



PROPOSAL 2: REDISTRICTING COMMISSION

A proposed constitutional amendment to establish a commission of citizens with exclusive authority to adopt district boundaries for the Michigan Senate, Michigan House of Representatives and U.S. Congress, every 10 years.

The proposed constitutional amendment would:

- Create a commission of 13 registered voters randomly selected by the Secretary of State:
 - 4 each who self-identify as affiliated with the 2 major political parties; and
 - 5 who self-identify as unaffiliated with major political parties.
- Prohibit partisan officeholders and candidates, their employees, certain relatives, and lobbyists from serving as commissioners.
- Establish new redistricting criteria including geographically compact and contiguous districts of equal population, reflecting Michigan's diverse population and communities of interest. Districts shall not provide disproportionate advantage to political parties or candidates.
- Require an appropriation of funds for commission operations and commissioner compensation.

Should this proposal be adopted?

- Yes
- No

What would it do? This proposal would amend the Michigan Constitution to create the Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission. The job of the Commission would be to establish state and federal legislative district boundaries every ten years.

How would this diverge from current policy? New legislative districts are created every ten years, after the U.S. Census. In Michigan, this task falls to the State Legislature and governor. Proposal 2 would instead have these lines determined by an Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission. The Commission would include thirteen registered Michigan voters: four Democrats, four Republicans, and five members affiliated with a third party or no party. The plan must be approved by a majority of the Commission. The Commission would have a budget of approximately \$5.5 million each year it is active.

What do other states do? According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, a majority of states give State Legislatures the primary responsibility of drawing district lines. Thirteen states have given the primary responsibility to commissions for *state* legislative district lines. Six states give commissions the primary responsibility for drawing federal *Congressional* lines. The membership of state commissions varies from state to state, but Michigan's structure of independent citizens is most similar to California's.

How would Michigan's Commission be chosen? Members would be chosen one of two ways: 1) through an open application process or 2) the Secretary of State (SOS) will randomly mail an invitation to apply to at least 10,000 registered voters. All eligible applicants must be registered Michigan voters and must

identify their political party. They cannot be a candidate, elected official, registered lobbyist, party officer, or close relative to any of these individuals (parents, stepparents, children, stepchildren, or spouses). Eligible applicants will be placed into a general pool, where 200 finalists will be randomly selected: half from the general applications, half from those mailed by the SOS. Applicants will be sorted to mirror Michigan's geographic and demographic makeup, and from there, the final thirteen commissioners will be randomly selected. After serving, Commissioners could not hold partisan elective office for five years.

Does the proposal outline any mapping criteria? Districts must be equal in population; include single, unbroken shapes; reflect the state's diversity and communities of interest; comply with the Federal Voting Rights Act; reflect consideration of existing boundaries (such as townships or county lines); be reasonably compact; and not provide unfair advantage to any political party, politician, or candidate.

Arguments from Supporters:

- Districts have been drawn for partisan advantage, by both parties. This policy balances the make-up of the Commission to require compromise and fairness.
- Politicians drawing their own districts is a conflict of interest, as it allows them to hand-pick their voters. This process can contribute to inattentive and unpopular representatives.
- This proposal increases transparency by holding a minimum of fifteen public meetings and publishing any materials used to draw maps. Currently, the process happens behind closed doors.

Supporters include, but are not limited to: Voters Not Politicians (ballot question committee); American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan; American Federation of Teachers-Michigan; Clean Water Action Michigan; Governor Candidate Gretchen Whitmer (D); League of Conservation Voters of Michigan; League of Women Voters of Michigan; Michigan Association for Justice; Michigan Education Association; Michigan Nurses Association; Michigan State Utilities Worker Council; Michigan United Auto Workers; Michigan United Steelworkers; Mid-Michigan Environmental Action Council; Secretary of State Candidate Jocelyn Benson (D); Sierra Club; and State Employees Retirees Association.

Arguments from Opponents:

- Criteria for drawing lines is unclear (i.e. "communities of interest"), the proposal is complex, and it affects too many sections of the State Constitution.
- Choosing those with limited government experience to participate in a complex process will result in poorly drawn lines. Inexperience could make Commissioners vulnerable to outside influences.
- The proposal imposes decision-making by thirteen randomly selected people. These people are not chosen by Michigan residents, which makes it difficult to hold them accountable for their decisions.

Opponents include, but are not limited to: Citizens Protecting Michigan's Constitution (ballot question committee); the Michigan Chamber of Commerce; Michigan Farm Bureau; Michigan Freedom Fund; Governor Candidate Bill Schuette (R); Realtors of Michigan; Secretary of State Candidate Mary Treder Lang (R); and Fair Lines American Inc (Virginia).