
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 2571 Session of
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INTRODUCED BY SOLOMON, GREGORY, MEHAFFIE, VENKAT, HILL-EVANS,
PROBST, HADDOCK AND MADSEN, SEPTEMBER 19, 2024

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, SEPTEMBER 19, 2024

AN ACT

1 Providing for the establishment, conduct and composition of the
2 Independent Congressional Redistricting Commission, for
3 adoption of congressional district maps, for prioritized
4 redistricting criteria, for failure to adopt final
5 congressional district map and for judicial review.

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7 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
8 hereby enacts as follows:

9 CHAPTER 1

10 PRELIMINARY PROVISIONS

11 Section 101. Short title.

12 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Fair
13 Congressional Redistricting Act.

14 Section 102. Definitions.

15 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
16 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
17 context clearly indicates otherwise:

18 "Application." An application for a position as a
19 commissioner on the Independent Congressional Redistricting
20 Commission.

21 "Commission." The Independent Congressional Redistricting
22 Commission established under section 301(a).

23 "Secretary." The Secretary of the Commonwealth.

24 CHAPTER 3

25 CONGRESSIONAL INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING COMMISSION

26 Section 301. Establishment and conduct of commission.

27 (a) Establishment.--In each year ending in zero, an
28 Independent Congressional Redistricting Commission shall be
29 established for the purpose of drawing the congressional
30 district maps for this Commonwealth.

1 (b) Conduct.--The commission shall be convened no later than
2 May 1 in each year ending in one. The commission shall have the
3 following duties:

4 (1) Conduct an open and transparent process enabling
5 full public consideration of and comment on the drawing of
6 congressional district maps.

7 (2) Draw congressional district maps according to the
8 redistricting criteria specified in this act.

9 (3) Conduct itself with integrity and fairness.

10 Section 302. Composition of commission.

11 (a) Composition.--The commission shall consist of the
12 following commissioners:

13 (1) Five commissioners who are registered with the
14 largest political party in this Commonwealth.

15 (2) Five commissioners who are registered with the
16 second-largest political party in this Commonwealth.

17 (3) Five commissioners who are not registered with the
18 largest political party or second-largest political party in
19 this Commonwealth.

20 (b) Diversity.--The commission as a whole shall reflect the
21 Commonwealth's geographic and demographic diversity, including,
22 but not limited to, racial, ethnic and gender diversity, to the
23 greatest extent practicable.

24 Section 303. Application process.

25 (a) Administration.--The secretary shall administer an
26 application process for individuals seeking appointment to the
27 commission.

28 (b) Process.--

29 (1) The application period shall begin on November 15 in
30 each year ending in zero and end on January 15 in each year

1 ending in one.

2 (2) The secretary shall design the application to obtain
3 all information necessary to determine each applicant's
4 qualifications, party registration, relevant experiences,
5 skills and commitments, including experiences with community
6 leadership, skills in strategic planning and commitments to
7 compromise and fairness. If the documentation submitted by an
8 applicant is insufficient to determine whether the applicant
9 is eligible to serve on the commission, the applicant shall
10 be deemed ineligible to serve on the commission.

11 (3) Beginning September 1 in each year ending in zero
12 and ending on January 15 in each year ending in one, the
13 secretary shall adequately provide public notice of the
14 application process, including, but not limited to, the
15 following:

16 (i) The application period, commissioner
17 qualifications and selection process in the 10 most
18 prominent print or online media outlets and in at least
19 one prominent print publication in each of the 67
20 counties in this Commonwealth as determined by
21 circulation or online readership.

22 (ii) The application period, commissioner
23 qualifications and the selection process on the home page
24 of all publicly accessible Commonwealth agency Internet
25 websites.

26 (iii) The application period, commissioner
27 qualifications and the selection process on local
28 television stations during local news broadcasts in this
29 Commonwealth.

30 (iv) The application period, commissioner

1 qualifications and the selection process in media outlets
2 that serve specific racial and ethnic communities in this
3 Commonwealth.

4 (4) The secretary shall continue to accept applications
5 until all of the following are satisfied:

6 (i) At least 60 individuals who are registered with
7 the largest political party in this Commonwealth have
8 applied.

9 (ii) At least 60 individuals who are registered with
10 the second-largest political party in this Commonwealth
11 have applied.

12 (iii) At least 60 individuals who are not registered
13 with the largest political party or second-largest
14 political party in this Commonwealth have applied.

15 (5) If between November 15 and January 15 or the close
16 of the application period, the secretary has not received at
17 least 60 applications from the applicants specified under
18 paragraph (4) (i), (ii) and (iii), the secretary shall
19 continue to accept applications until all of the following
20 are satisfied:

21 (i) At least 60 individuals who are registered with
22 the largest political party in this Commonwealth have
23 applied.

