

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 24-0487
(First Reader)**

Introduced by: Councilmember Cohen, Dorsey
Introduced and read first time: February 12, 2024
Assigned to: Rules and Legislative Oversight Committee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: City Solicitor, Department of Finance, Board of Elections, Office of Equity and Civil Rights

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL concerning

2 **Charter Amendment – Baltimore City Redistricting Commission**

3 FOR the purpose of amending the City Council redistricting process; creating the Redistricting
4 Commission; establishing the duties of the Commission; requiring that the Commission
5 submit a redistricting plan to the City Council before a certain deadline; requiring the Mayor
6 and City Council to take certain action before a certain deadline; defining certain terms;
7 generally relating to the Baltimore City Council redistricting process; and submitting this
8 amendment to the qualified voters of the City for adoption or rejection.

9 BY proposing to amend
10 Article III - City Council
11 Section 7
12 Baltimore City Charter
13 (1996 Edition)

14 BY proposing to add
15 Article VII - Executive Departments
16 Sections 150 to 158 to be under the new subtitle designation,
17 “Redistricting Commission”
18 Baltimore City Charter
19 (1996 Edition)

20 **SECTION 1. BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the
21 City Charter is proposed to be amended to read as follows:

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS indicate matter added to existing law.
[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

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Baltimore City Charter

Article III. City Council

§ 7. Council districts.

(a) *Criteria for redistricting.*

The City shall be divided [by ordinance] into districts for the election of members of the City Council. The criteria in redistricting shall be equality of population, contiguous territory, compactness, natural boundaries, existing council district lines, and the standards established by the Supreme Court of the United States.

[(b) *Redistricting plan.*]

[Following each census of the United States the Mayor shall prepare a plan for council redistricting. The Mayor shall present the plan to the City Council not later than the first day of February of the first municipal election year following the census.]

[After the Mayor's plan is presented to the City Council, the Council may adopt it or amend it or the City Council may adopt another plan. If no plan has been adopted by the City Council within sixty days after the Mayor's plan is presented, the Mayor's plan shall take effect as the redistricting ordinance.]

(B) *REDISTRICTING PROCESS.*

(1) FOLLOWING EACH UNITED STATES CENSUS, THE REDISTRICTING COMMISSION SHALL FORM IN THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER OF THE YEAR THE NEW CENSUS DATA IS PUBLISHED.

(2) THE REDISTRICTING COMMISSION SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE REDRAWING OF THE BOUNDARIES OF THE BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL DISTRICTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH APPLICABLE LAWS AND REGULATIONS.

(3) THE REDISTRICTING COMMISSION SHALL ENSURE THAT THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION IS CONDUCTED IN A FAIR AND TRANSPARENT MANNER, WITH THE GOAL OF PROMOTING EQUAL REPRESENTATION AND COMMUNITY COHESION.

[(c) *{Vacant}*]

(C) [(d)] *Incumbent's residency.*

No member of the City Council shall be required to vacate that office by reason of a change of boundary lines of that member's council district made during that member's term, as long as that member remains a resident of Baltimore City.

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1 (D) [(e)] *Residency duration for next election.*

2 For elections following the adoption of redistricting plans, members of the City Council
3 shall have been residents of the districts they have been chosen to represent since the
4 preceding July 1.

5 **Article VII. Executive Departments**

6 ***REDISTRICTING COMMISSION***

7 **§ 150. DEFINITIONS.**

8 (A) *IN GENERAL.*

9 IN §§ 150 THROUGH 158 OF THIS ARTICLE, THE FOLLOWING TERMS HAVE THE MEANINGS
10 INDICATED.

11 (B) *COMMISSION.*

12 “COMMISSION” MEANS THE BALTIMORE CITY REDISTRICTING COMMISSION.

13 (C) *DRAFT REDISTRICTING PLAN.*

14 “DRAFT REDISTRICTING PLAN” MEANS THE INITIAL PROPOSED CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT
15 BOUNDARIES DRAWN AND PUBLISHED BY THE COMMISSION.

16 (D) *PROPOSED REDISTRICTING PLAN.*

17 “PROPOSED REDISTRICTING PLAN” MEANS THE CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT BOUNDARIES
18 SUBMITTED BY THE COMMISSION TO THE CITY COUNCIL.

19 (E) *REVISED REDISTRICTING PLAN.*

20 (1) *IN GENERAL.*

21 “REVISED REDISTRICTING PLAN” MEANS THE PROPOSED REDISTRICTING PLAN THAT IS
22 MODIFIED BY THE COMMISSION FOLLOWING REJECTION BY EITHER THE MAYOR OR THE
23 CITY COUNCIL.

24 (2) *EQUIVALENCY.*

25 THE REVISED REDISTRICTING PLAN MAY BE IDENTICAL TO THE PROPOSED
26 REDISTRICTING PLAN.

27 (F) *REDISTRICTING PLAN.*

28 “REDISTRICTING PLAN” MEANS THE FINAL CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT BOUNDARIES
29 ESTABLISHED UNDER §§ 156 AND 157 OF THIS ARTICLE.

