

RESOLUTION No.: 16A, 2016

**A RESOLUTION OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF VALPARAISO,
INDIANA, SUPPORTING COMPREHENSIVE REDISTRICTING REFORM**

WHEREAS, the current redistricting process in the State of Indiana creates a potential conflict of interest as state legislators are effectively choosing their own constituents; and

WHEREAS, the redistricting process should be conducted in an open manner with real opportunities for public dialogue and feedback, not behind closed doors; and

WHEREAS, public input and involvement in the redistricting process will empower communities by allowing them to elect representatives who represent their interests on issues that are important to their lives; and

WHEREAS, the boundaries of state districts are currently drawn by legislative incumbents, often sacrificing the integrity of neighborhoods and cities; and

WHEREAS, important principles such as the protections of the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965 and respect for neighborhoods and cities should be clearly listed for a Commission to abide by;

WHEREAS, voters are more likely to participate when they feel that their vote will count and that they have a reasonable chance of electing candidates who represent their interests; and

WHEREAS, elected officials are more responsive to constituents when voters have a choice of candidates, thus increasing accountability and serving the best interests of the voters of Indiana; and

NOW, THEREFORE, the Common Council of the City of Valparaiso, Indiana, does hereby RESOLVE as follows:

Section 1. The Common Council of the City of Valparaiso, Indiana (“Common Council”), hereby urges the Indiana Special Interim Committee on Redistricting to produce a final report that supports comprehensive redistricting reform which incorporates the following:

a. The State of Indiana should establish a citizens led commission (“Commission”) composed of Indiana voters who are representative of the State’s diversity, partisan balance, and geography, for all future **redistricting**. This Commission will oversee the process to draw the lines of the state Senate, state House of Representatives and Congressional districts.

b. District boundaries should be drawn according to clearly described criteria, including respect for:

- i. The U.S. Constitution’s requirement of one person, one vote;
- ii. The Voting Rights Act (VRA);
- iii. Contiguity requirements (to draw districts as one connected area);
- iv. Communities of interest, city and county boundaries;
- v. Political competition, where this does not conflict with the above criteria; and
- vi. Compactness, where this does not conflict with the above criteria;

c. The addresses of any individual, including an incumbent officeholder or candidate, shall not be considered when any district is drawn.

d. The Commission should conduct a transparent redistricting process with full opportunities for public **participation**. All redistricting plan information should be available in a timely fashion, free of charge, via a public website and other **means**. The public should be provided the ability to draw and submit maps for Commission consideration.

e. The public should be given ample notice to participate in any Commission meetings and meetings should be held in at least three (3) different geographic regions of the state.

f. Members of the Commission must be prohibited from all off-the-record communications with anyone (including lobbyists, political party officials, elected officeholders and candidates), except staff and legal counsel.

g. Redistricting should occur once every 10 years following the decennial U.S. Census and Congressional Reapportionment.

Section 2. This Resolution shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and any publication required by law.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Common Council of the City of Valparaiso, Porter County, Indiana, on the _____ day of August, 2016.

Jon Costas, Mayor

ATTEST:

Sharon Swihart, Clerk-Treasurer

Presented by me to the Mayor of the City of Valparaiso, Indiana, this _____ day of _____, 2016, at _____ o'clock p.m.

Sharon Swihart, Clerk-Treasurer

This Resolution approved and signed by me this _____ day of _____, 2016, at _____ o'clock p.m.

Jon Costas, Mayor