



Remove Local Redistricting Commission Requirement from HJ615

At-A-Glance

House Resolution:
HJ615 (Cole)

Senate Resolution:
SJ306 (Barker)

Issue:
Holds certain localities to state redistricting requirements

Cities/Towns Negatively Impacted:
25

House Conferees:

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Issue Brief

HJ615 (Cole): Constitutional amendment; apportionment, state and local redistricting commissions

The House and Senate have each introduced resolutions to establish bipartisan redistricting commissions. The House version, HJ615, would require localities with district- or ward-based elections to establish their own commissions, adhering to the same requirements as that of the Commonwealth.

HJ615 is currently under review by a conference committee of four House members and three Senate members.

Concerns

HJ615 would introduce partisanship into otherwise nonpartisan local electoral processes and would undermine systems already in place to protect the rights of local voters. Many of these systems have been set in place under the supervision of the U.S. Department of Justice, and there is room for potential conflict between these systems versus the proposed local redistricting requirements. Timing requirements for localities would restrict localities' ability to hold May elections. Finally, the cost of implementation for individual localities is indeterminate.

Action Request

VML urges members to contact their local delegations and members of the conference committee to oppose the inclusion of localities under the General Assembly's final redistricting plan.

Key Points

- The vast majority of cities and towns across Virginia have nonpartisan local elections.
- HJ615 would unnaturally introduce partisanship into nonpartisan local processes.
- The application of state requirements to individual localities could conflict with federal regulations.
- The proposed timeline would conflict with many localities' current election calendars.
- HJ615 could effectively represent an unfunded mandate.
- ***VML opposes the inclusion of localities under redistricting regulations designed to address state-level issues.***