



VA Redistricting &lt;varedist@dls.virginia.gov&gt;

---

## Re-naming Districts

---

**Janet I. Trettner** <jitrettner@comcast.net>  
To: Virginia Redistricting Commission <varedist@dls.virginia.gov>

Sun, Feb 28, 2021 at 8:10 PM

Dear Members of the Redistricting Commission:

Our House, Senate, and Congressional districts are currently labeled in a manner that is very confusing. Each set of districts is numbered beginning with number one. As a result, there are 3 districts 1-11 (House, Senate, and Congressional) and 2 districts 12-40 (House and Senate). Only districts 41-100 are clearly identifiable as House districts.

I respectfully request that once you have established our new districts, you rename them so there is no longer any question which district one is referring to. My suggestion going forward is:

House and Senate districts would be labeled consecutively. If the final plan includes 100 House districts and 40 Senate senate districts, for instance, the House districts would be labeled 1-100 and the Senate districts would be labeled 101-140. These numbers would be adjusted of course depending on the actual number of districts in the final plan.

Congressional districts would be lettered A-K (adjusted for the actual number of congressional districts in the final plan).

This would make references to the districts so much easier to understand.

Thank you for your consideration of this idea and for the work you are doing,

Very truly yours,  
Janet I. Trettner  
Keezletown, Virginia 22832



VA Redistricting <[varedist@dls.virginia.gov](mailto:varedist@dls.virginia.gov)>

---

## A proposal for Congressional and House of Delegate districts

---

**Shirley Desimone** <[shirley.desimone@vcuhealth.org](mailto:shirley.desimone@vcuhealth.org)>  
To: "varedist@dls.virginia.gov" <[varedist@dls.virginia.gov](mailto:varedist@dls.virginia.gov)>

Thu, Mar 4, 2021 at 4:34 PM

Draw districts of equal numbers of voters and so that the average or median income of each district is equal. People vote their pocketbooks, regardless of race, ethnicity or anything else.



VA Redistricting &lt;varedist@dls.virginia.gov&gt;

---

## Commission Comments

---

**katherine slaughter** <katherineslaughter61@gmail.com>  
To: varedist@dls.virginia.gov

Thu, Mar 4, 2021 at 11:32 AM

Dear Commission:

I don't know where you are in the process of district re-drawing for districts of Virginia General Assembly or US Congress. However, I hope you will consider the use of Planning Districts as a basis for common interests. In general, these districts have a history in Virginia of bringing regions together to work on common problems, and thus there is not only a geographic rationale but a working relationship as communities with common interests and a history of working on these interests. I have attached more detailed comments.

The Thomas Jefferson Planning District (TJPDC) of Charlottesville, Albemarle, Nelson, Greene, Louisa, Fluvanna demonstrates the current status of how split a common interest area may be. There are 9 legislators representing this "area" (5 delegates and 4 senators). Parts of TJPDC in the Central Piedmont share legislators from districts across the Blue Ridge (Avoli, Hanger and Deeds) and as far south as the Lynchburg area (Peake, Farriss) and as far east as Richmond (Carter) and to the north east, Spotsylvania (Reeves). See <https://tjpd.org/your-state-legislators/>

I have participated in the League of Women Voters' excellent mapmaking training, but I find the scale of districts of common interest too small as compared to size of congressional or legislative districts.

Our area is but one example where communities of interest have been split into many different districts that do not represent common interests or even common geography. I hope your map drawing will seek to make sure that lines are drawn based on true interests, rather than political parties, and of course include the other criteria as well.

Sincerely,  
Kay Slaughter  
Charlottesville, VA

--

**Kay Slaughter**

---

 **Redistricting.docx**  
18K

To: Legislative Staff and Redistricting Commission  
From: Katherine Slaughter, Citizen of Charlottesville and a former chair, Thomas Jefferson Planning District  
Re: Use of Virginia Planning Districts for Redistricting.  
March 4, 2021

While drawing political district drawing challenges, like assembling a jigsaw puzzle, I propose for a start that you utilize the boundaries of Planning Districts (PDs) as a basis for creating communities of interest, combining PDs and/or portions of PDs to fit the needed population base for General Assembly districts and Congressional Districts.

<https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/pdcs> Within their PDs, these communities have worked with each other and generally share common interests and certainly a common geography.

The criteria for redistricting includes contiguous land “preserving *communities of interest*; ... contiguous territory; ... compact territory; ... does not unduly favor or disfavor any political party.” Important also are the requirements not to dilute the voting power of minority communities. For example, the Virginia Piedmont is one such “community of interest.”

Planning districts of contiguous counties and cities have historically provided forums for the individual cities and counties to work together on issues of common interest, including housing, transportation, water quality, air quality, and other planning issues. Because the Planning Districts are creations of the state government, using their structure as a template with which to work on redistricting, including potentially combining areas such as or adjacent portions as Congressional districts or state legislative districts, seems appropriate.

For example, Charlottesville and Albemarle County are part of the Thomas Jefferson Planning District 10, which also includes Counties of Nelson, Louisa, Fluvanna, and Greene. The Rappahannock-Rapidan District 9 encompasses Madison, Orange, Culpeper, Rappahannock, and Fauquier. From past census, I understand 768,588 is the ideal size for congressional districts. Clearly for Congressional districts, each PDC alone is too small – TJPDC, 235,000; Rappahannock-Rapidan District, 164,209. But combined, they are almost 400,000. Possibly the two could be combined with another PD to the west or south.

TJPD 10 serves a broad community through Charlottesville’s University of Virginia, Piedmont Virginia Community College, the UVA Medical Complex, and a regional library system. To the North, the Rappahannock Rapidan District is served by Germanna Community College and local hospitals but many residents depend on the UVA Medical Complex for acute and critical care. PD 9 serves Madison, Orange, Culpeper, Fauquier, and Rappahannock. PD 9 and 10 (excepting Nelson County) are served by the Culpeper Transportation District. The metropolitan planning districts – utilized for federal funding -- are also developed by looking at the planning districts.

Clearly, the current state legislative districting is awry when districts cross major barriers, like the mountains, and thus serve different issues. For example, while Charlottesville and Staunton

are both cities, Charlottesville and the Central Virginia Piedmont face issues different from those of Staunton and the Shenandoah Valley communities.

