

Senior
Statesmen of
Virginia

www.seniorstatesmen.org



The mission of SSV, a nonprofit, nonpartisan, educational and advocacy organization, is to enable seniors to identify and articulate their viewpoints on the issues affecting all citizens of Virginia, to encourage knowledge of and active participation in the legislative process of government, and to disseminate information about the social, governmental, and educational institutions that offer support and assistance.



Senior Statesmen of Virginia

The next meeting of the Senior Statesmen of Virginia will be held on Wednesday, October 14, 2020, 1:30 – 2:30 p.m. via ZOOM

Redistricting and Gerrymandering Virginia Proposed Constitutional Amendment #1

The October 14 SSV program will be held via Zoom. Preregistration is required in order to participate. Here is the link to register for the meeting: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_cDKaQUbXRQSeMzp7MXGXtQ

The link is also posted on SSV's website: www.seniorstatesmen.org

Audience members will be muted and their video turned off during the candidates' presentation, but able to submit questions via the Zoom "chat" feature after the candidates have spoken.



For 5 years, **Brian Cannon** was the executive director of OneVirginia2021 and lead their grassroots, nonpartisan organization in lobbying legislators to pass a constitutional redistricting reform amendment. Brian is now the executive director of FairMapsVA, a ballot campaign dedicated to educating Virginians about Amendment 1 and urging them to vote yes to end partisan gerrymandering in Virginia. He brings over a decade of experience in nonprofit leadership, community building, fundraising, and bipartisan advocacy for state policy issues. While in law school, Brian studied election law and was on one of the winning teams in the 2011 state-wide redistricting competition. Brian is a double William and Mary graduate (2011 JD, 2004 BA). He and his wife, Kelly, live in Richmond, Virginia with their son and daughter.

VOTERS CAN END PARTISAN GERRYMANDERING IN VIRGINIA.

And this November, voters have a chance to approve a constitutional amendment to create Virginia's first-ever redistricting commission. If passed, it would be the most significant improvement to the way districts are drawn in the history of our Commonwealth. **Vote YES!**



Christopher Ambrose is a small business owner from Fairfax County and has been a longtime community activist and long-standing advocate against gerrymandering. Mr. Ambrose supports independent redistricting and is a founding member of Fair Districts Virginia, a grassroots group that supports independent redistricting and opposes the constitutional amendment.

SUPPORT OUR MOVEMENT.

This fall, Virginians will vote on a constitutional amendment that could enshrine political gerrymandering in our state constitution. If you want a Virginia where voters choose their politicians with a truly independent and non-partisan redistricting commission, we must vote **NO on Amendment 1.**



The program will be moderated by **Bob McGrath**, SSV board member and past president.

Article II. Franchise and Officers.

Section 6. Apportionment.

Section 6-A. Virginia Redistricting Commission

BALLOT QUESTION

Should the Constitution of Virginia be amended to establish a redistricting commission, consisting of eight members of the General Assembly and eight citizens of the Commonwealth, that is responsible for drawing the congressional and state legislative districts that will be subsequently voted on, but not changed by, the General Assembly and enacted without the Governor's involvement and to give the responsibility of drawing districts to the Supreme Court of Virginia if the redistricting commission fails to draw districts or the General Assembly fails to enact districts by certain deadlines?

EXPLANATION**Current Law:**

Under the current Constitution, the General Assembly and the Governor are responsible for drawing new election districts for the U.S. House of Representatives, the state Senate, and the House of Delegates. These districts are required to be compact and contiguous, and to have populations that are equal to each other.

Proposed Law:

The proposed amendment would shift the responsibility of drawing these election districts from the General Assembly and the Governor to a bipartisan commission, made up of 16 persons, half being members of the General Assembly and half being citizens of the Commonwealth. This commission would draw the election districts for the U.S. House of Representatives, the state Senate, and the House of Delegates and then submit the maps to the General Assembly for approval. If the commissioners are unable to agree on proposals for maps by a certain date, or if the General Assembly does not approve the submitted maps by a certain date, the commission is allotted additional time to draw new districts, but if maps are not then submitted or approved, the Supreme Court of Virginia becomes responsible for drawing these election districts.

The eight legislative commissioners are appointed by the political party leadership in the state Senate and the House of Delegates, with an equal number from each house and from each major political party. The eight citizen commissioners are picked by a committee of five retired circuit court judges. Four of the retired judges are selected by party leaders in the Senate and the House from a list compiled by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Virginia. These four judges pick the fifth judge from the same list. This selection committee then chooses citizen commissioners from lists created by party leaders in the Senate and the House. Members and employees of Congress or the General Assembly cannot be citizen commissioners. Each party leader in each house gives the selection committee a list of at least 16 candidates, and the committee picks two from each list for a total of eight citizen commissioners.

