



## **As one panel submits plan for legislative boundaries in Maryland, another panel getting close**

General Assembly will hold special session in December to approve new districts

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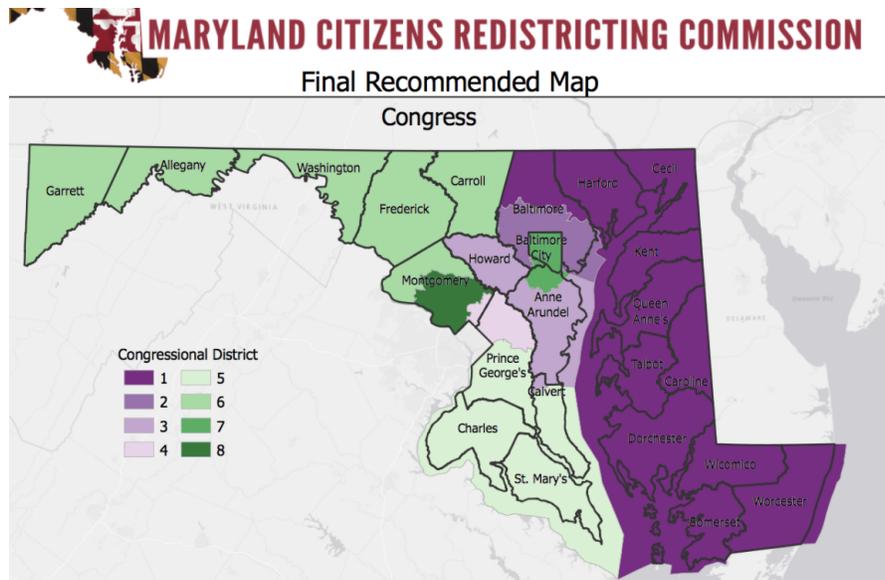
The process of redrawing state and federal districts in Maryland was scrutinized in Montgomery County on Friday, as a legislative panel heard public comments about the process.

Another panel — this one formed by Gov. Larry Hogan — turned in its proposed maps on Friday, setting the stage for a possible showdown of ideas next month.

Hogan, a Republican, announced Friday that the Maryland General Assembly will meet in a special session starting Dec. 6 to go through the decennial process of drawing new lines for congressional and state legislative districts.

The governor’s panel — called the Maryland Citizens Redistricting Commission — has proposed a map that could bring noticeable changes to Montgomery County.

The map moves Takoma Park — the home of District 8 U.S. Rep Jamie Raskin, a Democrat — out of the 8th District and into the 4th District. (Under the U.S. Constitution, members of Congress must live in the state they represent, but not the district.)



The map also proposes remaking the 6th District, now represented by Democrat David Trone, with boundaries that would make it more Republican.

The Democratic-dominated General Assembly will choose and approve new boundaries for 2022. It’s unknown how much it will consider plans from both the Hogan redistricting commission and from the state legislature’s own redistricting commission.

“In Maryland, it’s the duty of the state legislature to draw and vote on the congressional lines,” Trone wrote in an email. “Governor Hogan can submit a redistricting proposal if he chooses, but at the end of the day, it’s the state legislature’s prerogative to approve both federal and state district lines.”

Montgomery County residents on Friday night had a chance to weigh in as the legislature's commission held a hearing in Rockville. Several said they were frustrated they have not been able to see even a rough draft of the plan yet.

"We do intend to release the maps, but we're not there yet," said Karl Aro, the chair of the Legislative Redistricting Advisory Commission.

That did not satisfy Montgomery County resident Jaqueline Coolidge, who said state residents "really need" to see a draft map before the next redistricting hearing is held on Nov. 15.

"It's hard for most people to consider what they want out of the redistricting process on the basis of blank maps or old maps," she said.

Some who spoke at a hearing at The Universities at Shady Grove Conference Center lobbied for the map to keep multimember state delegate districts, instead of turning them into single-member districts.

Montgomery County's eight General Assembly districts are all at large. They have one senator and three delegates who represent the entire district. Having single-member districts means carving the district in three, and having one delegate represent each area.

Nicole Drew of Burtonsville said multimember districts gave diverse communities better representation and greater political clout because they are represented on each committee that includes their delegates.

Redistricting — the process of changing the boundaries of the state’s congressional and General Assembly — occurs every 10 years. The U.S. Census Bureau determined Maryland’s population grew by about 7 percent between 2010 and 2020, to about 6.18 million residents.

The process is fraught with politics and controversy, particularly when the party in power controls the process and, therefore, the lines. Hogan has pushed back for years, saying redistricting needs to be done through a bipartisan review.

The Maryland Citizens Redistricting Commission, which Hogan created, has proposed three maps — one for congressional districts, one for state Senate districts and one for state delegate districts.