The Thomas Jefferson Planning District (TJPDC) of Charlottesville, Albemarle, Nelson, Greene, Louisa, Fluvanna demonstrates the current status of how split a common interest area may be. There are 9 legislators representing this "area" (5 delegates and 4 senators). Parts of TJPDC in the Central Piedmont share legislators from districts across the Blue Ridge (Avoli, Hanger and Deeds) and as far south as the Lynchburg area (Peake, Farriss) and as far east as Richmond (Carter) and to the north east, Spotsylvania (Reeves). See <https://tjpd.org/your-state-legislators/> As to Congressional districts, all TJPDC except for Louisa is in a district that stretches from portions of Fauquier to the north to Danville and the North Carolina border. Louisa County is in the 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District.

Because Planning Districts meet regularly, the members of various governing bodies have worked together on common issues. Members of the elected bodies know each other through this work which often includes infrastructure issues like transportation, water supply and thus water quality issues, air quality, land use management and planning, and conservation issues.

What physical or manmade barriers should exclude the joining of land masses together in Districts? Lands that are adjacent but separated by mountains or bodies of water should not be joined. The Eastern Shore of Virginia because of population may need to be joined to a mainland area. Otherwise, keeping areas in Northern Virginia, the Shenandoah Valley, Piedmont, Southside, near- and far-southwest Virginia should be practicable.

Thus, I urge the Commission to consider using the Planning Districts as the building blocks for General Assembly or Congressional districts.



VA Redistricting &lt;varedist@dls.virginia.gov&gt;

---

## Community of Interest

---

**Carla Heath** <cheath340@icloud.com>  
To: varedist@dls.virginia.gov

Mon, Mar 22, 2021 at 11:01 AM

Commissioners,

The City of Lynchburg is my Community of Interest for the following reasons;

It is a single, unified jurisdictional entity that governs and funds one public school system, one police department, one fire department, water, sewage, and trash collection to all homes and businesses within its boundaries.

The City should be a SINGLE state legislative district. The present situation which divides the City into two state senate and two state 'house' districts that are not coterminous is both confusing for the public and irrational.

The attached maps are illustrative of the problem.

Respectfully,

Carla Heath  
339 Sumpter St  
Lynchburg, VA 24503

---

 **Districts 22 and 23.pdf**  
2796K

# The City of Lynchburg is divided into FOUR state legislative districts.

**TWO Senatorial Districts: 22nd-Sen. Mark Peake and 23rd-Sen. Steve Newman**

**TWO House of Delegates Districts: 22nd-De. Kathy Byron and 23rd-Del. Wendell Walker**

**If you vote in these precincts, you are in the**

## **22nd Senate and 22nd House District**

- 201-St. Paul's Episcopal Church
- 202-R.S. Payne Elementary School
- 203-Jubilee Family Center
- 204-Fairview Christian Church
- 301-Public Library Community Room

**If you vote in these precincts, you are in the**

## **23rd Senate and 23rd House District**

- 101-Heritage Baptist Church
- 302-Liberty University Vines Center
- 304-First Church of Nazarene
- 305-Heritage United Methodist Church
- 401-Crosspoint Church
- 404-Linkhome Middle School

**If you vote in these precincts, you are in the**

## **22nd Senate and 23rd House Districts**

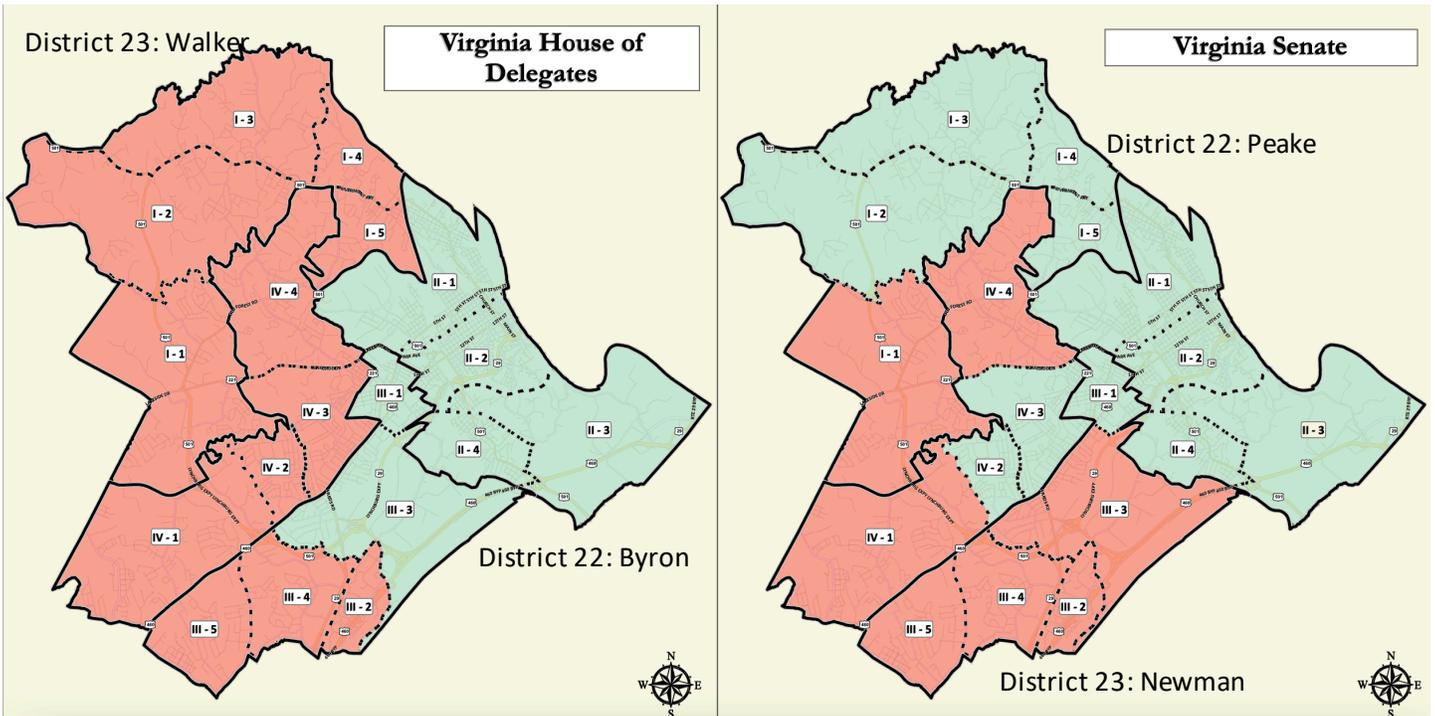
- 102-Bedford Hills Elementary School
- 103-First Presbyterian Church
- 104-Rivermont Presbyterian Church
- 105-First Christian Church
- 402-Sandusky Middle School
- 403-Perrymont Fellowship Hall

