

Senate Resolution 6

By: Senators Parent of the 42nd, Henson of the 41st, McKoon of the 29th, Jones II of the 22nd, Butler of the 55th and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Proposing an amendment to the Constitution so as to provide that legislative and
 2 congressional reapportionment be done by an independent bipartisan commission instead of
 3 the General Assembly; to provide for the establishment of such commission; to provide for
 4 the qualifications and appointment of members of such commission; to provide for the filling
 5 of vacancies on the commission; to provide for powers, duties, responsibilities, and resources
 6 for such commission; to provide for guidelines for reapportionment; to provide for related
 7 matters; to provide for submission of this amendment for ratification or rejection; and for
 8 other purposes.

9 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

10 SECTION 1.

11 Article II of the Constitution is amended by adding a new Section IV to read as follows:

12 "SECTION IV.

13 LEGISLATIVE AND CONGRESSIONAL REAPPORTIONMENT

14 Paragraph I. *Citizens' Redistricting Commission.* (a) In each year following a year in
 15 which a United States decennial census is conducted or when congressional or legislative
 16 redistricting is required by court order, a Citizens' Redistricting Commission shall be
 17 established as provided in this Paragraph.

18 (b)(1) The commission shall consist of 14 members appointed as provided in this
 19 Paragraph.

20 (2) The commission shall include five members who are identified with the political
 21 party whose candidate for Governor in the last general election to fill the office of
 22 Governor received the highest number of votes, five members who are identified with the
 23 political party whose candidate for Governor in the last general election to fill the office
 24 of Governor received the next highest number of votes, and four members who are not
 25 identified with any political party. Identification with a political party shall mean that a
 26 person voted in the general primary of such political party in each of the three
 27 immediately preceding general primaries. Not being identified with a political party shall

28 mean that the person did not vote exclusively in the general primary of one political party
 29 in the three immediately preceding general primaries.

30 (3) Each commission member shall be a registered voter who, at the time of his or her
 31 selection to serve on the commission, has been continuously registered to vote in Georgia
 32 for the immediately preceding five-year period or longer and has voted in each of the
 33 three immediately preceding state-wide general elections.

34 (4) No person shall be eligible to serve on the commission who has, within the
 35 immediately preceding ten-year period prior to his or her selection to serve on the
 36 commission, or whose immediate family member has, within the immediately preceding
 37 ten-year period prior to such person's selection to serve on the commission:

38 (A) Been appointed or elected to or been a candidate for federal, state, or local office;

39 (B) Served as an officer, employee, or paid consultant of a political party or body or
 40 of the campaign or campaign committee of a candidate for elective federal, state, or
 41 local office;

42 (C) Served as an elected or appointed officer of a political party or body on a state
 43 or county executive committee;

44 (D) Served as a registered federal, state, or local lobbyist;

45 (E) Served as a paid congressional or legislative staff member; or

46 (F) Contributed \$2,000.00 or more to any federal, state, or local candidate for elective
 47 public office in any year; such amount shall be adjusted every ten years by the
 48 Secretary of State by calculating the cumulative percentage increase in the consumer
 49 price index for Georgia or its successor index over the preceding ten-year period.

50 Immediate family members include spouses, parents, siblings, and children.

51 (5) Not later than January 1, 2020, and in each year ending in the number zero
 52 thereafter, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court shall initiate an application process for
 53 service on the commission which shall be open to all registered electors in Georgia in a
 54 manner that promotes a diverse and qualified applicant pool. Such applications shall be
 55 received through June 30 of such year and in each year ending in the number zero
 56 thereafter. Not later than July 1 of such year and in each year ending in the number zero
 57 thereafter, the Chief Justice shall establish a review panel consisting of three retired
 58 appellate or superior court judges to screen applicants for the commission. Not later than
 59 August 1 of such year and in each year ending in the number zero thereafter, the Chief
 60 Justice shall publicize the names of the applicants and deliver copies of their applications
 61 to the review panel.

62 (6) The review panel shall review and verify the qualifications of the applicants and
 63 shall select 20 of the most qualified applicants who are identified with the political party
 64 whose candidate for Governor in the last general election to fill the office of Governor

65 received the highest number of votes, 20 of the most qualified applicants who are
66 identified with the political party whose candidate for Governor in the last general
67 election to fill the office of Governor received the next highest number of votes, and 20
68 of the most qualified applicants who are not identified with any political party. These
69 subpools shall be created on the basis of relevant analytical skills, ability to be impartial,
70 and appreciation of the diverse demographics and geography of the state. The members
71 of the review panel shall not communicate with any member of the Georgia congressional
72 delegation, any member of the General Assembly, or any representative of any such
73 member prior to the selection of the three subpools of applicants.