For a plan to be submitted for the General Assembly's approval, at least six of the eight citizen commissioners and at least six of the eight legislative commissioners must agree to it. Additionally, for plans for General Assembly districts to be submitted, at least three of the four Senators on the commission have to agree to the Senate districts plan and at least three of the four Delegates on the commission have to agree to the House of Delegates districts plan. The General Assembly cannot make any changes to these plans, and the Governor cannot veto any plan approved by the General Assembly.

The amendment also adds a requirement that districts provide, where practicable, opportunities for racial and ethnic communities to elect candidates of their choice.

Continued on page 3

A “yes” vote will make a bipartisan commission responsible for the initial drawing of election districts.

A “no” vote will leave the sole responsibility for drawing the districts with the General Assembly and the Governor.

FULL TEXT OF AMENDMENT

[Proposed new language is underlined. Deleted old language is ~~stricken~~.]

Amend Section 6 of Article II of the Constitution of Virginia and amend the Constitution of Virginia by adding in Article II a section numbered 6-A as follows:

ARTICLE II. FRANCHISE AND OFFICERS

Section 6. Apportionment.

Members of the House of Representatives of the United States and members of the Senate and of the House of Delegates of the General Assembly shall be elected from electoral districts established ~~by the General Assembly pursuant to Section 6-A of this Constitution~~. Every electoral district shall be composed of contiguous and compact territory and shall be so constituted as to give, as nearly as is practicable, representation in proportion to the population of the district. Every electoral district shall be drawn in accordance with the requirements of federal and state laws that address racial and ethnic fairness, including the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States and provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended, and judicial decisions interpreting such laws. Districts shall provide, where practicable, opportunities for racial and ethnic communities to elect candidates of their choice.

The ~~General Assembly shall reapportion the~~ Commonwealth shall be reapportioned into electoral districts in accordance with this section and Section 6-A in the year ~~2011~~ 2021 and every ten years thereafter.

Any such decennial reapportionment law shall take effect immediately and not be subject to the limitations contained in Article IV, Section 13, of this Constitution.

The districts delineated in the decennial reapportionment law shall be implemented for the November general election for the United States House of Representatives, Senate, or House of Delegates, respectively, that is held immediately prior to the expiration of the term being served in the year that the reapportionment law is required to be enacted. A member in office at the time that a decennial redistricting law is enacted shall complete his term of office and shall continue to represent the district from which he was elected for the duration of such term of office so long as he does not move his residence from the district from which he was elected. Any vacancy occurring during such term shall be filled from the same district that elected the member whose vacancy is being filled.

Section 6-A. Virginia Redistricting Commission.

(a) In the year 2020 and every ten years thereafter, the Virginia Redistricting Commission (the Commission) shall be convened for the purpose of establishing districts for the United States House of Representatives and for the Senate and the House of Delegates of the General Assembly pursuant to Article II, Section 6 of this Constitution.

(b) The Commission shall consist of sixteen commissioners who shall be selected in accordance with the provisions of this subsection.

(1) Eight commissioners shall be legislative members, four of whom shall be members of the Senate of Virginia and four of whom shall be members of the House of Delegates. These commissioners shall be appointed no later than December 1 of the year ending in zero and shall continue to serve until their successors are appointed.

(A) Two commissioners shall represent the political party having the highest number of members in the Senate of Virginia and shall be appointed by the President pro tempore of the Senate of Virginia.gov Virginia.

(B) Two commissioners shall represent the political party having the next highest number of members in the Senate of Virginia and shall be appointed by the leader of that political party.

(C) Two commissioners shall represent the political party having the highest number of members in the House of Delegates and shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates.

(D) Two commissioners shall represent the political party having the next highest number of members in the House of Delegates and shall be appointed by the leader of that political party.

(2) Eight commissioners shall be citizen members who shall be selected in accordance with the provisions of this sub-division and in the manner determined by the General Assembly by general law.

(A) There shall be a Redistricting Commission Selection Committee (the Committee) consisting of five retired judges of the circuit courts of Virginia. By November 15 of the year ending in zero, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Virginia shall certify to the Speaker of the House of Delegates, the leader in the House of Delegates of the political party having the next highest number of members in the House of Delegates, the President pro tempore of the Senate of Virginia, and the leader in the Senate of Virginia of the political party having the next highest number of members in the Senate a list of retired judges of the circuit courts of Virginia who are willing to serve on the Committee, and these members shall each select a judge from the list. The four judges selected to serve on the Committee shall select, by a majority vote, a judge from the list prescribed herein to serve as the fifth member of the Committee and to serve as the chairman of the Committee.