**If you vote in this one precinct, you are in the**

## **23rd Senate and 22nd House Districts**

- 303-Sheffield Elementary School

District 22-green    District 23-orange

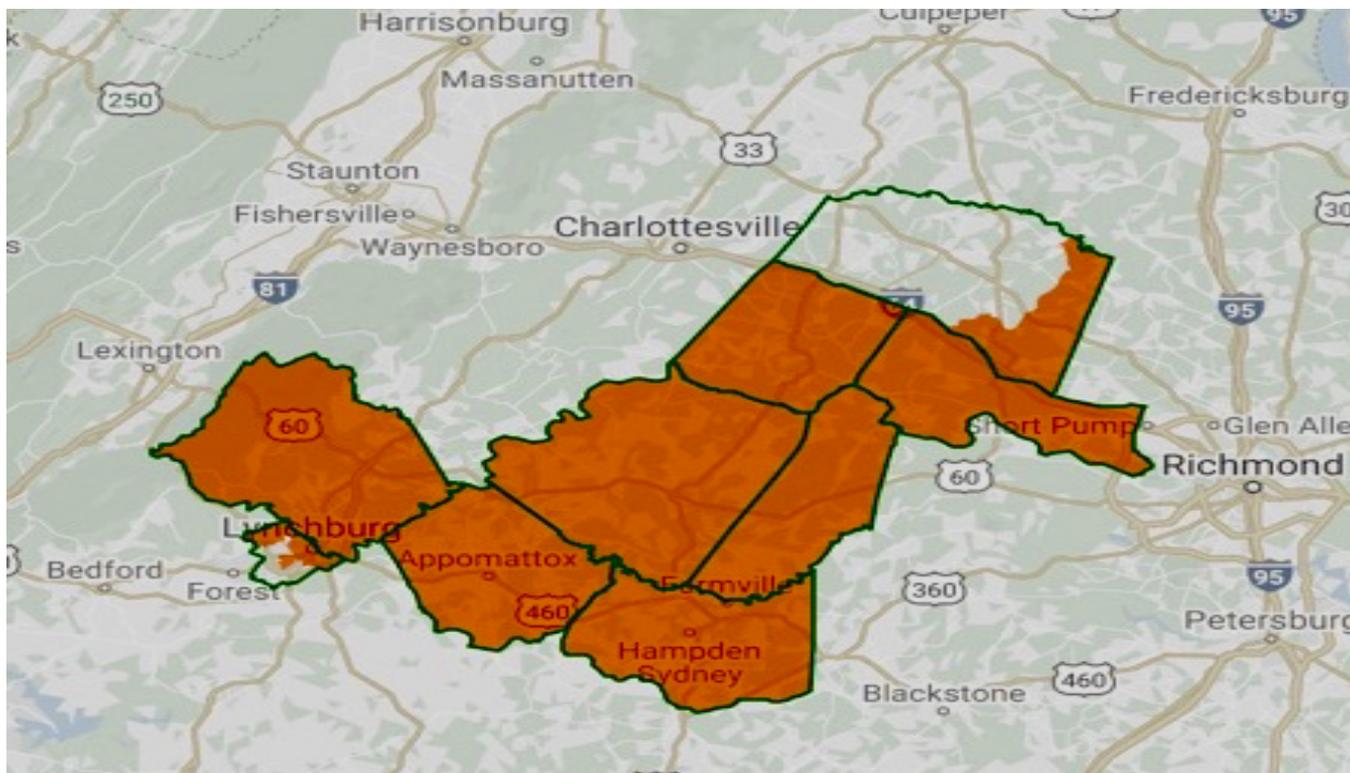


map from [lynchburgva.gov](http://lynchburgva.gov)

**State Senate District 22: Mark Peake**

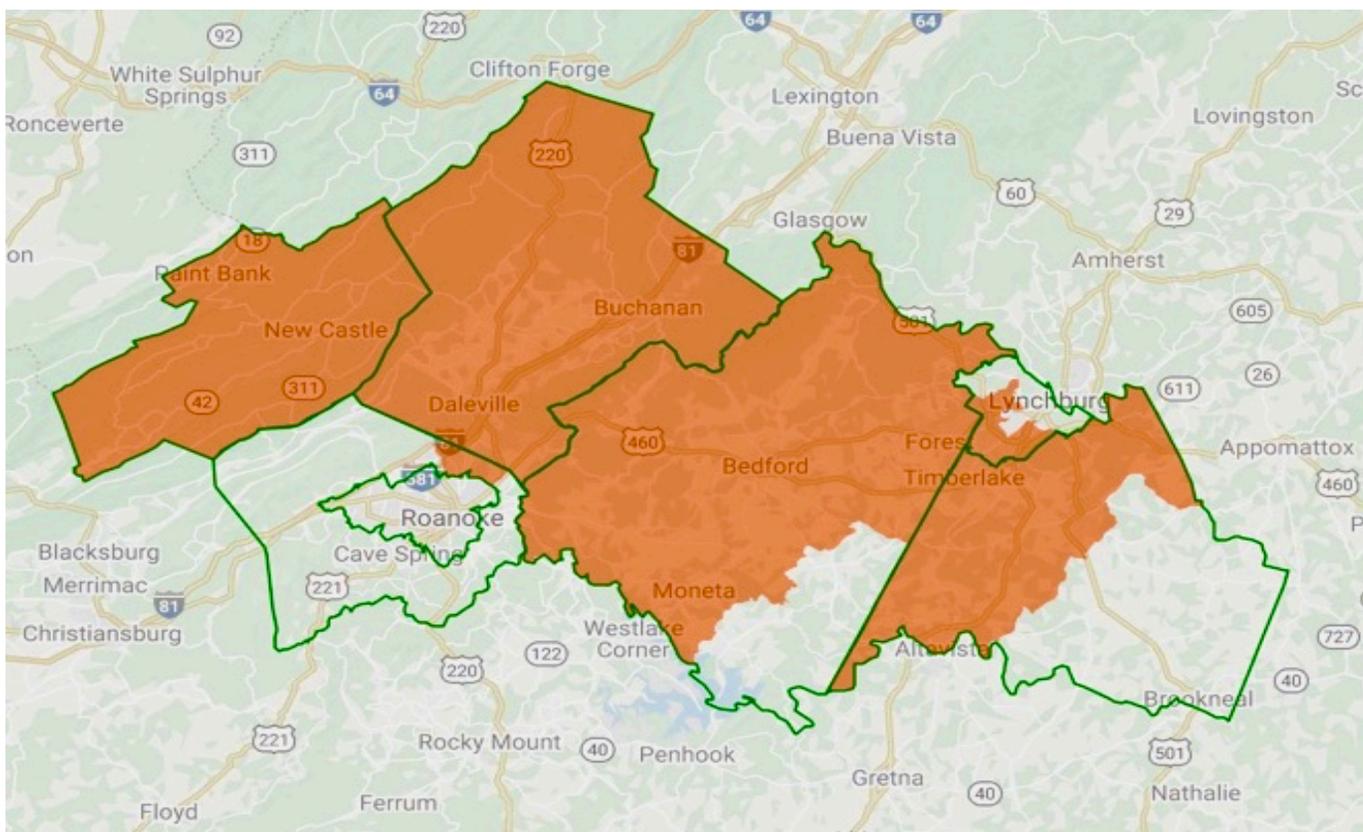
**Lynchburg is only 17% of Sen Peake's district**

