

I support having a diverse array of interests and identities represented on the bench. However, it is clear to me this is not the way to accomplish that goal; in fact, this bill poses a grave threat to the independence of our judiciary. The process of drawing these districts as proposed in this bill is fundamentally political and arbitrary, as it would fall entirely on the General Assembly. I have little doubt that diversity will not be the primary concern of the majority party when drawing these districts. Instead, the districts will be politicized and gerrymandered to maximize the influence of whichever party happens to control the General Assembly at the time.

Further, there is no guarantee that the creation of these districts will increase the diversity of the bench at all. If this amendment becomes law, it is clear to me that it will immediately become another tool for politicians to destroy the independence of the judiciary and secure the continued power of their own party by reducing the influence of voters who oppose them. And it is no coincidence that sponsors of this bill are members of the party that currently controls the General Assembly.

Our system may not be perfect, but this amendment is not the solution. If Republicans want to increase the diversity of our judges, they should propose a system that actually accomplishes this goal, such as a merit-based selection system. Instead, they have proposed a power grab under the thin guise of increasing the diversity of geographical representation, which this amendment isn't even guaranteed to do if it passes.

I am proud to join my fellow representatives in opposing any resolution to create judicial gerrymandering, and I thank our citizens of the 156th for your overall civic engagement in critical issues like this one.

Best regards,

Rep. Dianne Herrin