



October 26, 2017

**LOWER BUCKS COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
ECONOMICS AND GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE**

Chamber Mission: The Lower Bucks County Chamber of Commerce is organized to advance the principles of free enterprise by providing leadership to enhance the economic climate of the business community.

Committee Mission: Examine, promote and monitor governmental activity affecting business in Lower Bucks County and to encourage dialogue with elected officials, inform members and recommend action when necessary.

Chamber Position on the Establishment of an Independent Citizen's Redistricting Commission

At the recommendation of the Chamber's Legislative and Regulatory Advocacy Committee, the Chamber supports legislative efforts (such as 2017 PA Senate Bill No. 22) to effect a constitutional amendment to assign the decennial task of redistricting and reapportionment to independent commissions, empowered to create congressional and legislative districts:

- 1) that are nearly equal in population;
- 2) that do not favor any particular parties or candidates;
- 3) that are truly as contiguous and compact as can practicably be made;
- 4) that respect political subdivisions and communities of interest to the extent that doing so is reasonably compatible with the above; and

- 5) that have been made in a process completely transparent with respect to the development and implementation of the committee's methodologies and the reasoning for each decision not strictly dictated by those methodologies.

The Chamber's position is driven by the current system's propensity to result in gerrymandering, which has many unhealthy effects, the leading two of which are:

- 1.) The creation of institutional imbalances where one political party achieves far greater representation than is justified by their proportional share of the vote. (With the result that one group of interests achieves far greater representation than their numbers dictate at the expense of countervailing interests.)
- 2.) The drift within political parties to extreme patrician positions, enforced through the primary process, which encumber efforts to solve problems by focusing on facts and being open to compromise.

The Chamber believes that a healthy business environment requires a health political framework within which to operate. That framework, in turn, requires a districting system which, to the greatest extent possible, puts the citizenship first by counting each vote equally.

Accordingly, the Chamber calls on members of the Pennsylvania Senate and House of Representatives to support legislation creating independent redistricting commissions of the kind outlined above.