maps from vpap.org



**State Senate District 23: Steve Newman: look for Lynchburg**

**Lynchburg is only 17% of Sen Newman's district**







Claire Waters &lt;cwaters@dls.virginia.gov&gt;

---

## January 21, 2021, Commission Meeting - Citizen Thoughts and Comments

---

**Candace Butler** <candy@edandcandy.com>

Tue, Feb 23, 2021 at 2:37 PM

To: Greta Harris &lt;gharris@dls.virginia.gov&gt;, Mackenzie Babichenko &lt;mbabichenko@dls.virginia.gov&gt;

Cc: Sean Kumar &lt;skumar@dls.virginia.gov&gt;, Marvin Gilliam &lt;mgilliam@dls.virginia.gov&gt;, Rick Harrell &lt;rharrell@dls.virginia.gov&gt;, James Abrenio &lt;jabrenio@dls.virginia.gov&gt;, Jose Feliciano &lt;jfeliciano@dls.virginia.gov&gt;, Brandon Hutchins &lt;bhutchins@dls.virginia.gov&gt;, Senator Steve Newman &lt;sdnewman7@gmail.com&gt;, Senator Mamie Locke &lt;district02@senate.virginia.gov&gt;, Senator George Barker &lt;senatorbarker@gmail.com&gt;, Senator Ryan McDougle &lt;redistricting@ryanmcdougle.com&gt;, "Simon - Marcus B.=D" &lt;DeIMSimon@house.virginia.gov&gt;, Delegate Les Adams &lt;deladamsredistricting@house.virginia.gov&gt;, Delegate Delores McQuinn &lt;deldmcquinn@house.virginia.gov&gt;, Delegate Margaret Ransone &lt;delransoneredistricting@house.virginia.gov&gt;, "Claire Waters (staff)" &lt;cwaters@dls.virginia.gov&gt;

We are submitting this letter to you for your consideration of the thoughts and comments therein. We hope they will be helpful in the Commission's work going forward.

Sincerely,

Bill Millhouser, Falls Church VA

Candace Butler, Annandale VA

Kathy Utgoff, Falls Church VA

Pat Kablach Casano, Alexandria VA

Deborah Mayer, Centreville VA

JoAnn Kennedy Flanagan, Fairfax VA

Anne Strange, Reston VA

Janet Martin, Springfield VA

Michael Martin, Springfield VA

**2021-02-23 Letter to Redistricting Commission Final Signed.pdf**

108K

VIA EMAIL

February 23, 2021

Ms. Greta J. Harris  
Co-Chair  
Virginia Redistricting Commission  
gharris@dls.virginia.gov

Ms. Mackenzie K. Babichenko  
Co-Chair  
Virginia Redistricting Commission  
mbabichenko@dls.virginia.gov

Dear Ms. Harris and Ms. Babichenko,

Congratulations on being elected the co-chairs of Virginia's new Redistricting Commission at the January 21, 2021, Commission meeting. We greatly appreciate your commitment to lead this historic effort to draw fair maps through a bipartisan, transparent process. As citizens who worked the last four years to advocate for the creation of the Redistricting Commission, we look forward to supporting your important work.

Drawing new district maps for the United States House of Representatives, the Virginia Senate, and the House of Delegates is a major undertaking that requires a substantial knowledge base on the part of each Commissioner. The Commission must draw fair district maps that adhere to substantive and procedural requirements contained in the Federal and State Constitutions and law. This includes completing numerous logistical and substantive tasks, ranging from the relatively simple (e.g., how to run a public meeting) to the complex (e.g., how to identify communities of interest, and how to draw district maps). The Commission began to tackle these issues at the January meeting with an excellent initial discussion of the work tasks of the Commission as well as the training needs of Commissioners.

The Division of Legislative Services staff indicated a number of resources that they will provide to the Commission. One of these was the National Conference of State Legislatures' "Red Book" which discusses redistricting from a national perspective.

We also recommend the work of the Princeton Gerrymandering Project, a nonpartisan effort to develop tools for drawing district maps that will withstand judicial scrutiny. The Princeton Gerrymandering Project staff is well versed in redistricting issues in Virginia and has published "A Citizen's Guide to Redistricting in Virginia (the "Guide") at <https://gerrymander.princeton.edu/virginia-report>.

