category required.

Ranked Redistricting Criteria:
1 Equal population
2 Voting Rights Act
3 Contiguity
4 Minimized divisions of any community of interest, municipality, county, or neighborhood
5 Compactness

Prohibited from consideration:
× A population’s party affiliation or voting history
× Residence of a member of Congress or candidate

6 Back-up Plan
If the state does not designate a nonpartisan agency, the state legislative leaders do not approve a selection pool, or the commission does not approve a map, a three-judge panel of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia will draw the districts.

Graphic produced by Common Cause. Illustrates the proposed independent citizens redistricting commission requirement in H.R. 1.