

**A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING GENERAL ASSEMBLY HOUSE BILL HB 555 and  
SENATE BILL 59 CONGRESSIONAL AND STATE LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS**

**WHEREAS**, the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors strives to promote and support ideas that improve the democratic process and citizens' representation and engagement in civic life; and

**WHEREAS**, the current redistricting process has rendered up to 90 percent of Virginia General Assembly and Congressional districts noncompetitive, including those held by both parties representing parts of Albemarle County; and

**WHEREAS**, the need is critical to restore trust, compromise and fair competition to Virginia politics; and

**WHEREAS**, General Assembly House Bill 555 and Senate Bill 59 provide criteria for the General Assembly to observe in drawing districts, including respect for political boundaries, equal population, racial and ethnic fairness, contiguity, compactness, and communities of interest and would prohibit use of political data or election results unless necessary to determine if racial or ethnic minorities can elect candidates of their choice.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors fully supports the goals of HB 555 and SB 59 to draw state legislative and Congressional lines based on specified and consistent criteria and requests that HB 555 and SB 59 be enacted into law.

I, Ella W. Jordan, do hereby certify that the foregoing writing is a true, correct copy of a Resolution duly adopted by the Board of Supervisors of Albemarle County, Virginia, by a vote of \_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_, as recorded below, at a regular meeting held on \_\_\_\_\_.

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Clerk, Board of County Supervisors

	<u>Aye</u>	<u>Nay</u>
Mr. Dill	_____	_____
Ms. Mallek	_____	_____
Ms. McKeel	_____	_____
Ms. Palmer	_____	_____
Mr. Randolph	_____	_____
Mr. Sheffield	_____	_____

## 2016 SESSION

**HB 555 Congressional and state legislative districts.**Introduced by: [R. Steven Landes](#) | [all patrons](#) ... [notes](#) | [add to my profiles](#)**SUMMARY AS INTRODUCED:**

**Congressional and state legislative districts.** Provides criteria for the General Assembly to observe in drawing districts, including respect for political boundaries, equal population, racial and ethnic fairness, contiguity, compactness, and communities of interest. Use of political data or election results is prohibited unless necessary to determine if racial or ethnic minorities can elect candidates of their choice.

**FULL TEXT****01/10/16 House: Prefiled and ordered printed; offered 01/13/16 16101095D** [pdf](#) | [impact statement](#)**HISTORY**

01/10/16 House: Prefiled and ordered printed; offered 01/13/16 16101095D

01/10/16 House: Referred to Committee on Privileges and Elections

01/14/16 House: Assigned to sub: Subcommittee Elections

2016 SESSION  
16101095D

**HOUSE BILL NO. 555**

Offered January 13, 2016

Prefiled January 10, 2016

*A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Article 2 of Chapter 3 of Title 24.2 a section numbered 24.2-304.04, relating to standards and criteria for congressional and state legislative districts.*

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Patron-- Landes  
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Referred to Committee on Privileges and Elections  
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Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Article 2 of Chapter 3 of Title 24.2 a section numbered 24.2-304.04 as follows:

§ 24.2-304.04. *Standards and criteria for congressional and state legislative districts.*

*A. Every congressional and state legislative district shall be constituted so as to adhere to the following criteria, in the order in which the criteria are set forth in subsections B through G.*

*B. Existing political boundaries shall be respected to the maximum extent possible. Political boundaries shall include the boundaries of counties, cities, towns, county magisterial and election districts, municipal councilmanic districts, and voting precincts. If a departure from existing political boundaries is necessary in order to comply with other districting criteria, the district lines shall be drawn utilizing clearly observable physical boundaries. A "clearly observable boundary" shall include (i) any named road or street; (ii) any road or highway that is a part of the federal, primary, or secondary state highway system; (iii) any river, stream, or drainage feature shown as a polygon boundary on the TIGER/Line Files of the United States Bureau of the Census; or (iv) any other natural or constructed or erected permanent physical feature that is shown on an official map issued by the Virginia Department of Transportation, on a United States Geological Survey topographical map, or as a polygon boundary on the TIGER/Line Files of the United States Bureau of the Census. No property line or subdivision boundary shall be deemed to be a clearly observable boundary unless it is marked by a permanent physical feature that is shown on an official map issued by the Virginia Department of Transportation, on a United States Geological Survey topographical map, or as a polygon boundary on the TIGER/Line Files of the United States Bureau of the Census.*