24 (ii) At least 60 individuals who are registered with
25 the second-largest political party in this Commonwealth
26 have applied.

27 (iii) At least 60 individuals who are not registered
28 with the largest political party or second-largest
29 political party in this Commonwealth have applied.

30 (c) Required disclosures.--

1 (1) An applicant must disclose, under the penalty of
2 perjury, the following information pertaining to the six
3 years before the submission of an application:

4 (i) Party registration.

5 (ii) Relevant leadership and community experiences.

6 (iii) All political contributions over \$250 to
7 Federal, State or municipal candidates or to any
8 committee supporting or opposing the election of
9 candidates to Federal, State or municipal office.

10 (iv) Contractual and other financial interests with
11 the Commonwealth and with any other government-related
12 entity.

13 (2) Information disclosed under paragraph (1) shall be
14 made publicly available on the commission's publicly
15 accessible Internet website under section 307(c).

16 Section 304. Qualifications and terms of commissioners.

17 (a) Qualifications.--

18 (1) An individual shall be eligible to serve as a
19 commissioner if, during the three years before submission of
20 an application, the individual has met all of the following
21 criteria:

22 (i) The individual has been continuously registered
23 as a voter in this Commonwealth.

24 (ii) The individual has voted in one of the last
25 three Statewide elections.

26 (iii) The individual has been continuously
27 registered to vote in this Commonwealth and is
28 unaffiliated with a political party in this Commonwealth
29 or the individual has been continuously registered with
30 any of the following:

1 (A) The largest political party in this
2 Commonwealth.

3 (B) The second-largest political party in this
4 Commonwealth.

5 (C) A political party that is not the largest
6 political party or second-largest political party in
7 this Commonwealth.

8 (2) An individual may not serve as a commissioner if,
9 during the six years before submission of an application, the
10 individual:

11 (i) has been a candidate for or has been elected or
12 appointed to any Federal, State, county or first class or
13 second class city office or judgeship;

14 (ii) has served as an elected or appointed member of
15 the Federal, State or county committee of a political
16 party;

17 (iii) has served as an officer, employee or paid
18 consultant to a political party, a political action
19 committee or a campaign committee of a candidate for
20 Federal or State public office; or

21 (iv) has been registered as a lobbyist as defined in
22 65 Pa.C.S. § 13A03 (relating to definitions) or a
23 lobbyist under the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995
24 (Public Law 104-65, 2 U.S.C. § 1601 et seq.).

25 (3) Any of the following may not serve as a
26 commissioner:

27 (i) A staff member of, consultant to, contractor for
28 or any individual with an immediate family relationship
29 with an elected or appointed official or judge
30 disqualified under paragraph (2)(i).

- 1 (ii) A member of Congress.
- 2 (iii) A member of the General Assembly.
- 3 (iv) An employee of the secretary.

4 (b) Terms.--A commissioner's term shall expire upon the
5 appointment of the succeeding commission.

6 Section 305. Selection and appointment of commissioners.

7 (a) Selection.--

8 (1) From the applications received, the secretary shall
9 select 120 applicants who meet the requirements under this
10 act to serve on the commission by February 15 of each year
11 ending in one. The secretary shall give due consideration to
12 promoting the racial, ethnic, demographic and gender
13 diversity of the selected applicants.

14 (2) The secretary shall divide the 120 applicants
15 selected under paragraph (1) into the following categories:

16 (i) Forty applicants who are registered with the
17 largest political party in this Commonwealth.

18 (ii) Forty applicants who are registered with the
19 second-largest political party in this Commonwealth.

20 (iii) Forty applicants who are not registered with
21 the largest political party or second-largest political
22 party in this Commonwealth.

23 (3) After selecting and dividing the applicants under
24 paragraphs (1) and (2), the secretary shall transmit their
25 applications to the chair and minority chair of the State
26 Government Committee of the Senate and the chair and minority
27 chair of the State Government Committee of the House of
28 Representatives. Upon receipt of the applications, the chair
29 and minority chair the State Government Committee of the
30 Senate and the chair and minority chair of the State

1 Government Committee of the House of Representatives shall
2 reduce each category of applicants under paragraph (2) by
3 five applicants for a total of 60 reductions by March 1 of
4 each year ending in one. No more than one chair or minority
5 chair of the State Government Committee of the Senate or the
6 State Government Committee of the House of Representatives
7 may remove an individual applicant from consideration. In
8 reducing the size of each category of applicants under
9 paragraph (2), the chair and minority chair of the State
10 Government Committee of the Senate and the chair and minority
11 chair of the State Government Committee of the House of
12 Representatives shall give due consideration to promoting the
13 racial, ethnic, demographic and gender diversity of the
14 commission.

