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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Representative Smola supports creating independent redistricting commission to redraw state legislative districts**

**BOSTON – Representative Todd M. Smola (R-Warren, Ranking Member, Committee on Ways & Means)** voted this week to support the creation of an independent redistricting commission to redraw the state’s legislative and Governor’s Council voting districts every 10 years.

The proposed amendment, offered by House Minority Leader Bradley H. Jones, Jr. (R-North Reading) and members of the House Republican Caucus, was defeated on a roll call vote of 48-145 during a joint Constitutional Convention of the House and Senate on February 3.

The state Constitution currently requires the Legislature to create new legislative district maps every decade, based on the latest Census figures. The amendment proposed transferring these responsibilities to a seven-member commission consisting entirely of non-elected officials.

“The redistricting process should not be about protecting the interests of whatever political party happens to be in power, but should instead be focused on guaranteeing that no individual or group of citizens is disenfranchised,” said Representative Smola. “By taking politics out of the equation, we can help to ensure that the redistricting process remains fair and impartial.”

Under the proposed amendment, the Governor would appoint a dean or professor of law, political science or government at an institution of higher learning in the Commonwealth to serve on the commission. The Attorney General would appoint a retired

Massachusetts judge, while the Secretary of State would be responsible for appointing a Massachusetts resident with expertise in civil rights law.

The four remaining Commission members would be nominated by the Speaker of the House, Senate President, House Minority Leader and Senate Minority Leader, who would each submit the names of three individuals for consideration. The Governor, Attorney General and Secretary of State would then select one individual from each of the four lists of candidates submitted.

The amendment specifically prohibits individuals from serving on the commission if they have held certain elected offices within the five years immediately preceding their appointment or nomination. This includes anyone who has held a Congressional, state legislative or statewide elected office; served as a mayor, city councilor or Governor's Councilor; or been elected to a state or federal party committee. The amendment also bars any current employee, agent or family member of any of the above from serving on the commission, as well as individuals who have served as a legislative agent within the two years immediately preceding their appointment or nomination.

The amendment contains additional provisions allowing any member of the commission or any appointing authority to petition the Supreme Judicial Court to remove a commissioner on the grounds of neglect, misconduct or inability to perform their duties.

The current boundaries for Massachusetts' legislative districts were created in 2012. The next round of redistricting is scheduled to take place in 2022.

For additional information please contact Representative Smola at [Todd.Smola@mahouse.gov](mailto:Todd.Smola@mahouse.gov) or (617)722-2100.

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