

Senator,

We understand that the House of Delegates has advanced HJ4, an amendment to the Virginia Constitution to permit mid-decade redistricting. As the Senate takes up the resolution and as this process moves forward, we urge you to adhere to Common Cause's Fairness Criteria that ensure fair representation.

Working at the forefront of redistricting reform, Common Cause has championed fair representation, fair maps, and people-centered democratic processes in every state. We supported reformers in the commonwealth who successfully created the Virginia Redistricting Commission to involve ordinary Virginians in the process, mandate partisan balance, and empower the Supreme Court of Virginia to step in and draw fair maps if the commission deadlocks.

We believe that redistricting reforms that reduce partisanship and increase community input are the best mechanism for achieving fair representation, yet they are a means to an end – not the end itself. In this grave moment, President Trump and Republican leaders are pursuing an unprecedented mid-decade redistricting strategy to lock in unaccountable power and silence voters. We therefore understand why some states, including Virginia, are considering mid-decade redistricting as a countermeasure. Although we will not endorse partisan gerrymandering even when its motive is to offset more extreme gerrymandering by a different party, we recognize that a blanket condemnation in this moment would amount to a call for unilateral political disarmament in the face of authoritarianism. This is why we have drawn on our decades of experience and expertise to carefully craft the following mid-decade redistricting criteria, which we urge you to follow. If Virginia's redistricting effort adheres to these criteria, we will not oppose it. Here are our six fairness criteria.

- **Proportionality:** Mid-decade redistricting should be a response proportional to the threat posed by mid-decade gerrymanders in other states.
- **Public participation:** Redistricting must include meaningful public participation, such as transparent, publicly accessible map-drawing meetings held with sufficient advanced notice and plentiful opportunities for public input on draft maps.
- **Racial equity:** Redistricting must not further racial discrimination or dilute the political voice of Black, Latino, Indigenous, Asian American, and Pacific Islander, or other communities of color.
- **Federal reform:** Leaders pursuing mid-decade redistricting must publicly endorse the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act and the Freedom to Vote Act, including provisions banning mid-decade redistricting and partisan gerrymandering.

- **Endorsement of independent redistricting:** Leaders pursuing mid-decade redistricting must publicly endorse a neutral, fair redistricting system, such as citizen-led independent redistricting commissions, as the long-term solution.
- **Time-limited:** Any new redistricting maps must expire following the 2030 Census, which counts all people in our country, and be replaced through the regular decennial redistricting process.

We are committed to evaluating each mid-decade redistricting effort based on these criteria. Any mid-decade redistricting in Virginia must pass our fairness criteria to protect Virginians' right to fair representation. If Virginia passes each of our criteria, Common Cause will not oppose the redistricting effort. If it does not meet all of the criteria, Common Cause will oppose the map. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Suzanne Almeida, vice president of state operations, at salmeida@commoncause.org.

Sincerely,