15 (b) Appointments.--

16 (1) From the applicants remaining after the reduction of
17 applicants under subsection (a), the Majority Leader and
18 Minority Leader of the Senate and the Majority Leader and
19 Minority Leader of the House of Representatives shall each
20 appoint one commissioner who belongs to the appointer's
21 political party by April 1 of each year ending in one. In
22 making the appointments, the Majority Leader and Minority
23 Leader of the Senate and the Majority Leader and Minority
24 Leader of the House of Representatives shall give due
25 consideration to promoting the overall racial, ethnic,
26 demographic and gender diversity of the commission.

27 (2) No later than April 7 of each year ending in one
28 after the appointments are made under paragraph (1), the
29 secretary shall, at a public meeting, randomly appoint the
30 following:

1 (i) One commissioner who is registered with the
2 largest political party in this Commonwealth.

3 (ii) One commissioner who is registered with the
4 second-largest political party in this Commonwealth.

5 (iii) Three commissioners who are not registered
6 with the largest political party or second-largest
7 political party in this Commonwealth.

8 (3) After the appointments are made under paragraph (2),
9 the nine commissioners appointed shall meet publicly,
10 promptly review the remaining applications and by majority
11 vote, including the vote of at least one commissioner
12 appointed from each category of applicants under subsection
13 (a)(2), appoint the final six commissioners. The final six
14 commissioners shall consist of two commissioners appointed
15 from each category of applicants under subsection (a)(2). The
16 final six commissioners shall be appointed in a manner that
17 ensures that the commission is as representative of the
18 Commonwealth's geographic, racial, gender, ethnic and other
19 demographic diversity as possible and possesses the relevant
20 skills to perform the duties specified under this act.

21 Section 306. Removal of commissioners and vacancies.

22 (a) Removal.--

23 (1) A commissioner may be removed by a majority vote of
24 the other commissioners, comprised of no less than the
25 following:

26 (i) One commissioner who is registered with the
27 largest political party in this Commonwealth.

28 (ii) One commissioner who is registered with the
29 second-largest political party in this Commonwealth.

30 (iii) One commissioner who is not registered with

1 the largest political party or the second-largest
2 political party in this Commonwealth.

3 (2) A commissioner may be removed after the commissioner
4 receives proper notice and an opportunity to be heard if the
5 commissioner:

6 (i) exhibits a substantial neglect of duty or gross
7 misconduct or is otherwise unable to discharge the
8 commissioner's duties; or

9 (ii) missed three consecutive meetings at which a
10 vote is taken unless the absence is due to serious
11 illness of the commissioner or death of the
12 commissioner's immediate family member.

13 (3) Any vote to remove a commissioner under paragraph
14 (1) shall be in accordance with section 307(a).

15 (4) As used in this subsection, the term "substantial
16 neglect of duty" means any conduct that demonstrates a
17 commissioner's inability to act with integrity and fairness,
18 including the failure to comply with the communications
19 disclosure required specified under section 307(d).

20 (b) Vacancies.--The commission shall fill any vacancy
21 created under subsection (a) by appointing a qualified
22 individual who is willing to serve from the applicants selected
23 under section 305(a)(1) and the same category of applicants
24 under section 305(a)(2) that the commissioner who created the
25 vacancy was appointed from before the vacancy was created.
26 Section 307. Actions by commission.

27 (a) Actions.--Actions by the commission shall be in a public
28 meeting by the affirmative vote of no less than nine
29 commissioners, including the following:

30 (1) At least two commissioners registered with the

1 largest political party in this Commonwealth.

2 (2) At least two commissioners registered with the
3 second-largest political party in this Commonwealth.

4 (3) At least two commissioners who are not registered
5 with the largest political party or second-largest political
6 party in this Commonwealth.

7 (b) Chair and vice chair.--At the first meeting of the full
8 commission, the commissioners shall select one of the
9 commissioners to serve as a chair and one of the commissioners
10 to serve as a vice chair. The chair and vice chair may not be
11 registered with the same political party.

12 (c) Internet website.--

13 (1) No later than September 1 of each year ending in
14 zero, the secretary shall establish a publicly accessible
15 Internet website for the commission. Once the commissioners
16 have been appointed under section 305 and a web manager has
17 been hired by the secretary, the commission shall assume
18 responsibility for managing and updating the Internet
19 website.