The Guide includes a thorough overview of the recent history of redistricting in Virginia as well as information on a comprehensive framework for the Commission's work and step-by-step recommendations the Commission can use as it moves forward in developing a workplan. Also, the Guide can provide useful information to assist in identifying and meeting the in-depth training needs of the Commissioners on all aspects of the redistricting process. This includes training on how to organize and conduct meetings and hearings; Virginia's map-drawing criteria; the Federal Voting Rights Act; advanced use of census data, and training and practice in using software to draw maps.

During the January 21<sup>st</sup> meeting, there was discussion among the Commissioners about training needs. We appreciate that the Commission recognizes the necessity for training on all aspects of the redistricting process. All training sessions should occur at regular public meetings to ensure that all members of the Commission receive the same training, and so that the public can fully understand and participate in the map drawing process later this year.

The Guide also makes recommendations regarding the substantial public involvement and transparency requirements of the Constitutional Amendment and enabling legislation. Establishing rules governing public communication will be important for maintaining full transparency. Transparency rules will need to cover public communication with, and between Commission members, especially when it occurs outside public Commission meetings. The Commission discussed this issue at length during the January meeting.

We applaud the decision of the Commission and the Division of Legislative Services to specify in writing what constitutes proper and improper communication both between and among Commission members and between and among Commission members and nonmembers, including other legislators, staff, consultants, and members of the public. This document should also define what constitutes allowable “internal communications” between Commission members, staff and consultants; and explain how such communications will be included in the public record as required by law.

A Commission web site is an essential component of the public involvement and transparency requirements; and we understand that contractor work has begun to create such a web site. We urge that the web site be interactive to provide information to the public on all aspects of the Commission’s work, and to facilitate public comment and input on that same work. We suggest that the web site include a feature that allows citizens to sign up for notifications of upcoming Commission meetings and new web site postings.

The January meeting also included a brief discussion regarding the possible use by Commissioners of the “chat” feature during the public video meetings of the Commission. We urge the Commission to weigh this option carefully so that any use of the “chat” feature will not undermine the requirement that the work of the Commission take place in public.

Finally, we recognize that successfully meeting the objectives of the Commission is likely to require resources beyond those already made available to the Commission. The Commission should not hesitate to ask the legislature to provide additional resources so that the Commission can fully execute its mandate, a goal we all share.

Thank you for your consideration,

Bill Millhouser, Falls Church VA  
Candace Butler, Annandale VA  
Kathy Utgoff, Falls Church VA  
Pat Kablach Casano, Alexandria VA  
Deborah Mayer, Centreville VA

JoAnn Kennedy Flanagan, Fairfax VA  
Anne Strange, Reston VA  
Janet Martin, Springfield VA  
Michael Martin, Springfield VA

cc: Commissioner Hutchins  
Commissioner Feliciano  
Commissioner Abrenio  
Commissioner Kumar  
Commissioner Gilliam  
Commissioner Harrell  
  
Claire Waters, DLS Staff

Commissioner Barker  
Commissioner Locke  
Commissioner McDougle  
Commissioner Newman  
Commissioner McQuinn  
Commissioner Simon  
Commissioner Les Adams  
Commissioner Ransone



VA Redistricting &lt;varedist@dls.virginia.gov&gt;

---

## Public Comment: Letter to the Virginia Redistricting Commission about its website

---

**Candace Butler** <candy@edandcandy.com>

Tue, Mar 23, 2021 at 2:00 PM

To: Greta Harris <gharris@dls.virginia.gov>, Mackenzie Babichenko <mbabichenko@dls.virginia.gov>, varedist@dls.virginia.gov  
Cc: Sean Kumar <skumar@dls.virginia.gov>, Marvin Gilliam <mgilliam@dls.virginia.gov>, Rick Harrell <rharrell@dls.virginia.gov>, James Abrenio <jabrenio@dls.virginia.gov>, Jose Feliciano <jfeliciano@dls.virginia.gov>, Brandon Hutchins <bhutchins@dls.virginia.gov>, Senator Steve Newman <sdnewman7@gmail.com>, Senator Mamie Locke <district02@senate.virginia.gov>, Senator George Barker <senatorbarker@gmail.com>, Senator Ryan McDougle <redistricting@ryanmcdougle.com>, "Simon - Marcus B.=D" <DeIMSimon@house.virginia.gov>, Delegate Les Adams <deladamsredistricting@house.virginia.gov>, Delegate Delores McQuinn <deldmcquinn@house.virginia.gov>, Delegate Margaret Ransone <delransoneredistricting@house.virginia.gov>, "Claire Waters (staff)" <cwaters@dls.virginia.gov>

We are submitting this letter about the Commission website to you for your consideration. We hope the ideas and suggestions will be helpful in the development of the website.

Sincerely,

Bill Millhouser, Falls Church VA    Janet Martin, Springfield VA  
Candace Butler, Annandale VA    Michael Martin, Springfield VA  
Kathy Utgoff, Falls Church VA    Deborah Mayer, Centreville VA  
Pat Kablach Casano, Alexandria VA

---

### 2 attachments

 **2021-03-21 Ltr to Comm re website final - signed.pdf**  
139K

 **State Redistricting Commissions v8 - final.pdf**  
133K

VIA EMAIL

March 23, 2021

Ms. Greta J. Harris  
Co-Chair  
Virginia Redistricting Commission  
gharris@dls.virginia.gov

Ms. Mackenzie K. Babichenko  
Co-Chair  
Virginia Redistricting Commission  
mbabichenko@dls.virginia.gov

Dear Ms. Harris and Ms. Babichenko,

We are writing to discuss the Virginia Redistricting website.

The Commission and the Division of Legal Services are directed by § 30-396 of the Code of Virginia to develop a website to facilitate public participation in the work of the Commission. This is an important component of the transparency requirements of the Amendment because the website will be one of the main methods of communication between the citizens and the Commission.

We have reviewed redistricting commission websites from other state and offer the following suggestions for the Virginia website which we believe will be helpful. They are offered from the citizens' point of view. We appreciate your consideration of these suggestions.

### **Thoughts on the Virginia Redistricting Commission Website Philosophy and Implementation**

The website should meet the needs of citizens with a range of knowledge of redistricting: those who do not have experience with governing, politics and redistricting; those who are somewhat familiar with the process; and those who are highly engaged in state governance. The website should be up to date, intuitive, and easy to use for all users with help/how-to/FAQ section, including guidance for less tech-savvy users. Accommodation for disabled, impaired and non-computer users should be included in the design.

