

Election Ambassador Survey Results

1) *Would you support amending the PA Constitution to create an independent citizens redistricting commission responsible for drawing congressional and state legislative districts?*

<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>UNCERTAIN</u>
817	166	164
71%	14%	14%
Total responses: 1,147		

Background: The Pennsylvania General Assembly currently has significant control over how congressional and state legislative districts are drawn after each U.S. Census. This process is required every 10 years to ensure districts remain equal in population. In states where political parties control the redistricting process (including Pennsylvania), districts can change drastically when one party wrests control from the other.

An independent **citizens redistricting commission** would have strict rules about the political connections of participating members, none of whom could be politicians, their employees or family members. Clear guidelines (e.g. compactness) for the drawing of districts would also be installed to reduce the risk of political meddling. Arizona and California each have notable models of independent redistricting commissions that Pennsylvania could consider.

The Current Process: **Congressional districts** in Pennsylvania are drawn through the regular legislative process by the General Assembly; that is, a bill defining new districts must pass in each chamber (PA House and Senate) and be signed by the Governor to become law. This has typically resulted in new boundaries favoring the party that controls the Generally Assembly and governorship.

State legislative (PA House and Senate) districts are determined by a bipartisan **Legislative Reapportionment Commission** comprised of the majority and minority leaders in the General Assembly (i.e., two Democrats and two Republicans). If these four members cannot agree on the fifth member (and chair) of the Commission, the PA Supreme Court appoints this person. This commission determines the new districts. Depending on the partisan leaning of the high court, this fifth member can determine whether the new boundaries favor Democrats or Republicans.

2) *Would you support allowing independent and third party voters to vote in primary elections?*

<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>UNCERTAIN</u>
790	261	92
69%	23%	8%
Total responses: 1,143		

Background: Pennsylvania has a **closed primary system**, only allowing registered Democrats and Republicans to vote in spring primary elections – and only for candidates in their party. Independent and third party voters must wait until the general election in the fall to vote for candidates. Election systems in other states, however, allow all voters to participate in the primary process. One such system is **top-two open primaries** in which all voters are eligible to cast ballots for all candidates in the spring primary; then the two candidates with the most votes go on to the fall election.

3) *Most elections in the United States are “first-past-the-post” – the winning candidate only has to garner more votes than his or her competitors. Do you think the winner of an election should have to receive more than 50 percent of the vote?*

<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>UNCERTAIN</u>
513	435	203
45%	38%	18%
Total responses: 1,151		

Background: Pennsylvania uses a **plurality election system** where each voter can only vote for one candidate, and the candidate who receives the most votes wins the election. Crowded fields of candidates can split the vote, resulting in the winning candidate receiving far less than 50 percent of the votes. In other election schemes (e.g. ranked choice voting, two-round runoff voting) candidates must receive more than 50 percent of the vote to win (**majority voting**).