That commission ignored the existing political maps and drew up new ones from scratch. The commission said it did not consider the residency of any incumbent or candidate for office or the political affiliations of any resident in the district.

For instance, Hogan’s commission would move part of Montgomery County — including Takoma Park, White Oak and Burtonsville — into the 4th District, a Prince George’s-based district now represented by Rep. Anthony Brown, a Democrat.

“Politics was not on our radar screen,” said Walter Olson, a co-chair of Hogan’s commission.

He said the decision to move Takoma Park into the 4th District was based on the commission’s efforts to create a map that follows federal laws and complies with Supreme Court redistricting decisions.

Another change in Montgomery County's congressional representation focused on Western Maryland, which now is divided into two districts.

The Hogan commission's map would place all of Western Maryland into Trone's 6th District. It also would add the Agricultural Reserve area of Montgomery County, including Damascus and Poolesville, adding more rural area.

"That way you have a better community of interest," Olson said.

The commission delivered the maps to Hogan Friday. The governor forwarded them to the state legislature for a special session beginning Dec. 6.

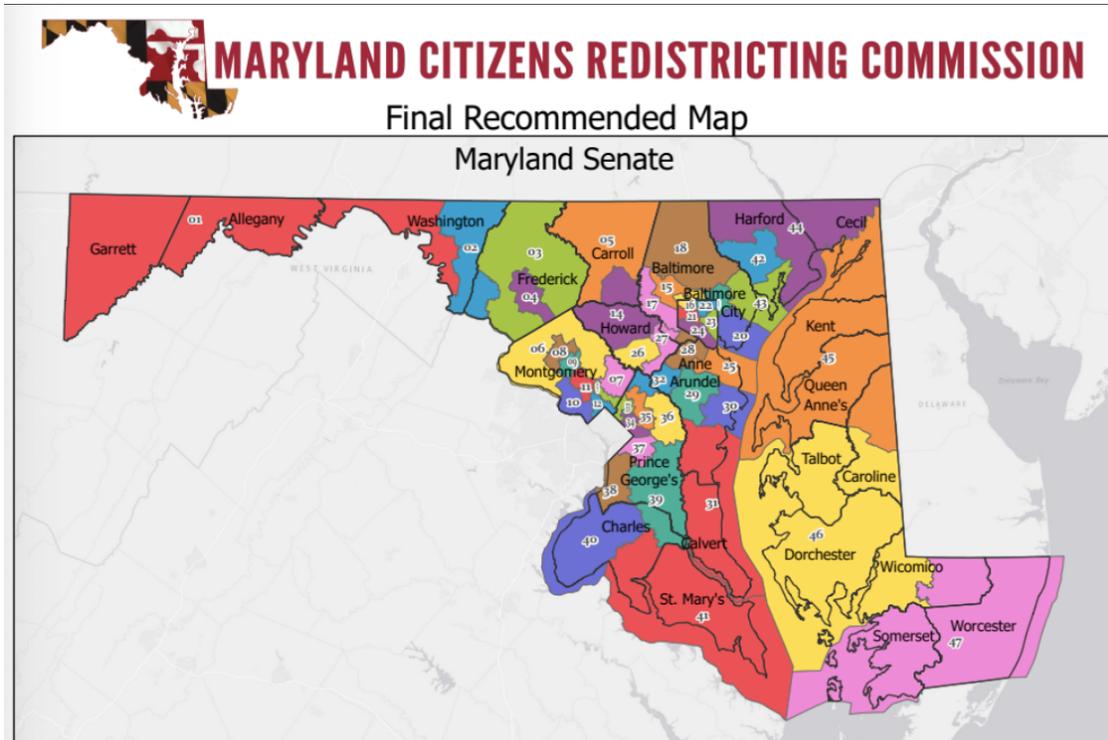
Hogan said the commission members — three Republicans, three Democrats and three independents — were selected to be independent from legislative influence, impartial, and representative of the state's diversity and geographical, racial, and gender makeup.

Democrats in "blue" Maryland have been criticized for drawing political boundary lines for political gain, just as Republicans in "red" states.

In 2018, Hogan supported a legal challenge to the way the 6th District was drawn by the General Assembly after the 2010 census.

Opponents of how those boundaries were decided accused the General Assembly of "gerrymandering" — drawing lines to include more residents of Montgomery County to make the district more Democratic. After redistricting, Republican Roscoe Bartlett lost the 6th District seat he had held for 20 years.

The case made its way to the U.S. Supreme Court, which remanded it to the lower courts. After years of litigation, the case was dismissed.





# MARYLAND CITIZENS REDISTRICTING COMMISSION

## Final Recommended Map

### House of Delegates