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1 (G) *YEAR OF ESTABLISHMENT.*

2 “YEAR OF ESTABLISHMENT” MEANS THE CALENDAR YEAR IN WHICH REDISTRICTING DATA
3 IS PUBLISHED BY THE UNITED STATES CENSUS BUREAU.

4 (H) *YEAR OF IMPLEMENTATION.*

5 “YEAR OF IMPLEMENTATION” MEANS THE CALENDAR YEAR IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING
6 THE YEAR OF ESTABLISHMENT.

7 **§ 151. COMMISSION ESTABLISHED.**

8 (A) *IN GENERAL.*

9 THERE IS A BALTIMORE CITY REDISTRICTING COMMISSION.

10 (B) *PURPOSE.*

11 THE COMMISSION IS ESTABLISHED FOR THE PURPOSE OF REDRAWING CITY COUNCIL
12 DISTRICT BOUNDARIES IN THE CITY OF BALTIMORE IN A MANNER THAT IS:

13 (1) FAIR;

14 (2) TRANSPARENT; AND

15 (3) LEGAL.

16 (C) *DUTIES.*

17 THE COMMISSION SHALL DRAFT AND SUBMIT A REDISTRICTING PLAN TO THE CITY BOARD
18 OF ELECTIONS.

19 **§ 152. TERM.**

20 THE COMMISSION SHALL DISSOLVE AFTER THE COMMISSION SUBMITS A REDISTRICTING PLAN
21 TO THE CITY BOARD OF ELECTIONS.

22 **§ 153. REDISTRICTING PLAN.**

23 (A) *REDISTRICTING PLAN FACTORS.*

24 IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A REDISTRICTING PLAN, THE COMMISSION SHALL CONSIDER
25 FACTORS INCLUDING:

26 (I) DEMOGRAPHIC DATA;

27 (II) GEOGRAPHIC BOUNDARIES;

28 (III) NEIGHBORHOOD BOUNDARIES; AND

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1 (IV) THE DISTRIBUTION OF ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS.

2 (B) *PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENT.*

3 (1) *IN GENERAL.*

4 THE COMMISSION SHALL PUBLISH A DRAFT REDISTRICTING PLAN NO LATER THAN
5 MAY 1 OF THE YEAR OF IMPLEMENTATION.

6 (2) *HEARINGS; NOTICE AND COMMENT.*

7 FOLLOWING THE PUBLISHING OF THE DRAFT REDISTRICTING PLAN, THE COMMISSION
8 SHALL HOLD PUBLIC HEARINGS AND SOLICIT PUBLIC COMMENT.

9 **§ 154. SUBMISSION TO CITY COUNCIL.**

10 (A) *WHEN REQUIRED.*

11 THE COMMISSION SHALL SUBMIT A PROPOSED REDISTRICTING PLAN TO THE CITY COUNCIL
12 AFTER ALL PUBLIC HEARINGS REQUIRED UNDER § 153(B) {"PUBLIC NOTICE AND
13 COMMENT"} AND AS MAY BE REQUIRED BY ORDINANCE HAVE CONCLUDED, BUT NO LATER
14 THAN OCTOBER 1 OF THE YEAR OF IMPLEMENTATION.

15 (B) *MATERIALS REQUIRED.*

16 THE COMMISSION SHALL SUBMIT TO THE CITY COUNCIL THE PROPOSED REDISTRICTING
17 PLAN, TOGETHER WITH A COPY OF ALL WORKING FILES OF THE COMMISSION.

18 **§ 155. COUNCIL ACTION.**

19 (A) *WHEN REQUIRED.*

20 THE CITY COUNCIL SHALL TAKE A FINAL VOTE ON THE PROPOSED REDISTRICTING PLAN
21 BY OCTOBER 15 OF THE YEAR OF IMPLEMENTATION.

22 (B) *AMENDMENT NOT AUTHORIZED.*

23 THE CITY COUNCIL MAY NOT AMEND THE PROPOSED REDISTRICTING PLAN.

24 (C) *REJECTION BY COUNCIL.*

25
26 IF THE CITY COUNCIL REJECTS THE PROPOSED REDISTRICTING PLAN, THE CITY COUNCIL
27 PRESIDENT, ON BEHALF OF THE CITY COUNCIL, SHALL PROVIDE TO THE COMMISSION A
28 DETAILED WRITTEN EXPLANATION SPECIFYING THE CITY COUNCIL'S REASONS FOR
29 REJECTING THE REDISTRICTING PLAN.

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1 (D) *ADOPTION BY COUNCIL.*

2 IF THE PROPOSED REDISTRICTING PLAN IS ADOPTED ON OR BEFORE OCTOBER 15 OF THE
3 YEAR OF IMPLEMENTATION THE CITY COUNCIL SHALL DELIVER THE PROPOSED
4 REDISTRICTING PLAN TO THE MAYOR FOR THEIR APPROVAL OR REJECTION.

