

MOTION OF THE COUNCIL OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY

Urging the General Assembly to undertake public hearings on SB22 and HB722, bills which would initiate the process of amending the Commonwealth's Constitution in an attempt to establish a fair, fully transparent, impartial and depoliticized process of the decennial drawing of state legislature and congressional districts, with all deliberate speed.

WHEREAS, the citizens of Allegheny County and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania deserve a fair, fully transparent, impartial and depoliticized process of the decennial drawing of state legislature and congressional districts of near equal population; and

WHEREAS, legislative and congressional redistricting has at times resulted in districts that functionally work in favor of candidates affiliated with one political party over candidates affiliated with other parties; and

WHEREAS, inequitably drawn legislative and congressional districts inherently result in deleterious consequences for any ordered system of representative democracy; and

WHEREAS, it is the judgment of Council that the creation of a truly independent citizens redistricting commission devoid of political motivation or partisanship would ensure a fair, transparent, and accurate legislative and congressional redistricting process that respects political subdivisions, while prohibiting districts from being drawn to favor or discriminate against a political party or candidate; and

WHEREAS, it is further the judgment of Council that requiring the use of impartial and sound methodology when setting district boundaries, requiring public input, and fully complying with the constitutional requirement that "no county, city, incorporated town, borough, township or ward" be divided "unless absolutely necessary" will serve the goal of increasing the equity and legitimacy of election results while simultaneously rendering administration of the redistricting process more efficient and transparent; and

WHEREAS, legislation to initiate the amendment of Article II, Section 17 of the Pennsylvania Constitution would be necessary to undertake alterations to the decennial legislative and congressional redistricting process with the intent of using fairness and sound methodology in a non-partisan fashion, and such legislation is currently pending in the Commonwealth's General Assembly in the form of SB22 and HB722.

The Council of the County of Allegheny hereby moves as follows:

SECTION 1.

Allegheny Council does hereby recognize that legislative efforts to amend Article II, Section 17 of the Pennsylvania Constitution to assign the decennial task of both legislative and congressional redistricting to an independent citizens' redistricting commission have begun through the introduction of SB22 and HB722. Council does hereby further recognize that HB722 was introduced on May 8, 2017 and referred to the House Committee on State Government, while SB22 was introduced on February 27, 2017 and referred to the Senate Committee on State Government; and that, as of the date of introduction of this motion, no additional action has been undertaken by the General Assembly with regard to either HB722 or SB22 since they were introduced.

SECTION 2.

Allegheny County Council hereby urges all those elected officials in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania who represent the citizens of Allegheny County to publicly announce their support of and commitment to work towards holding public hearings on SB22 and HB722 in order to thoroughly vet and consider their effect, practicality, and potential beneficial impact upon the Commonwealth's election process.

SECTION 3.

The Chief Clerk is hereby directed to forward copies of this motion to the Governor and Lieutenant Governor of the Commonwealth, the Commonwealth's Secretary of State and Attorney General, the County's delegation to the Commonwealth's House of Representatives and Senate, and the County's delegation to the United States House of Representatives and Senate.

PRIMARY SPONSOR: COUNCIL MEMBER KLEIN

CO-SPONSORS:

Enacted in Council, this ____ day of _____, 2017,

Council Agenda No. _____.

John DeFazio
President of Council

Attest: _____
Jared Barker
Chief Clerk