*C. Legislative and congressional districts shall be established on the basis of population. Senate and House of Delegates districts, respectively, shall each have a population that is as substantially equal to the population of every other such district as practicable. Congressional districts shall have populations that are as nearly equal as practicable. The General Assembly shall be guided by the most recent federal and state judicial decisions defining standards for equal population for the respective districts, including permissible deviations from ideal population if the deviation is necessary in order to achieve some other legitimate districting criterion.*

*D. Districts shall be drawn in accordance with the requirements of federal and state laws, and judicial decisions interpreting such laws, that address racial and ethnic fairness, including the Equal Protection Clause of the United States Constitution and the provisions of the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended.*

*E. Each legislative and congressional district shall be composed of contiguous territory. A district shall be deemed contiguous if it is possible to travel from one point in the district to any other point in the district without crossing the boundary of the district. Territory that touches the rest of a district only by a point shall not be deemed contiguous territory. Districts divided by water shall be deemed contiguous if a common means of transport, such as a bridge or ferry, connects the two parts of the district or, if the water were to be removed, the land on one side of the district would be contiguous with the land on the other side of the district. Connections by water running downstream or upriver are not permissible.*

*F. Each legislative and congressional district shall be composed of compact territory. Districts shall not be oddly shaped or have irregular or contorted boundaries, unless justified because the district adheres to political subdivision lines. Fingers or*

*tendrils extending from a district core shall be avoided, as shall thin and elongated districts and districts with multiple core populations connected by thin strips of land or water. The General Assembly shall employ one or more standard numerical measures of individual and average district compactness to provide an objective assessment of a districting plan's compactness, both statewide and district by district.*

*G. Consideration may be given to communities of interest by creating districts that do not carve up homogeneous neighborhoods or separate groups of people living in an area with similar interests or needs in transportation, employment, or culture.*

*H. No district shall be drawn for the purpose of favoring or disfavoring any political party, incumbent legislator or member of Congress, or potential candidate. Political data, including addresses of incumbent legislators or members of Congress, political affiliations of voters, or previous election results, shall not be used in the drawing of any legislative or congressional district, except as may be necessary to ensure that racial or ethnic minorities are able to elect a preferred candidate of choice in a district drawn pursuant to the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended.*

**A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE EFFORTS OF THE ORGANIZATION  
ONEVIRGINIA2021: VIRGINIANS FOR FAIR REDISTRICTING, TO DEPOLITICIZE  
THE LEGISLATIVE REDISTRICTING PROCESS**

**WHEREAS**, the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors strives to promote and support ideas that improve the democratic process and citizens' representation and engagement in civic life; and

**WHEREAS**, the organization OneVirginia2021 supports the belief that Virginia's historical practice of redistricting by the majority party in each legislative chamber is an outdated practice that stifles political competition, discourages compromise and ensures continued control by the party in power; and

**WHEREAS**, the current redistricting process has rendered up to 90 percent of Virginia General Assembly and Congressional districts uncompetitive, including those held by both parties representing parts of Albemarle County, and

**WHEREAS**, OneVirginia2021 believes that Virginia's state and congressional districts belong to its citizens and not to any legislator, interest group or political party; and

**WHEREAS**, OneVirginia2021 believes that the redistricting process should not be a tool used by those in power to protect and bolster their power, but should be designed for the best interests of Virginia's democracy and its citizens; and

**WHEREAS**, the need is critical to restore trust, compromise and fair competition to Virginia politics;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors fully supports the goals of OneVirginia2021: Virginians for Fair Redistricting, to depoliticize the redrawing of legislative district lines with an approach that advocates for fairness, transparency and accountability, and which keeps the citizens' interests in mind, encourages healthy debate and participation by the public in the process.

I, Ella W. Jordan, do hereby certify that the foregoing writing is a true, correct copy of a Resolution duly adopted by the Board of Supervisors of Albemarle County, Virginia, by a vote of five to one, as recorded below, at a regular meeting held on October 1, 2014.

