



VOTER EMPOWERMENT PROJECT

*PROVIDING VOTERS WITH A STRONGER
VOICE IN THEIR GOVERNMENT* ★

ILLINOIS SENATE REPUBLICAN CAUCUS

Senate Joint Resolution Constitutional Amendment 13: Independent Redistricting

Summary: Amends the Constitution to require an independent redistricting commission. The chief justice of the Illinois Supreme Court and the most senior supreme court justice of the opposite party would jointly select 17 commissioners to serve on the commission:

- 7 commissioners to represent the Democratic Party
- 7 commissioners to represent the Republican Party
- 3 independent commissioners

The first redistricting would occur in 2023 and then after every subsequent federal decennial census.

Background: Currently, sitting legislators are charged with drawing maps. This means that the party in power has total control over who their voters are and leads to gerrymandering for political purposes.

Additional Information: According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, 15 states use redistricting commissions to reapportion electoral districts:

Alaska, Arkansas, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Washington.

Another state, Iowa, utilizes non-partisan mapmakers for redistricting.

Senate Joint Resolution Constitutional Amendment 14: Voter-Initiated Amendments

Summary: Amends the Constitution to empower Illinois voters to initiate constitutional amendments on issues vital to the future of the state's government, such as redistricting, taxation, political accountability, and other important constitutional amendments.

Background: Currently, the Illinois Constitution limits the types of amendments that can be offered by the people, which include only "structural and procedural subjects contained in Article IV," preventing voters from taking the lead on such key issues as taxation, voting rights, and effectively, per the ruling of the Illinois Supreme Court, redistricting.

Additional Information: Unlike most other states that permit voter-initiated constitutional amendments, the Illinois Constitution limits the types of amendments that can be offered by the people.

Senate Joint Resolution Constitutional Amendment 15: Voter Referendum to Repeal Laws

Summary: Amends the Illinois Constitution to allow for voter-initiated referendums on recently enacted laws, granting voters the ability to overturn unpopular laws railroaded through the General Assembly without sufficient public input.

To put a referendum on the ballot, circulators must collect signatures equal to 5% of the votes cast in the last gubernatorial election within 90 days. The voters would then have a chance to vote down the legislation in the next general election.

Background: Over the past year, the majority party has used its supermajorities in the General Assembly to push through controversial and extremely partisan legislation, often times late at night with little to no opportunity for public review or input.

Additional Information: Illinois, unlike similar blue-leaning states, such as Massachusetts, Oregon, Washington, Maryland, and nearly half of U.S. state, lack a mechanism for voters to initiate up-or-down referendums on deeply unpopular legislation.

Senate Joint Resolution Constitutional Amendment 16: Recall Elected Officials

Summary: Amends the Constitution to allow voters to recall elected officials including any executive branch officer, the Speaker of the House, the President of the Senate, the Auditor General, Members of the General Assembly, and local government officials.

Background: Under current law, only the Governor is subject to recall. This recall process, instead of being independent, requires legislative support from members of both major parties—a requirement unique to Illinois. There is no recall provision to allow for the recall of members of the General Assembly.

Additional Information: Illinois, by restricting recalls to the Governor, is an outlier among states that permit recall elections. Its requirement for bipartisan legislative support for a recall effort is a lone anomaly.