

## Letter to the Editor talking points, June 2020

Choose just a few; don't try to use all!

- Many bills passed through the House State Government Committee and the House itself in the past few weeks were considered just days, even minutes, after introduction.
- Many had no bipartisan or clear public support, no public input or expert testimony.
- Many had no hope of being signed by the governor or of gaining enough votes to override a veto, so in effect the Legislature, and the House in particular, have been putting on a very expensive, dangerous charade at the public expense.
- The bills we support, HB 22 and 23 and SB 1022 and 1023, represent years of discussion, research, advocacy and civic engagement. Despite having more co-sponsors than any other bills in both this session and the last, bills to create an independent redistricting commission have never been given a vote.
- An independent redistricting commission would be an important first step toward a less divided, more responsive Legislature more able to meet the challenges that confront our state.
- There is strong evidence of support for a citizens redistricting commission:
  - HBs 23/22 have the most co-sponsors of all bills filed this session. (99/97). Companion Senate bills 1023 and 1022 have 19/20 cosponsors respectively.
  - Statewide **385 governing bodies, including 23 county commissions, have declared their support** for fair redistricting practices. These elected bodies, with both Republican and Democratic majorities, represent over 9 million Pennsylvanians—70% of the estimated population of the state. More resolutions are being sought.
  - Over **100,000 Pennsylvanians** have **signed petitions** supporting an independent redistricting commission.
  - Our supporters have called, visited legislative offices, and sent thousands of letters, emails and faxes to their local legislators calling for change.
  - Hometown newspapers have printed **over 500 letters to the editor, oped and editorial** supporting reform in over 100 media outlets statewide.
  - Redistricting reform is on the march nationwide. In the November 2018 general election
  - Statewide polls show that an overwhelming majority (over 2/3 in every recent poll) support an independent citizens redistricting commission.
- Democrats will have the upper hand for state house and senate districts since unless majority and minority party leaders agree, the PA Supreme Court will be selecting the fifth person for the Legislative Reapportionment Commission in 2021. The legislature does not get a vote on the maps they draw and the governor cannot veto them. Republicans will have only themselves to blame if they don't fix the process before then.
- The deadline for these bills is fast approaching. We want a vote before our legislators break for the summer.