

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2018 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 4002

BY DELEGATES OVERINGTON, COWLES, MOORE, HILL,
ROMINE, C., DEEM, HAMILTON, JENNINGS, MR. SPEAKER
(MR. ARMSTEAD) AND MAYNARD

[Introduced January 12, 2018; Referred
to the Committee on the Judiciary]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new section,
 2 designated §1-2-2c, relating to the decennial redistricting of the House of Delegates and
 3 setting forth certain findings and providing that following the reapportionment and
 4 redistricting of the Legislature following the United States Census in 2020, all delegates
 5 shall be elected from one hundred single districts.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 2. APPORTIONMENT OF REPRESENTATION.

§1-2-2c. Redistricting.

1 (a) The Legislature finds that:

2 (1) Single member districts best exemplify the principle of one person, one vote;

3 (2) Single member districts provide enhanced responsiveness to constituent needs, as the
 4 fewer constituents that each delegate represents, the more time and energy a delegate has to
 5 devote to their needs;

6 (3) Single member districts provide enhanced accountability, as it is easier for citizens to
 7 follow the actions of one delegate than to follow the actions of many;

8 (4) Single member districts would aid in the implementation of campaign finance reform
 9 as these smaller districts would reduce the amount of money needed for candidates to
 10 successfully contest elections;

11 (5) Where large sums of money must be raised to compete in multidelegate districts,
 12 inordinate attention is given to the interests of contributors, and not the citizenry as a whole;

13 (6) Historically, multimember districts were a tactic used in the segregation era to deny
 14 minority voters the full exercise of their franchise;

15 (7) Multimember districts continue to cause the disenfranchisement of large groups of
 16 voters in whole regions of West Virginia, including among others, voters in eastern Kanawha
 17 County and Mason County;

18 (8) Only ten states do not use the single member district system; and

19 (9) That of all the states in the Union, only West Virginia and New Hampshire continue to
20 have legislative districts consisting of three or more members.

21 (b) The Legislature, therefore, declares it to be in the best interest of its citizens that:

22 (1) The State of West Virginia establish as a principle that single member delegate districts
23 are needed for better functioning of our state's political system;

24 (2) Their use would lead to greater accountability and effective representation in our
25 political process;

26 (3) They would serve as a check on corruption of our public life and our ideals;

27 (4) They would correct gross inequities currently present in our existing system; and

28 (5) To achieve these ends, the policy of the state is to enact a plan for single member
29 districts.

30 (c) Based on the legislative findings and declarations contained within this section, at the
31 reapportionment and redistricting of the Legislature following the United States Census in 2020,
32 and in each such succeeding reapportionment and redistricting thereafter, the House of Delegates
33 is to be permanently composed of one hundred single member districts, with apportionment to
34 meet constitutional standards.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to provide that in the reapportionment and redistricting following the 2020 US census that the House of Delegates shall comprise one hundred single member districts.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.