(B) By January 1 of the year ending in one, the Speaker of the House of Delegates, the leader in the House of Delegates of the political party having the next highest number of members in the House of Delegates, the President pro tempore of the Senate of Virginia, and the leader in the Senate of the political party having the next highest number of members in the Senate shall each submit to the Committee a list of at least sixteen citizen candidates for service on the Commission. Such citizen candidates shall meet the criteria established by the General Assembly by general law. The Committee shall select, by a majority vote, two citizen members from each list submitted. No member or employee of the Congress of the United States or of the General Assembly shall be eligible to serve as a citizen member.

(C) By February 1 of the year ending in one, the Commission shall hold a public meeting at which it shall select a chairman from its membership. The chairman shall be a citizen member and shall be responsible for coordinating the work of the Commission.

(D) The Commission shall submit to the General Assembly plans for districts for the Senate and the House of Delegates of the General Assembly no later than 45 days following the receipt of census data and shall submit to the General Assembly plans for districts for the United States House of Representatives no later than 60 days following the receipt of census data or by the first day of July of that year, whichever occurs later.

(1) To be submitted as a proposed plan for districts for members of the United States House of Representatives, a plan shall receive affirmative votes of at least six of the eight legislative members and six of the eight citizen members.

(2) To be submitted as a proposed plan for districts for members of the Senate, a plan shall receive affirmative votes of at least six of the eight legislative members, including at least three of the four legislative members who are members of the Senate, and at least six of the eight citizen members.

(3) To be submitted as a proposed plan for districts for members of the House of Delegates, a plan shall receive affirmative votes of at least six of the eight legislative members, including at least three of the four legislative

members who are members of the House of Delegates, and at least six of the eight citizen members.

(E) Plans for districts for the Senate and the House of Delegates shall be embodied in and voted on as a single bill. The vote on any bill embodying a plan for districts shall be taken in accordance with the provisions of Article IV, Section 11 of this Constitution, except that no amendments shall be permitted. Such bills shall not be subject to the provisions contained in Article V, Section 6 of this Constitution.

(F) Within fifteen days of receipt of a plan for districts, the General Assembly shall take a vote on the bill embodying that plan in accordance with the provisions of subsection (e). If the General Assembly fails to adopt such bill by this deadline, the Commission shall submit a new plan for districts to the General Assembly within fourteen days of the General Assembly's failure to adopt the bill. The General Assembly shall take a vote on the bill embodying such plan within seven days of receipt of the plan. If the General Assembly fails to adopt such bill by this deadline, the districts shall be established by the Supreme Court of Virginia.

(G) If the Commission fails to submit a plan for districts by the deadline set forth in subsection (d), the Commission shall have fourteen days following its initial failure to submit a plan to the General Assembly. If the Commission fails to submit a plan for districts to the General Assembly by this deadline, the districts shall be established by the Supreme Court of Virginia. If the Commission submits a plan for districts within fourteen days following its initial failure to submit a plan, the General Assembly shall take a vote on the bill embodying such plan within seven days of its receipt. If the General Assembly fails to adopt such bill by this deadline, the districts shall be established by the Supreme Court of Virginia.

(H) All meetings of the Commission shall be open to the public. Prior to proposing any redistricting plans and prior to voting on redistricting plans, the Commission shall hold at least three public hearings in different parts of the Commonwealth to receive and consider comments from the public.

(I) All records and documents of the Commission, or any individual or group performing delegated functions of or advising the Commission, related to the Commission's work, including internal communications and communications from outside parties, shall be considered public information.

In case you missed the September 9 meeting:

College basketball: ACC coaches propose all-inclusive 2021 NCAA Tournament **BI**

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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2020

SENIOR STATESMEN FORUM

Good and Webb highlight policy differences

Candidates spar over healthcare, policing

BY TYLER HAMMEL
thammel@dailyprogress.com
(434) 978-7268

For the first time this election, 5th District congressional hopefuls Republican Bob Good and Democrat Dr. Cameron Webb made their virtual forum was the first time voters were able to hear from both Good and Webb at the same event.

As nearly 1,000 individuals watched, the two introduced themselves and their policy points before quickly criticizing the other's political views.