This website should be a one-stop-shop. In addition to enabling and augmenting the work of the Commission, the website should provide references to pertinent information and educational resources, such as Federal and Virginia governance (e.g. relevant pages from Virginia's Legislative Information Services), relevant reading lists, and good governance organizations (e.g. League of Women Voters, Brennan Center for Justice, Princeton Gerrymandering Project).

The website should also clearly describe how citizens can participate in the process – through submitting comments and viewing and/or participating in Commission meetings. These features should be easy to access and well documented.

Time is short. Therefore, the website should be implemented quickly. To accomplish this, the website could be released in phases, with basic functionality released first, and more advanced features coming later. If practical, placeholders could be placed on web pages to indicate not-yet-completed features.

**The Redistricting Commission website should include the following information:**

1. All legal requirements for map drawing and approval, and commission procedures
2. Commissioner biographies
3. Plan implementation goals and objectives
4. Commission meeting schedule, far in advance, so that citizens can make plans to participate
5. Timeline of major events, milestones deadlines
6. Description of how citizens can participate in the process
7. Procedures whereby citizens can provide comments, including definition of the legally permissible methods of contacting the Commission
8. All public comments received, whether associated with a Commission meeting or not, should be searchable by keywords to facilitate use by the Commission and the public
9. Identification of public commenters should be limited to first name, last name and zip code (or town/city); email and street addresses should not be included
10. Meeting minutes or videos, handouts, maps, and other materials discussed at meetings
11. A subscription service such that citizens can automatically be notified of meetings, events, and other news
12. Links/references to good governance advice on redistricting

**Survey of Other State Redistricting Commission Websites**

The following page is a spreadsheet evaluating commission websites of 5 states with independent redistricting commissions. We have rated each website on the features described in the preceding section using a scale of 1 (insufficient) through 5 (most functional).

**Conclusion**

Virginia has an opportunity to set a standard with its redistricting commission website. We hope these suggestions and the accompanying spreadsheet highlighting other states' redistricting commission websites will be useful in doing so.

Sincerely,

Bill Millhouser, Falls Church VA  
Candace Butler, Annandale VA  
Kathy Utgoff, Falls Church VA  
Pat Kablach Casano, Alexandria VA

Janet Martin, Springfield VA  
Michael Martin, Springfield VA  
Deborah Mayer, Centreville VA

cc:

Commissioner Hutchins  
Commissioner Feliciano  
Commissioner Abrenio  
Commissioner Kumar  
Commissioner Gilliam  
Commissioner Harrell

Commissioner Barker  
Commissioner Locke  
Commissioner McDougle  
Commissioner Newman  
Commissioner McQuinn  
Commissioner Simon  
Commissioner Les Adams  
Commission

Claire Waters, DLS Staff

STATE	WEBSITE	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	Ease of use	Up to date	Legal rqrts: redistricting	Commissioner biographies?	Plan of implementation	Timing of major events	Citizen participation	Comments & feedback	Comments readable, searchable?	Mtg minutes, handouts, recordings?	Subscription services?	Reference, education links?
ARIZONA	<a href="https://irc.az.gov/">https://irc.az.gov/</a>	Nice clean website. Easily comment for meeting, read prior mtg comments.	No commissioner bios. No plans/timeline.	4	5	5	2	1	2	3	3	3	1	2	
CALIFORNIA	WeDrawTheLinesCA.org	Community of Interest (COI) mapping & submission built-in; Commissioner Zoom outreach zones;	Large graphics require too much scrolling. Discussion of law on redistricting or commission difficult to find. Cannot search public comments.	5	5	2	5	2	5	2	3	1	5	1	
COLORADO	<a href="https://redistricting.colorado.gov/">https://redistricting.colorado.gov/</a>	Clean; ease of use; clarity & completeness of explanations; concise overviews under 'Commissions' tab	No timeline; light on scheduled meetings.	5	5	5	1	2	2	5	5	3	3	5	
MICHIGAN	<a href="https://www.michigan.gov/sos/0,4670,7-127-1633_91141---,00.html">https://www.michigan.gov/sos/0,4670,7-127-1633_91141---,00.html</a>	Variety of social media, timeline, history of all meetings with handouts. Code of conduct. Rules of procedure. Searchable public comments.	Cluttered layout of info; hard to find info. Emailed comments searchable only by meeting.	3	5	2	2	4	5	5	5	3	2	5	2
WASHINGTON	<a href="http://www.redistricting.wa.gov/">http://www.redistricting.wa.gov/</a>	Published meeting agendas. Live meetings, which are recorded. Email input. Subscribe for email notification. Good history of WA redistricting	The current website is not as fully developed as the excellent website used for the 2011 process, which is archived on the current website.	3	2	5	1	3	2	2	3	4	2	5	4

**Key to column labels:**

- Ease of use: is the website visually pleasing, logically arranged, intuitive?
- Up to date: is the information up-to-date?
- Legal requirements for redistricting: Are the state's legal requirements for redistricting stated, linked or referenced?
- Legal requirements for the commission: Are the state's legal requirements for the commission stated, linked or referenced?
- Commissioner biographies: Are the commissioners introduced with photo, family, location, vocation, interests, etc.?
- Plan of implementation: Are the commission's goals, intentions, direction described in addition to just-scheduled events and meetings?
- Commission meeting schedule: is the commission's public meeting schedule available, far in advance, so citizens can make plans to attend?
- Timeline of major events: Are the major events that must occur to get new maps drawn and implemented delineated?
- Citizen participation: Are the ways that citizens can participate delineated?
- Comments & feedback: Are the ways citizens can make comments and get feedback described?
- Comments readable, searchable: Can citizens read all comments? Are the comments searchable by keywords?
- Meeting minutes, handouts, recordings: Are there audio/video recordings of public meetings? Are handouts and mtg minutes available?
- Subscription services: Can citizens subscribe (email/other) to be automatically notified of relevant meetings, occurrences, news?
- Reference, education links: Does the website have links/references to learn about the law, redistricting, commissions, good governance?



