



**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA**  
*Office of the Governor*

Ralph S. Northam  
Governor

September 7, 2018

***Via email***

The Hon. M. Kirkland Cox  
Speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates  
[DelKCox@house.virginia.gov](mailto:DelKCox@house.virginia.gov)

Dear Speaker Cox:

On June 26, 2018, the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia ruled that 11 Virginia House of Delegates districts are unconstitutional and allowed the General Assembly until October 30, 2018 to enact a constitutional map (Order). There have been four elections with unconstitutional districts, and I believe it is imperative that these districts be redrawn as soon as possible so Virginians have constitutional lines enacted in time for the June 2019 primaries.

I called a special session for August 30 to give the General Assembly the opportunity to comply with the Order in a timely fashion. Delegate Lamont Bagby introduced a map on August 29, HB 7001, that met fierce criticism from the majority. In statements to the press, responses to the Order, speeches on the House floor, and in an hours-long committee hearing on the proposal, the House majority has never committed to proposing its own remedial districting plan. On the same day that the House of Delegates convened the special session, it adjourned without setting a date for the body or the relevant committee to reconvene, despite individual Delegates making two efforts to establish specific dates.

The Court has ruled the current map unconstitutional. Yet, the House majority has offered no alternative map and do not appear inclined to do so. Moreover, as of the date of this letter, the General Assembly has not set a deadline by which any proposed map will be passed or rejected or even a date on which the relevant committee will reconvene. I have stated that I expect the General Assembly to produce a constitutional map pursuant to the Court's Order. At this point, however, I do not believe the General Assembly is likely to pass a constitutional map that I can sign.

This raises substantial concerns with respect to Virginia's June 2019 House of Delegates primaries. It is imperative that constitutional district lines be in place in time for the 2019 election cycle to avoid letting another election (the last this redistricting cycle) take place under an unconstitutional map. I am committed to implementing a remedy and hope that one can be in place as soon as possible to minimize any impact on the state's administrative election process. I

see no reason to delay a court-drawn remedy where all signs indicate that the General Assembly will not enact a constitutional map by the current October 30 deadline.

Thus, given my concerns related to timing and my belief that the legislative process has reached an impasse, I urge you and others to request that the Court begin the remedial phase as soon as possible to provide Virginians with the certainty that we will have constitutional districts well in advance of the June 2019 primaries.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ralph S. Northam". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Ralph S. Northam  
Governor

cc:

The Honorable Mark R. Herring, Attorney General (*via hand delivery*)

The Honorable Thomas K. Norment, Jr. (*via email* [district03@senate.virginia.gov](mailto:district03@senate.virginia.gov))

The Honorable Richard L. Saslaw (*via email* [district35@senate.virginia.gov](mailto:district35@senate.virginia.gov))

The Honorable C. Todd Gilbert (*via email* [delTGilbert@house.virginia.gov](mailto:delTGilbert@house.virginia.gov))

The Honorable David J. Toscano (*via email* [delDToscano@house.virginia.gov](mailto:delDToscano@house.virginia.gov))