Webb, who works as a

Growing up, Webb said, his parents instilled in him the value of public service, which led him to study medicine and later law. Through his work as a physician, Webb said he came to be aware that being a healer means more than just addressing symptoms.

"It taught me even more so

sick are related to education, or housing or food insecurity, challenges with earning a decent wage or having good-paying jobs."

Webb said he views himself as a "consensus builder," who looks to solve community problems instead rather than just sickness.

"We've got a unique moment to lean into where we can fix not only our health-



See full text of the Daily Progress coverage beginning on next page (page 6)

BREAKING FEATURED TOP STORY—The *Daily Progress*, September 10, 2020. **Tyler Hammel**

At Senior Statesmen forum, Good and Webb highlight policy differences

For the first time this election, 5th District congressional hopefuls Republican Bob Good and Democrat Dr. Cameron Webb made their cases to voters in a joint forum that at times was contentious.

Hosted by the Senior Statesmen of Virginia and moderated by Daily Progress reporter Allison Wrabel, the virtual forum was the first time voters were able to hear from both Good and Webb at the same event.

As nearly 1,000 individuals watched, the two introduced themselves and their policy points before quickly criticizing the other's political views.

Webb, who works as a doctor, assistant professor of medicine and a director of health policy and equity at the University of Virginia, went first, spending much of his introduction talking about his background.

Growing up, Webb said, his parents instilled in him the value of public service, which led him to study medicine and later law. Through his work as a physician, Webb said he came to be aware that being a healer means more than just addressing symptoms.

"It taught me even more so that being a healer is more than just being a doctor being a physician, it means that we're leaning into the issues that make our patients sick," he said. "Oftentimes the issues that make them sick are related to education, or housing or food insecurity, challenges with earning a decent wage or having good-paying jobs."

Webb said he views himself as a "consensus builder," who looks to solve community problems instead rather than just sickness.

"We've got a unique moment to lean into where we can fix not only our healthcare system but our society to create fair opportunities," he said. "No matter if you're in a rural county or an urban environment, no matter your race or ethnicity, your sexual orientation or gender identity, you should have opportunities to succeed in these United States. That's what the American Dream is."

Good, a former Liberty University athletics director and former member of the Campbell County Board of Supervisors, also highlighted his humble beginnings and call to service during his introduction before launching into criticisms of Webb.

Growing up poor, Good said, he learned the value of hard work and compassion for those who are less fortunate.

"I had to work my way through college as my parents were unable to help me in any way, but together these experiences formed my work ethic and shaped me into the person that I am today," he said. "These also developed within me because of the way that I grew up in a lower-income family and struggling as we did, it helped develop in me a real sense of compassion and a generous spirit to those who are less fortunate."

Shifting gears from his own background, Good then contrasted his views with Webb's, accusing the Democratic candidate of being "aligned with the radical socialist left that's become much of a Democrat party."

"If he [Webb] is elected, he would do everything in his power to stop President Trump's agenda or, God forbid, to enact the Biden/Harris agenda, if President Trump was not reelected," Good said. "He and I have a very different view for the future of America and the direction of our country. I wholeheartedly support President Trump's America first policies, and I will work and vote accordingly as your representative."

Good stressed his support of police officers and condemned actions to defund the police and remove statutory immunity, which shields officers from lawsuits. Instead, Good said he supported a "law enforcement bill of rights," that would increase protections for officers and mandate a death penalty for anyone who killed a police officer.

Because much of Good's introduction had focused on Webb, the Democratic candidate was given a minute to respond. Webb used his time to argue that Good's record as a Campbell County Supervisor showed that he did not support law enforcement, pointing to a vote he cast not to increase the salaries of local officers.

"My opponent has had opportunities to increase police funding, but while he was on the Board of Supervisors in Campbell County ... he cast the deciding vote to actually make sure that their salaries were not even competitive with the rest of the Commonwealth," Webb said. "He's had that opportunity and he hasn't taken it."

Continued on page 7

Over the course of the next several questions, Webb positioned himself as a candidate who would seek bipartisan solutions to issues like climate change and rural broadband access, something he said is crucial to success.

Good backed Trump's decision to roll back some environmental protections, arguing that environmental policy and energy policy are inextricably linked. The Republican candidate also cited Trump's rural broadband plan and cited an experience he had as a Campbell County Supervisor where the Board assisted a rural but affluent community in establishing broadband.

When asked about how to fix healthcare, Webb said that he does not support Medicare For All, instead supporting a public option as well as "free-market solutions." As a physician, Webb said he sees every day how important private innovation is to healthcare and accused Good of taking a quote out of context to "spread misinformation" about his stance on Medicare For All.

