



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

HOUSE OF DELEGATES

RICHMOND

**WILLIAM J. HOWELL**  
SPEAKER

TWENTY-EIGHTH DISTRICT

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:  
RULES (CHAIRMAN)

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## **Statement of Speaker William J. Howell**

-- on Today's Introduction of New Redistricting Legislation and its 16-0 Passage by  
House Privileges & Elections Committee --

**RICHMOND, VA** – Virginia House of Delegates Speaker William J. Howell (R-Stafford) today issued the following statement after the introduction of [House Bill 5005](#), patroned by Delegate Chris Jones (R-Suffolk), and that new redistricting legislation's passage by the House of Delegates' Privileges and Elections Committee on a strong bipartisan vote of 16-0. HB 5005 was introduced following the veto of House Bill 5001 on April 15, 2011 by the Governor because of his "significant concerns" with the Senate reapportionment plan that was added to the House Bill by the Senate Democratic majority on a straight party-line vote of 22-18. As Governor McDonnell requested in his veto letter last Friday, House Bill 5005 strengthens the original House redistricting plan that garnered an unprecedented 85-9 vote earlier this month, with a majority of House Republicans supporting as well as a majority of House Democrats. Presently, the 100-member Virginia House of Delegates has 61 members in the Republican Caucus and 39 Democrats.

"I'm pleased that the House Privileges & Elections Committee today met and approved HB 5005, a bill that strengthens the House's original redistricting plan and continues to garner solid bipartisan support from Democrats, House members of the Legislative Black Caucus, and Republicans. The redistricting plan for the Virginia House of Delegates in the bill follows closely the plan sent to the Governor last week. However, we have taken the advice the Governor offered in his April 15 veto message and used the intervening time to strengthen the bill by making several adjustments. As requested by local government officials and others, the changes make whole a number of precincts. The unsplit precincts now included in HB 5005 are in the cities of Norfolk and Richmond and the counties of Chesterfield and Henrico.

"Working to do our part to advance this process toward a successful legislative conclusion, I called the House into *pro forma* session today so HB 5005 could pass the first of its three constitutional readings. Now, when the full House and Senate return on Monday, April 25, we will be in the best possible position to send a bill to the Senate so a new Senate plan that successfully addresses the Governor's concerns can be added to HB 5005 and sent to him so the schedule for this November's legislative elections can be met.

"Today's strong bipartisan vote on HB 5005 underscores anew the priority placed by the House on meeting the standard we set last summer on redistricting – a fair process leading to a fair outcome that complies with the law and makes each district as nearly equal in population to every other district as practicable. Now, I look forward to the Governor and Senators resolving their difference that led to last week's veto so we all can come together and complete this important redistricting exercise as soon as possible."

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