



**INDEPENDENT.
NONPARTISAN.
NONPROFIT.**

The premier site for
news about Maryland
government and politics.

Redistricting Commission Selects U. of Md. Official to Help with Hispanic Outreach

Bennett Leckrone

May 13, 2021

The Maryland Citizens Redistricting Commission, which is drawing up proposed congressional and legislative maps for the state's next round of redistricting, appointed an adviser at their Wednesday night meeting to help with outreach to Maryland's Hispanic community.

Gloria Aparicio Blackwell, the director of the University of Maryland's Office of Community Engagement, will serve as the panel's adviser on how redistricting relates to Maryland's Hispanic and Latino community, and will help with outreach. The role is unpaid and is a non-voting position, commission members said.

The multi-partisan commission, made up of three Democrats, three Republicans and three independent voters, voted unanimously to approve Aparicio Blackwell as an adviser.

Aparicio Blackwell is the first adviser to be brought on, but commission co-chair Walter Olson (R), a senior fellow at the Cato Institute's Robert A. Levy Center for Constitutional Studies, said at the meeting that additional advisers might be brought on to help the commission engage with Marylanders.

The commission, created by Gov. Lawrence J. Hogan Jr. (R) via an executive order, will conduct regional hearings on redistricting in the coming months before drawing up proposed maps.

Whatever maps the commission comes up with for Hogan to submit will ultimately be subject to revision and approval by the Maryland General Assembly.

Commission co-Chair Alexander Williams (D), a retired federal judge, said any advisers and consultants brought on to help the panel will need to be “heavily vetted.” Olson said that when he spoke with members of nonpartisan redistricting commissions in other states, including California, they warned him that the search for nonpartisan advisers and consultants would be “frustrating.”

“Making the wrong choice, we would regret it,” Olson said. “We have to put nonpartisanship absolutely in front of what we do.”