74 (7) Not later than October 1, 2020, and in each year ending in the number zero
75 thereafter, the review panel shall submit the three subpools of applicants to the Secretary
76 of the Senate and the Clerk of the House of Representatives. Not later than
77 November 15, 2020, and in each year ending in the number zero thereafter, the President
78 Pro Tempore of the Senate, the minority leader of the Senate, the Speaker of the House
79 of Representatives, and the minority leader of the House of Representatives may each
80 strike up to two of the applicants from each subpool for a total of up to eight strikes from
81 each subpool. After removing the names of those persons stricken from the subpools, the
82 Secretary of the Senate and the Clerk of the House of Representatives shall deliver the
83 pool of remaining names to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

84 (8) Not later than November 20, 2020, and in each year ending in the number zero
85 thereafter, the Chief Justice shall randomly draw eight names from the applicants
86 remaining. Three names shall be drawn from the subpool of applicants who identify with
87 the political party whose candidate for Governor in the last general election to fill the
88 office of Governor received the highest number of votes, three names shall be drawn
89 from the subpool of applicants who identify with the political party whose candidate for
90 Governor in the last general election to fill the office of Governor received the next
91 highest number of votes, and two names shall be drawn from the subpool of applicants
92 who do not identify with any political party. These persons shall serve on the
93 commission.

94 (9) Not later than December 31, 2020, and in each year ending in the number zero
95 thereafter, the initial eight members of the commission selected as provided in
96 subparagraph (b)(8) of this Paragraph shall review the names remaining in the pool of
97 applicants following their selection and shall appoint an additional six persons from such
98 remaining applicants. Two names shall be selected from the subpool of applicants who
99 identify with the political party whose candidate for Governor in the last general election
100 to fill the office of Governor received the highest number of votes, two names shall be
101 selected from the subpool of applicants who identify with the political party whose

102 candidate for Governor in the last general election to fill the office of Governor received
103 the next highest number of votes, and two names shall be selected from the subpool of
104 applicants who do not identify with any political party. The six appointees must receive
105 the affirmative vote of at least five of the eight commissioners, which shall include at
106 least two votes by commissioners who identify with one of the political parties and one
107 vote by a commissioner who does not identify with any political party. Such additional
108 six commissioners shall be chosen to represent the state's diversity to include, but not be
109 limited to, racial, ethnic, geographic, and gender diversity, provided that no formula or
110 specific ratio shall be used for such purpose. Such commissioners shall also be chosen
111 for their analytical skills and ability to be impartial.

112 (c)(1) In the event of substantial neglect of duty, gross misconduct in office, or inability
113 to discharge the duties of the office, a member of the commission may be removed by the
114 review panel established by the Chief Justice pursuant to subparagraph (b)(5) of this
115 Paragraph after having been served with written notice and provided with an opportunity
116 for responding.

117 (2) Vacancies on the commission shall be filled within 30 days following the
118 occurrence of such vacancy by the remaining members of the commission by selecting
119 a person from the same subpool of applicants from which the vacating member was
120 selected as such subpool existed on November 20 of the year in which that pool was
121 established. In the event that none of the remaining applicants are available for service,
122 the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court shall create a new subpool following the general
123 methodology of subparagraph (b) of this Paragraph.

124 (d) The members of the commission shall select from among their number a chairperson
125 to preside over meetings of the commission and a vice chairperson to act in the absence of
126 the chairperson. The chairperson and vice chairperson shall not be from the same subpool.
127 The commission may also select a secretary to keep the records of the commission and
128 minutes of its meetings. Such person need not be a member of the commission.

129 (e) Members of the commission shall be reimbursed for expenses incurred in the
130 performance of their duties on the commission in the same manner as members of the
131 General Assembly. The General Assembly is authorized to provide for the payment of
132 reasonable compensation to the members of the commission. The General Assembly shall
133 provide adequate funding to the commission, including the employment of a competent
134 staff, in order for the commission to carry out its duties. The General Assembly shall
135 provide adequate funding for the representation of the commission in any litigation, and
136 the Department of Law shall have the responsibility for such representation.

137 (f) The commission shall have the following duties:

138 (1) To create proposed United States congressional and Georgia House of
139 Representatives and Senate legislative districts for submission to the General Assembly
140 for approval or rejection;

141 (2) To conduct public hearings throughout all areas of this state, including at least one
142 hearing in each congressional district in this state, after providing adequate advance
143 notice to the public so that all interested citizens have a reasonable opportunity to express
144 their views with regard to proposed redistricting plans prior to the submission of such
145 plans to the General Assembly; and

146 (3) To conduct meetings, discussions, and deliberations in public and to provide ample
147 notice of the meetings of the commission to facilitate public participation and attendance.