5 (E) *FAILURE TO ACT BY OCTOBER 15.*

6 IF THE CITY COUNCIL FAILS TO TAKE A FINAL VOTE ON THE PROPOSED REDISTRICTING
7 PLAN BY OCTOBER 15 OF THE YEAR OF IMPLEMENTATION, THE PROPOSED REDISTRICTING
8 PLAN SHALL BE DELIVERED TO THE MAYOR FOR THEIR APPROVAL OR REJECTION.

9 **§ 156. MAYORAL ACTION.**

10 (A) *WHEN REQUIRED.*

11 UPON DELIVERY OF THE PROPOSED REDISTRICTING PLAN TO THE MAYOR, THE MAYOR
12 SHALL APPROVE OR REJECT THE PROPOSED REDISTRICTING PLAN WITHIN 10 BUSINESS
13 DAYS FROM THE DATE OF DELIVERY.

14 (B) *REJECTION BY MAYOR.*

15 (1) IF THE MAYOR REJECTS THE PROPOSED REDISTRICTING PLAN, THE MAYOR SHALL
16 PROVIDE TO THE COMMISSION A DETAILED WRITTEN EXPLANATION SPECIFYING THE
17 MAYOR'S REASONS FOR REJECTING THE PROPOSED REDISTRICTING PLAN.

18 (2) THE VETO PROCESS IN § 5 OF ARTICLE IV OF THIS CHARTER DOES NOT APPLY TO THE
19 MAYOR'S REJECTION.

20 (C) *APPROVAL BY MAYOR.*

21 IF THE PROPOSED REDISTRICTING PLAN IS APPROVED BY THE MAYOR, THE PROPOSED
22 REDISTRICTING PLAN BECOMES EFFECTIVE AS DESCRIBED IN § 158 OF THIS ARTICLE
23 {"EFFECTIVE DATE OF APPROVED REDISTRICTING PLAN"}.

24 (D) *FAILURE TO ACT WITHIN 10 BUSINESS DAYS.*

25 IF THE MAYOR FAILS TO ACT WITHIN 10 BUSINESS DAYS FROM THE DATE THE PROPOSED
26 REDISTRICTING PLAN IS DELIVERED AS PROVIDED FOR UNDER § 156(A) OF THIS ARTICLE
27 THE PROPOSED REDISTRICTING PLAN BECOMES EFFECTIVE AS DESCRIBED IN § 158 OF THIS
28 ARTICLE {"EFFECTIVE DATE OF APPROVED REDISTRICTING PLAN"}.

29 **§ 157. ADDITIONAL COMMISSION RESPONSIBILITIES.**

30 (A) *UPON REJECTION BY MAYOR OR CITY COUNCIL.*

31 IF THE MAYOR OR CITY COUNCIL REJECT A PROPOSED REDISTRICTING PLAN, THE
32 COMMISSION SHALL APPROVE A REVISED REDISTRICTING PLAN BY NOVEMBER 30 OF THE
33 YEAR OF IMPLEMENTATION.

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1 (B) *PUBLIC HEARING REQUIRED.*

2 IF THE MAYOR OR CITY COUNCIL REJECTS A PROPOSED REDISTRICTING PLAN, THE
3 COMMISSION SHALL HOLD AN ADDITIONAL PUBLIC HEARING TO SOLICIT PUBLIC COMMENT
4 BEFORE VOTING TO ADOPT A REVISED REDISTRICTING PLAN.

5 (C) *ADOPTION OF REVISED REDISTRICTING PLAN.*

6 (1) IF THE COMMISSION APPROVES A REVISED REDISTRICTING PLAN, THE REVISED
7 REDISTRICTING PLAN BECOMES THE REDISTRICTING PLAN.

8 (2) THE REVISED REDISTRICTING PLAN BECOMES EFFECTIVE AS DESCRIBED IN § 158 OF
9 THIS ARTICLE.

10 (3) IF THE COMMISSION FAILS TO APPROVE A REVISED REDISTRICTING PLAN, THE
11 PROPOSED REDISTRICTING PLAN PREVIOUSLY SENT TO THE CITY COUNCIL BECOMES
12 THE REDISTRICTING PLAN.

13 (D) *FAILURE TO ACT BY NOVEMBER 30.*

14 IF THE COMMISSION FAILS TO ACT BY NOVEMBER 30 AS REQUIRED UNDER SUBSECTION (A)
15 OF THIS SECTION THE PROPOSED REDISTRICTING PLAN SUBMITTED TO THE CITY COUNCIL
16 UNDER § 154 BECOMES EFFECTIVE AS DESCRIBED IN § 158 OF THIS ARTICLE {"EFFECTIVE
17 DATE OF APPROVED REDISTRICTING PLAN"}.

18 **§ 158. EFFECTIVE DATE OF REDISTRICTING PLAN.**

19 THE CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT BOUNDARIES IN THE REDISTRICTING PLAN SHALL BECOME
20 EFFECTIVE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NEXT TERM OF THE CITY COUNCIL.

21 **SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That this proposed amendment to the City
22 Charter be submitted to the legal and qualified voters of Baltimore City, for adoption or rejection,
23 in accordance with Article XI-A, § 5 of the Maryland Constitution, in the form specified by the
24 City Solicitor.