VA Redistricting &lt;varedist@dls.virginia.gov&gt;

---

## My Public Comment re Virginia Redistricting Initiative

1 message

---

**Ken Chasin** <kenchasin1@gmail.com>  
To: varedist@dls.virginia.gov

Mon, Mar 29, 2021 at 9:09 PM

My name is Ken Chasin and I live in Charlottesville. I am a retired Information Technology professional and my areas of expertise include business intelligence solutions and data analysis. These skills are very adaptable to analyzing demographic data and discovering demographic trends and patterns.

I have developed a **redistricting strategy proposal for Virginia's congressional districts** which I emailed to the Commission last week. This proposal lays out seven (7) criteria for drawing Virginia's new congressional district maps and are in agreement with the criteria set forth by the Virginia Redistricting Commission, US Supreme Court rulings concerning redistricting/gerrymandering and criteria used by other states for redistricting. The seven criteria very briefly are:

1. Incorporate the concept of communities of interest/communities of place
2. Ensure that the congressional districts' land areas be contiguous and be of equal population as much as possible
3. Allow for racial fairness
4. Don't give a partisan edge
5. Preserve existing geographic boundaries of city, town, and counties
6. Reflect U.S. census data as concerns the number of congressional districts allocated to Virginia and
7. The land area chosen for each new congressional district map should be reflective of key demographics.

Finally, I would like to make you aware that over the last three months, I have been collecting demographic data pertaining to Virginia's existing eleven congressional districts and its 25 most populated counties which I have organized into a set of Microsoft Excel dashboards and charts. I emailed samples of the Excel dashboards and charts to the Commission last week. Let me know if you like me to share more of the demographic data with the Commission.

--

**Ken Chasin****Mobile Phone: 508-246-6887**



---

## Open Letter from OneVirginia2021, NAACP, etc.

---

Liz White <liz.white@onevirginia2021.org>  
Reply-To: liz.white@onevirginia2021foundation.org  
To: varedist@dls.virginia.gov

Tue, Mar 30, 2021 at 7:24 AM

Good morning,

In advance of your meeting this morning, please see the attached open letter signed by OneVirginia2021, the League of Women Voter of Virginia, the VA State Conference NAACP, CASA, Common Cause, RepresentVA, Unite Virginia, Activate Virginia, the National Black Nonpartisan Redistricting Organization, and the Princeton Gerrymandering Project.

We appreciate the work you're doing and look forward to the meeting.

Liz White

----

To the members of the Virginia Redistricting Commission:

Thank you for stepping up to serve on this historic commission. As you embark on this substantial undertaking, we, the undersigned, want to offer our assistance, our experience, and our support to your efforts to create fair and representative maps for the Commonwealth.

As Virginians who support fair redistricting and transparency in government, we were delighted to receive the release of the draft timeline for your work over the next year. We are particularly pleased that you plan to utilize the extra time provided to you by the delayed availability of the U.S. Census data to learn about the history and legal standards of redistricting, as well as the tools available to aid in the map-drawing.

**We strongly encourage the Commission to dedicate additional time and resources to thoroughly enable public communication and to determine how to best receive and incorporate feedback from diverse communities across Virginia.** We believe that the most important parts of the redistricting reforms passed over the last two years are those that elevate the role of the citizenry. The Commonwealth's legislative districts belong to Virginians, not to any political party or individual politician. The requirements that the Commission incorporate public input, consider Communities of Interest, and open all proceedings to the sunlight of transparency are the truly historic aspects of this new redistricting process.

Below is a list of questions we hope you will consider when planning your work. We are not proposing answers to these questions, but rather using the experiences of other redistricting commissions and organizations who engage with historically marginalized populations to help you think through how you will approach them. We hope this will help guide your efforts to make the redistricting process transparent, accessible, and collaborative.

1. How and when will you advertise meetings and hearings to maximize public knowledge and participation, particularly to those not on social media and those who lack easy internet access?
2. How will you ensure that all meetings and work products are accessible, including to non- English speakers and people living with disabilities who may need accommodations to participate fully?
3. How will you prioritize protecting communities of interest in drawing maps?
4. How do you plan to receive public input and testimony on communities of interest in a way that allows you to best utilize the information? How will that public input and testimony be available to members of the public?
5. Do you plan to communicate with the public through traditional media, social media, email, or more frequent updates to the website? If so, how?
6. How will you organize your inbox so that public feedback doesn't get overlooked? Would you consider hiring a third party to develop a portal for this input?
7. Will you reach out to individuals or organizations who specialize in fair and equitable redistricting to supplement your training?
8. Will you conduct direct outreach to diverse communities across Virginia to ensure that the Commission receives a full picture of the Commonwealth? If yes, what is your plan?
9. What will be your policy on attending public events organized by groups or individuals in which community mapping concerns are being addressed?

10. Do you plan to reach out or would you consider reaching out to other commissions or subject matter experts other than those listed in the draft timeline?
11. How many public hearings do you plan to conduct? Are you able to do more if they are in a virtual format?
12. How will you handle the Chat feature in the virtual meetings, as only those registered to give public comment are currently able to participate?
13. Would you consider implementing an automatic reply on [varedist@dls.virginia.gov](mailto:varedist@dls.virginia.gov) so that members of the public know their feedback has been received?<sup>[SEP]</sup>

We appreciate your commitment to a fair and transparent process and look forward to supporting your work in the coming months. Sincerely,

Liz White, Executive Director, *OneVirginia2021*<sup>[SEP]</sup>

Luis Aguilar, Virginia Director, *CASA*

Suzanne Almeida, Redistricting and Representation Counsel, *Common Cause*

Rev. David Denham, Lead, *RepresentVA*

The Hon. Michael Futrell, President, *National Black Nonpartisan Redistricting Organization*

Da'Quan Love, Executive Director, *Virginia State Conference NAACP*

Matthew Scoble, Executive Director, *Unite Virginia*

Josh Stanfield, Executive Director, *Activate Virginia*

Phillip Thompson, Executive Director, *National Black Nonpartisan Redistricting Organization*

Deb Wake, President, *League of Women Voters of Virginia*

Prof. Sam Wang, Director, *Princeton Gerrymandering Project*

--

Liz White

Executive Director, OneVirginia2021

804.305.8050

[liz.white@onevirginia2021.org](mailto:liz.white@onevirginia2021.org)

she/her



**Open Letter to Commission 3.29.21.pdf**

90K

March 29, 2021

To the members of the Virginia Redistricting Commission:

