

Hogan creates redistricting commission to draw Maryland's legislative maps

Madeleine O'Neill

January 12, 2021

Gov. Larry Hogan established a citizen redistricting commission to draw Maryland's new legislative maps, which for years have been highlighted as an example of partisan gerrymandering.

The commission will be made up of nine people: three Republicans, three Democrats and three Independents who are affiliated with neither major political party.

The redistricting process will begin after the results of the 2020 census are released. States must redraw district lines every 10 years, after each census.

The first three members of the commission, whom Hogan appointed, will choose the other six members from applications received from the public. Appointees must be Maryland voters who have been registered with the same party or unaffiliated for at least three years.

The commission's co-chairs are Judge Alexander Williams Jr., a Democrat and retired district judge; Walter Olson, a Republican and senior fellow at the Cato Institute's Robert A. Levy Center for Constitutional Studies; and Kathleen Hetherington, an Independent and the president of the Howard Community College.

Hogan's latest effort comes after years of failed attempts to pass redistricting reform through the legislature. He created the new redistricting commission through an executive order.

Maryland's General Assembly will have the opportunity to consider and possibly replace the proposed maps.

Hogan on Tuesday pointed to the odd shapes of Maryland's current congressional districts, which are considered to be some of the most gerrymandered in the nation, and the disproportionate representation of Democrats in Congress.

Former Gov. Martin O'Malley conceded during one legal challenge that Democrats drew the state's current legislative maps with the goal of creating a Congressional district that would favor their party.

Though Democrats outnumber Republicans two to one in Maryland, the state's Congressional delegation is made up of seven Democrats and only one Republican.

"This is exactly the kind of formula that leads people to doubt whether their democracy is fair and is truly working for them," Hogan said Tuesday.

