



Allegheny County Council

County of Allegheny
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Legislation Text

File #: 10408-17, **Version:** 1

Motion of the Council of Allegheny County urging the General Assembly to undertake amendment of the Municipality Reapportionment Act, 53 Pa.C.S.A. §901 *et. seq.*, in order to allow for the establishment of fair, fully transparent, impartial and depoliticized processes governing the decennial drawing of County Council 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 County Council districts of near equal population; and

WHEREAS, legislative 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 County Council districts would 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 County Council 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, the County Council redistricting process is currently governed by the Municipality Reapportionment Act, 53 Pa.C.S.A. §901 *et. seq.*; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to §903(a) of the Act, local government redistricting must be undertaken by the “governing body” of the unit of government in question, meaning County Council in the case of Allegheny County; and

WHEREAS, it is the recommendation of Council that §903(a) be amended to grant the governing bodies of county governments the flexibility to appoint redistricting commissions comprised of equal numbers of representatives of each of the two major political parties, together with individuals representing neither major political party, all of whom must be free from direct influence by elected or party officials, in order to conduct the required decennial redistricting activities;

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

SECTION 1.

Allegheny Council does hereby urge the General Assembly to undertake amendment of the Municipality Reapportionment Act, 53 Pa.C.S.A. §903(a), in order to permit County governing bodies to establish fair, fully transparent, impartial and depoliticized processes governing the decennial drawing of districts for their respective governing bodies, with all deliberate speed.

SECTION 2.

The Chief Clerk is hereby directed to forward copies of this motion to the the County's delegation to the Commonwealth's House of Representatives and Senate.