**Co-Signers:**

Liz White, Executive Director,  
*OneVirginia2021*

Luis Aguilar, Virginia Director,  
*CASA*

Suzanne Almeida, Redistricting  
and Representation Counsel,  
*Common Cause*

Rev. David Denham, Lead for  
*RepresentVA*

The Hon. Michael Futrell,  
President, *National Black  
Nonpartisan Redistricting  
Organization*

Da'Quan Love, Executive  
Director, *Virginia State  
Conference NAACP*

Matthew Scoble, Executive  
Director, *Unite Virginia*

Josh Stanfield, Executive  
Director, *Activate Virginia*

Phillip Thompson, Executive  
Director, *National Black  
Nonpartisan Redistricting  
Organization*

Deb Wake, President, *League of  
Women Voters of Virginia*

Prof. Sam Wang, Director,  
*Princeton Gerrymandering  
Project*

Thank you for stepping up to serve on this historic commission. As you embark on this substantial undertaking, we, the undersigned, want to offer our assistance, our experience, and our support to your efforts to create fair and representative maps for the Commonwealth.

As Virginians who support fair redistricting and transparency in government, we were delighted to receive the release of the draft timeline for your work over the next year. We are particularly pleased that you plan to utilize the extra time provided to you by the delayed availability of the U.S. Census data to learn about the history and legal standards of redistricting, as well as the tools available to aid in the map-drawing.

**We strongly encourage the Commission to dedicate additional time and resources to thoroughly enable public communication and to determine how to best receive and incorporate feedback from diverse communities across Virginia.** We believe that the most important parts of the redistricting reforms passed over the last two years are those that elevate the role of the citizenry. The Commonwealth's legislative districts belong to Virginians, not to any political party or individual politician. The requirements that the Commission incorporate public input, consider Communities of Interest, and open all proceedings to the sunlight of transparency are the truly historic aspects of this new redistricting process.

Below is a list of questions we hope you will consider when planning your work.

We are not proposing answers to these questions, but rather using the experiences of other redistricting commissions and organizations who engage with historically marginalized populations to help you think through how you will approach them. We hope this will help guide your efforts to make the redistricting process transparent, accessible, and collaborative.

1. How and when will you advertise meetings and hearings to maximize public knowledge and participation, particularly to those not on social media and those who lack easy internet access?
2. How will you ensure that all meetings and work products are accessible, including to non-English speakers and people living with disabilities who may need accommodations to participate fully?
3. How will you prioritize protecting communities of interest in drawing maps?

4. How do you plan to receive public input and testimony on communities of interest in a way that allows you to best utilize the information? How will that public input and testimony be available to members of the public?
5. Do you plan to communicate with the public through traditional media, social media, email, or more frequent updates to the website? If so, how?
6. How will you organize your inbox so that public feedback doesn't get overlooked? Would you consider hiring a third party to develop a portal for this input?
7. Will you reach out to individuals or organizations who specialize in fair and equitable redistricting to supplement your training?
8. Will you conduct direct outreach to diverse communities across Virginia to ensure that the Commission receives a full picture of the Commonwealth? If yes, what is your plan?
9. What will be your policy on attending public events organized by groups or individuals in which community mapping concerns are being addressed?
10. Do you plan to reach out or would you consider reaching out to other commissions or subject matter experts other than those listed in the draft timeline?
11. How many public hearings do you plan to conduct? Are you able to do more if they are in a virtual format?
12. How will you handle the Chat feature in the virtual meetings, as only those registered to give public comment are currently able to participate?
13. Would you consider implementing an automatic reply on [varedist@dls.virginia.gov](mailto:varedist@dls.virginia.gov) so that members of the public know their feedback has been received?

We appreciate your commitment to a fair and transparent process and look forward to supporting your work in the coming months.

Sincerely,

Liz White, Executive Director, *OneVirginia2021*

Luis Aguilar, Virginia Director, *CASA*

Suzanne Almeida, Redistricting and Representation Counsel, *Common Cause*

Rev. David Denham, Lead, *RepresentVA*

The Hon. Michael Futrell, President, *National Black Nonpartisan Redistricting Organization*

Da'Quan Love, Executive Director, *Virginia State Conference NAACP*

Matthew Scoble, Executive Director, *Unite Virginia*

Josh Stanfield, Executive Director, *Activate Virginia*

Phillip Thompson, Executive Director, *National Black Nonpartisan Redistricting Organization*

Deb Wake, President, *League of Women Voters of Virginia*

Prof. Sam Wang, Director, *Princeton Gerrymandering Project*



VA Redistricting &lt;varedist@dls.virginia.gov&gt;

---

## Public comment from Virginia Coalition for Open Government

1 message

---

**Jeff South** <jeffsouthrva@gmail.com>  
To: varedist@dls.virginia.gov

Tue, Mar 30, 2021 at 10:32 AM

Hi. I am viewing today's Zoom meeting and hope to have an opportunity to give a brief comment to the Virginia Redistricting Commission. If I'm not able to present my remarks, I am emailing them to you as suggested by Ms. Harris so that they can be included in the public record.

I am the president of the Virginia Coalition for Open Government as well as president of the Virginia Pro Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists. Speaking especially on behalf of VCOG, I would like to respectfully ask the Virginia Redistricting Commission to conduct its business in public to the greatest extent possible and to consider not just the letter but also the spirit of the Freedom of Information Act. There is public relations value in how the Commission conducts meetings and responds to requests for records: The more open you are, the greater the public trust and buy-in to what you're trying to accomplish. We realize that there are exemptions to FOIA -- circumstances in which a governmental body can meet in private or withhold records. But those exemptions are discretionary and do not have to be used. Moreover, if the commission does decide to meet in closed session or deny a request for documents, it is crucial to explain why. The public values context.

Thank you.

Jeff South | Associate Professor Emeritus | [Virginia Commonwealth University](#)  
President | [Virginia Coalition for Open Government](#)  
President | [Virginia Pro Chapter](#) | [Society of Professional Journalists](#)  
Freelance journalist | [Newsroom trainer](#) | [Fulbright scholar](#) | [jeff-south.com](#)  
[804-519-1062](#) | [JeffSouthRVA@gmail.com](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)