  
Clerk, Board of County Supervisors

	<u>Aye</u>	<u>Nay</u>
Mr. Boyd	<u>      </u>	<u>N</u>
Ms. Dittmar	<u>Y</u>	<u>      </u>
Ms. Mallek	<u>Y</u>	<u>      </u>
Ms. McKeel	<u>Y</u>	<u>      </u>
Ms. Palmer	<u>Y</u>	<u>      </u>
Mr. Sheffield	<u>Y</u>	<u>      </u>

16104804D

## SENATE BILL NO. 59

## AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

(Proposed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections  
on January 26, 2016)

(Patrons Prior to Substitute—Senators Howell and Vogel and Sturtevant [SB 495])

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Article 2 of Chapter 3 of Title 24.2 a section numbered 24.2-304.04, relating to standards and criteria for congressional and state legislative districts.*

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Article 2 of Chapter 3 of Title 24.2 a section numbered 24.2-304.04 as follows:**

**§ 24.2-304.04. Standards and criteria for congressional and state legislative districts.**

A. Every congressional and state legislative district shall be constituted so as to adhere to the following criteria, in the order in which the criteria are set forth in subsections B through G.

B. Existing political boundaries shall be respected to the maximum extent possible. Political boundaries shall include the boundaries of counties, cities, towns, county magisterial and election districts, municipal councilmanic districts, and voting precincts. If a departure from existing political boundaries is necessary in order to comply with other districting criteria, the district lines shall be drawn utilizing clearly observable physical boundaries. A "clearly observable boundary" shall include (i) any named road or street; (ii) any road or highway that is a part of the federal, primary, or secondary state highway system; (iii) any river, stream, or drainage feature shown as a polygon boundary on the TIGER/Line Files of the United States Bureau of the Census; or (iv) any other natural or constructed or erected permanent physical feature that is shown on an official map issued by the Virginia Department of Transportation, on a United States Geological Survey topographical map, or as a polygon boundary on the TIGER/Line Files of the United States Bureau of the Census. No property line or subdivision boundary shall be deemed to be a clearly observable boundary unless it is marked by a permanent physical feature that is shown on an official map issued by the Virginia Department of Transportation, on a United States Geological Survey topographical map, or as a polygon boundary on the TIGER/Line Files of the United States Bureau of the Census.

C. Legislative and congressional districts shall be established on the basis of population. Senate and House of Delegates districts shall each have a population that is as substantially equal to the population of every other respective district as practicable. Congressional districts shall have populations that are as nearly equal as practicable. The General Assembly shall be guided by the most recent federal and state judicial decisions defining standards for equal population for the respective districts, including permissible deviations from ideal population if the deviation is necessary in order to achieve some other legitimate districting criterion.

D. Districts shall be drawn in accordance with the requirements of federal and state laws, and judicial decisions interpreting such laws, that address racial and ethnic fairness, including the Equal Protection Clause of the United States Constitution and the provisions of the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended.

E. Each legislative and congressional district shall be composed of contiguous territory. A district shall be deemed contiguous if it is possible to travel from one point in the district to any other point in the district without crossing the boundary of the district. Territory that touches the rest of a district only by a point shall not be deemed contiguous territory. Districts divided by water shall be deemed contiguous if a common means of transport, such as a bridge or ferry, connects the two parts of the district or, if the water were to be removed, the land on one side of the district would be contiguous with the land on the other side of the district. Connections by water running downstream or upriver are not permissible.

F. Each legislative and congressional district shall be composed of compact territory. Districts shall not be oddly shaped or have irregular or contorted boundaries, unless justified because the district adheres to political subdivision lines. Fingers or tendrils extending from a district core shall be avoided, as shall thin and elongated districts and districts with multiple core populations connected by thin strips of land or water. The General Assembly shall employ one or more standard numerical measures of individual and average district compactness to provide an objective assessment of a districting plan's compactness, both statewide and district by district.

G. Consideration may be given to communities of interest by creating districts that do not carve up homogeneous neighborhoods or separate groups of people living in an area with similar interests or needs in transportation, employment, or culture.

H. No district shall be drawn for the purpose of favoring or disfavoring any political party,

**60** *incumbent legislator or member of Congress, or any potential candidate. Political data, including*  
**61** *addresses of incumbent legislators or members of Congress, political affiliations of voters, or previous*  
**62** *election results, shall not be used in the drawing of any legislative or congressional district, except as*  
**63** *may be necessary to ensure that racial or ethnic minorities are able to elect a preferred candidate of*  
**64** *choice in a district drawn pursuant to the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended.*