

## **Trump is trying to tilt the House before voters ever cast a ballot. Virginia must respond.**

Across the country, Americans of all backgrounds say they want elections that are fair, transparent, and accountable. One reform consistently commands overwhelming public support: a nationwide ban on partisan gerrymandering.

Every Democratic member of Virginia's congressional delegation supports that reform. We have voted for it, spoken out for it, and in 2021, a majority of House Democrats supported it as part of H.R. 1 — landmark legislation that would have banned partisan gerrymandering nationwide and ensured that voters always chose their representatives, instead of the other way around.

But Republicans voted against it. Republicans unanimously said no to a national ban on gerrymandering in favor of maintaining their ability to entrench their power.

In 2025, facing voters' rejection of his agenda in the upcoming midterm elections, Donald Trump demanded Republican legislatures in states such as Texas, North Carolina, Ohio, Missouri, and now Florida redraw their maps mid-decade to lock in more seats for the GOP.

In North Carolina alone, mid-decade redistricting delivered Republicans three additional seats in 2024 — the margin that secured their narrow House majority. Without those seats, legislation stripping health insurance and SNAP benefits from millions of Americans in order to finance tax breaks for the wealthiest would not have passed.

This is not business as usual. Mid-decade redistricting at the direction of a president is unprecedented in modern American politics. It is an attempt to preserve a MAGA majority in the House of Representatives before a single vote is cast in the 2026 midterms. And so far, there has been no meaningful accountability from Republican leaders who know exactly what is happening.

It is part of a broader pattern: one in which this administration has used the machinery of government — from immigration enforcement to election rules — to abuse its power and avoid accountability when the public pushes back.

That is the reality facing Virginia. As the elected representatives of communities across this Commonwealth, we cannot ignore what it means for the millions of people we serve. From military families in Hampton Roads to farmers in the Shenandoah Valley, from students in Charlottesville to federal workers in Northern Virginia, representation in Congress affects everything from health care access and military benefits to infrastructure funding, disaster relief and the cost of prescription drugs. When the balance of power in Washington is manipulated before a single ballot is cast to benefit this president, doing nothing is not neutrality. It is surrendering the voice of Virginians to decisions made elsewhere.

Virginians now face a choice: do nothing while our voice in Congress is overridden by the schemes in MAGA-controlled states, or respond with a temporary, voter-approved step to level the playing field and ensure the nationwide map is not structurally rigged ahead of the 2026 election.

Beginning March 6 and continuing through April 21, Virginians will have the chance to vote on a constitutional amendment that would allow new congressional maps ahead of the midterms. The proposed maps are publicly available, nothing takes effect unless voters approve them at the ballot box, and the amendment sunsets after 2030, when Virginia's bipartisan redistricting commission resumes responsibility following the next census. This is not a permanent change. It is a temporary response to an extraordinary national moment.

The real solution remains a nationwide ban on partisan gerrymandering — applied equally across all 50 states. We will keep fighting for that reform in Congress. But until Republicans are willing to join that effort, states cannot be expected to sit idly by while the rules are manipulated elsewhere. That is why we support a Yes vote on the upcoming Virginia referendum.

In a moment when the president himself is urging states to tilt the scales before voters ever cast a ballot, the people of this Commonwealth still have the power to decide for themselves. That is a principle as old as Virginia itself — that government derives its legitimacy from the consent of the governed, and that voters, not politicians, should have the final say.

Signed,

**Rep. Bobby Scott**

United States House of Representatives

**Rep. Don Beyer**

United States House of Representatives

**Rep. Jennifer McClellan**

United States House of Representatives

**Rep. Suhas Subramanyam**

United States House of Representatives

**Rep. Eugene Vindman**

United States House of Representatives

**Rep. James Walkinshaw**

United States House of Representatives