

Bipartisan Redistricting

Under current law, the General Assembly establishes electoral districts for members of the House of Representatives, the House of Delegates and the Virginia Senate. In making these determinations they must comply with federal equal protection guarantees, but there are no restrictions on favoring political parties, incumbents, or other interests. We believe that gerrymandering is bad for voters and for the political system. Packing voters into uncompetitive districts reduces voter turnout, disenfranchises those in the minority, causes elections to be decided at the primary level, and moves the political dialogue towards the extremes.

The solution to this problem lies with the creation of a Bipartisan Redistricting Commission which would draw districts taking certain factors into account. Districts would be required to be compact, contiguous and as equal in population as is practicable. Districts should also respect the boundaries of existing political subdivisions and encompass communities of interest, to the extent practicable. The standards would also prohibit certain factors from being taken into account including the impact on incumbent legislators, members of Congress, or known candidates for office, or promotion of the interests of a political party.

The 2008 Platform of the Democratic Party of Virginia contained the following statement:

We support legislative redistricting that is fair to all citizens, that follows logical geographical and jurisdictional boundaries, and that strives to keep communities of interest intact. We support the creation of an independent, bipartisan commission for the redistricting of legislative boundaries.

The Democratic Party of Virginia re-affirms its commitment to non-partisan redistricting and urges the General Assembly to adopt a bipartisan redistricting process.