



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** The Pennsylvania House State Government Committee

**FROM:** Elizabeth Randol, Legislative Director, ACLU of Pennsylvania

**DATE:** January 9, 2022

**RE: OPPOSITION TO HB 2207 P.N. 2572 (GROVE)**

**Bill summary:** [HB 2207](#) (PN 2572) is a proposed amendment to the Pennsylvania Constitution that would abolish the Legislative Reapportionment Commission (LRC) and replace it with an 11-member “citizens commission,” most of whom would be appointed by leaders of the General Assembly.

**On behalf of over 100,000 members and supporters of the ACLU of Pennsylvania, I respectfully urge you to oppose House Bill 2207.**

For many years, election reform advocates have been asking the General Assembly to reform the redistricting process and to end the conflict of interest that allows lawmakers to choose voters rather than voters choosing their representatives. Rather than giving voters the kind of reform they have demanded, HB 2207 would actually make the problem worse by setting up a sham “citizen's commission” that leaves the real power in the hands of the majority party in each chamber of the General Assembly.

### **The ACLU-PA stands with our allies<sup>1</sup> in opposing HB 2207 for the following reasons:**

- Replacing the LRC (Legislative Reapportionment Commission) with an 11-member “citizens commission” is NOT the independent citizens commission that many voters have demanded.
- Unlike the current process for congressional redistricting, there would be no role for the governor in approving or vetoing a Senate or House map under HB 2207.
- HB 2207 fails to allocate seats on the commission to independent and third-party voters.
- The new commission proposed under HB 2207 appears to be designed to fail—a redistricting plan would require approval by two-thirds of commission members, leading to partisan gridlock and failure to agree on a redistricting plan.
- If/when the commission fails to meet the extremely short deadlines for approving a plan, HB 2207 would allow the Senate and House to intervene to approve new legislative maps by a simple majority vote, not the two-thirds required for the commission itself to act. Each chamber would vote only on its own map.

This proposed constitutional amendment could appear on the ballot as early as May of 2023 assuming it passes this year and again early in the next session. If adopted, HB 2207 would take effect immediately, paving the way for new legislative district maps in time for the 2024 election.

**For these reasons, we urge you to oppose House Bill 2207.**

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<sup>1</sup> See [Fair Districts PA: Opposition to HB 2207](#) and Patrick Beaty, [Pennsylvania Republicans are planning a redistricting redo in time for the 2024 election](#), Pennsylvania Capital-Star, January 7, 2022.