148 (g) In developing proposed redistricting plans for submission to the General Assembly
149 for approval or rejection, the commission shall adhere to the following criteria:

150 (1) The plan shall be in compliance with the Constitutions of this state and the United
151 States;

152 (2) The plan shall be in compliance with the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965, as
153 amended;

154 (3) The plan shall contain only contiguous districts;

155 (4) The plan shall contain districts that are as compact as possible or practicable for
156 which the commission may use, but shall not be limited to, a general appearance test
157 regarding compactness, and may also consider functional compactness in terms of travel
158 and transportation, communication, and geography;

159 (5) The plan shall maintain communities of interest, as determined by the commission
160 from time to time, to the extent that it is reasonably possible to do so, including, but not
161 limited to, urban interests, suburban interests, rural interests, neighborhoods, trade areas,
162 geographic location, communication and transportation networks, media markets, social
163 and cultural interests, economic interests, and occupations and lifestyles;

164 (6) The plan shall follow the lines of political subdivisions and geographic boundaries
165 whenever possible, and the commission shall consider boundary lines of counties,
166 municipalities, school districts, and other political units in developing its plans;

167 (7) The plan, if for congressional redistricting, shall provide for zero deviation among
168 the districts and, if for legislative redistricting, shall provide for as close as practicable
169 to zero deviation among the districts; and

170 (8) The plan and districts shall not be drawn with the intent to favor or disfavor a
171 political party or an incumbent; districts shall not be drawn with the intent or result of
172 denying or abridging the equal opportunity of racial or language minorities to participate
173 in the political process or to diminish their ability to elect representatives of their choice.

174 (h) The commission shall, no later than July 1 of the year following the year in which a
175 United States decennial census is conducted or as soon as practicable following a court
176 ordered congressional or legislative redistricting, submit its report with a proposed
177 congressional redistricting plan, a proposed redistricting plan for the House of
178 Representatives, and a proposed redistricting plan for the Senate to the General Assembly
179 for approval. Such plans shall be voted upon by both houses of the General Assembly
180 without amendment during a special called session for the specific purpose of approving
181 or rejecting such plans. If either house of the General Assembly declines to approve a plan,
182 the plan and report shall be returned to the commission with such specific suggestions as
183 the Senate or House of Representatives, as applicable, believes would eliminate the basis
184 for disapproval of the plan. The commission shall then meet, revise the plan, and submit
185 a new report and proposed plan to the General Assembly within 15 days following the
186 disapproval of the plan. Such revised plan shall be voted upon by the General Assembly
187 without amendment. If either house of the General Assembly declines to approve the
188 revised plan, the General Assembly shall proceed to formulate and enact a redistricting
189 plan on its own which shall adhere to the criteria provided in subparagraph (g) of this
190 Paragraph.

191 (i) Upon the approval or final rejection of each of the proposed plans by the General
192 Assembly, the commission shall be dissolved.

193 (j) In the event that, at the time a commission is formed under this Paragraph, the Public
194 Service Commission is elected from districts by the electors residing within such district
195 and not the electors of the entire state, then following each decennial census or when
196 redistricting of the Public Service Commission districts is required by court order,
197 redistricting of the Public Service Commission districts shall be accomplished in the same
198 manner as provided for congressional and legislative districts in this Paragraph. In the
199 event that, at the time a commission is formed under this Paragraph, the Public Service
200 Commission is elected from districts by the electors of the entire state, then following each
201 decennial census, the commission formed under this Paragraph may submit a new district
202 plan for the election of members of the Public Service Commission but shall not be bound
203 by the provisions of subparagraph (g) of this Paragraph in formulating such districts, but
204 shall take into account political subdivision boundaries and shall devise districts that are
205 as near as practicable equal in population."

206 **SECTION 2.**

207 Article III, Section II of the Constitution is amended by revising Paragraph II as follows:

208 "Paragraph II. *Apportionment of General Assembly.* The General Assembly shall
 209 apportion the Senate and House districts. ~~Such districts shall be composed of contiguous~~
 210 ~~territory.~~ The apportionment of the Senate and of the House of Representatives shall be
 211 changed by the General Assembly as necessary after each United States decennial census
 212 as provided in Article II, Section IV of this Constitution."

213 **SECTION 3.**

214 The above proposed amendment to the Constitution shall be published and submitted as
 215 provided in Article X, Section I, Paragraph II of the Constitution. The ballot submitting the
 216 above proposed amendment shall have written or printed thereon the following:

217 "() YES Shall the Constitution of Georgia be amended so as to provide for the creation
 218 () NO of a bipartisan independent citizens' redistricting commission comprised of
 219 Georgia voters to conduct legislative and congressional redistricting to be
 220 submitted to the General Assembly for final approval?"

221 All persons desiring to vote in favor of ratifying the proposed amendment shall vote "Yes."

222 All persons desiring to vote against ratifying the proposed amendment shall vote "No." If
 223 such amendment shall be ratified as provided in said Paragraph of the Constitution, it shall
 224 become a part of the Constitution of this state.