"I support a public option, I support maintaining private insurance and I support using that to accomplish the goal of everybody being covered," he said. "For me, the most important thing is that we have a health care system that works for the patients that I'm taking care of."

Webb said he supports a healthcare system that would put the patient first and adequately fund hospitals that serve rural communities. Instead of repealing and replacing the Affordable Care Act, Webb said he supports solutions that would, in part, create price transparency in healthcare and lower the cost of prescription drugs.

Good's stance put an emphasis on market-driven healthcare over single-payer healthcare, which he claimed would bankrupt employers.

"Competition is always a good thing that provides more choice; it provides lower pricing, and forces improvement when you have competition," he said. "We need to permit self-employed individuals and small businesses the ability to pull together and negotiate better plans at lower prices like the large employers do."

Good and Webb will face off for the 5th District seat on Nov. 3.

You can hear the entire program podcast by the *Charlottesville Podcasting Network* by accessing it on the Senior Statesmen website: www.seniorstatesmen.org. A link to a video of the Candidates Forum is also available at:



Baker-Butler Receives National Award for Success in Closing Student Achievement Gaps With Strong Gains in Key Student Groups

"For the first time in Virginia, a school has been named a National Blue Ribbon School for closing achievement gaps between their overall student population and English Learners, special education students, and students from economically disadvantaged homes."

The above announcement was posted September 25 on the Albemarle County Public Schools website. Here is the link to the entire story: <https://www.k12albemarle.org/our-departments/communications/news-board/~board/newsroom/post/baker-butler-receives-national-award-for-success-in-closing-student-achievement-gaps-with-strong-gains-in-key-student-groups>

*Gene Ecton, founding member of the Senior Statesmen of Virginia, shares the following background information about **John Baker** and **James Butler** for whom the school is named, and their connection to the Senior Statesmen of Virginia.*

John Baker was appointed to the Albemarle County School Board when he first came to the area while in the military. When he returned, the rules had changed and he was ELECTED to the Albemarle County School Board and his peers chose him as chair. He had such fun in this role often bringing hot packages of pizza to the County School Board staff to join them at lunchtime. He and his wife, Marie Coles Baker who was his New York high school sweetheart, were members of SSV as was one of his best friends, Steve Kolezar.

James Butler was an Albemarle County extension agent, a member of the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors and the board representative to the Board of Directors of Piedmont Virginia Community College. He was born in an area northwest of Albemarle County where public education for Blacks ended in the eighth grade. His family sent him to a private Black high school in Roanoke where he paid his tuition and board by performing the school's janitorial duties. When he graduated, he went into the Army. After his Army service, he was given a GI Bill education at Virginia State University where he graduated and met his future wife. They had no children, but they were foster parents to several children. He, too, was a member of SSV.

The Proffitt residential area was the home of free Blacks. When Albemarle County decided to build a new elementary school in that area, some SSV members mobilized to lobby successfully for the school to be named for two of our prominent Black members. We made telephone calls and wrote letters to the members of the Albemarle School Board who would make that decision. We also spoke for the two names before public meeting of the Albemarle School Board. Steve was a member of the Board at that time and was the lone vote against the two names as he wanted it for his friend John Baker alone.

By the time of the naming ceremony, James Butler was in a wheelchair as a result of a stroke, but he was there with his wife and friends. A foster child spoke for him. (A man who was denied a public high school education in Virginia beyond the eighth grade was now having a Virginia public school named for him!) John and his family and friends were celebrating as John spoke. John later was a fixture at the school welcomed by all the students and staff each visit.

James and his wife have passed as has John. They were all class acts, and we were thrilled to have the school named for them. Both families were personal friends of mine and I celebrated with both families at James' home and John's party at the JAG School dining area after the school celebration.

Gene Ecton

Membership in the SSV is open to all past and present citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia. **Join now!** Annual dues are just \$20.00. Mail your check in the amount of \$20.00 (payable to "SSV") to Senior Statesmen of Virginia, P.O. Box 6591, Charlottesville, VA 22906. Telephone: 434-806-4474. E-mail: jimp@videoprovirginia.com. **Please visit our website at: www.seniorstatesmen.org/**

Mark your calendar

Wednesday, November 11: The Virginia Clean Economy Act presented by the Virginia Department of Commerce

Wednesday, December 9: Charlottesville and Albemarle police chiefs

Wednesday, January 13: Charlottesville and Albemarle Commonwealth's Attorneys

Senior Statesmen of Virginia

P.O. Box 6591

Charlottesville, VA 22906