20 (2) The Internet website shall include, but not be
21 limited to, all of the following information:

22 (i) A description of the role of the commission.

23 (ii) Timely information about the application
24 process and public bidding process.

25 (iii) Timely information about the time, place and
26 purpose of commission meetings.

27 (iv) A portal for the submission of proposed
28 congressional district maps.

29 (v) All congressional district maps drawn by the
30 commission or submitted by the public.

1 (vi) The underlying data used to create or evaluate
2 maps in a format easily usable for analysis.

3 (vii) Precinct-level shapefiles and census block
4 equivalency.

5 (viii) Precinct-level results from Statewide primary
6 and general elections for the past 10 years.

7 (ix) All reports analyzing the maps and transcripts
8 of the commission.

9 (x) A video archive of all meetings of the
10 commission.

11 (3) The commission shall post any data regarding
12 congressional redistricting on the publicly accessible
13 Internet website at the same time it is made available to the
14 commission and the data shall be considered public record as
15 defined in section 102 of the act of February 14, 2008
16 (P.L.6, No.3), known as the Right-to-Know Law.

17 (d) Communications.--

18 (1) The commission shall be considered a public body
19 subject to 65 Pa.C.S. Ch. 7 (relating to open meetings), the
20 Right-to-Know Law and mileage reimbursement as provided by
21 the laws of this Commonwealth.

22 (2) Except for documents or communications subject to
23 attorney-client privilege, documents or communications
24 created or received by a commissioner, a commission staff
25 member or a consultant to the commission as a part of the
26 commission's duties under this act shall not be exempt by any
27 privilege.

28 (3) Records pertaining to a commission's action on a
29 preliminary congressional district map or the analysis of a
30 preliminary congressional district map shall be publicly

1 disclosed on the commission's publicly accessible Internet
2 website under subsection (c) as soon as practicable after the
3 records are created.

4 (4) A commissioner, commission staff member or
5 consultant to the commissioner may not communicate with any
6 outside persons attempting to influence the congressional
7 district map drawing process outside of public meetings and
8 public comment periods. To the extent that a commissioner,
9 commission staff member or consultant to the commissioner
10 receives a communication described under this paragraph, the
11 communication shall be publicly disclosed on the commission's
12 publicly accessible Internet website under subsection (c) as
13 soon as practicable after the communication is received.

14 (e) Public hearings.--

15 (1) To identify communities of interest and obtain other
16 information relevant to the drawing of congressional
17 districts, the commission shall seek public input. Before any
18 proposed congressional district maps are drawn, the
19 commission shall hold no less than nine public hearings
20 across this Commonwealth to solicit testimony from a
21 representative cross-section of this Commonwealth's
22 population. The commission shall provide at least 14 days'
23 notice before a public hearing is held as specified under
24 paragraph (2).

25 (2) The commission shall adequately advertise a public
26 hearing and schedule a public hearing in a manner to
27 encourage attendance, including scheduling the public hearing
28 outside of regular work hours and using technology that
29 allows for real-time, virtual participation and feedback in
30 the public hearing. The commission shall record a public

1 hearing and post a video of the public hearing on the
2 commission's publicly accessible Internet website under
3 section 307(c) within three days of the public hearing.

4 (f) Public participation.--

5 (1) The commission shall provide a meaningful
6 opportunity for all persons to participate in the
7 congressional redistricting process, including, but not
8 limited to, the following:

9 (i) Issuing the notice under subsection (e)(1) in
10 multiple languages.

11 (ii) Ensuring that adequate translation services are
12 available at public hearings.

13 (iii) Complying with all Federal and State law
14 protections for individuals with disabilities.

15 (2) If the initial public input during the commission's
16 public hearings does not appear to represent the diversity of
17 this Commonwealth, the commission shall take remedial steps,
18 including, but not limited to, conducting additional
19 outreach, holding additional public hearings and identifying
20 underrepresented communities.

21 Section 308. Adoption of congressional district maps.

22 (a) Public submissions.--During the proposed congressional
23 district map drawing process, any member of the public may
24 submit maps, portions of maps or other comments for
25 consideration by the commission. Submissions under this
26 subsection shall be made publicly available on the commission's
27 publicly accessible Internet website under section 307(c) and
28 open to comment.

29 (b) Proposed and final maps.--

30 (1) The commission shall release a proposed

1 congressional district map and display the proposed
2 congressional district map for a minimum of 30 days for
3 public comment in a manner designed to achieve the widest
4 public access reasonably possible before acting to approve a
5 final congressional district map.

6 (2) The commission shall hold no fewer than six public
7 hearings in different regions of this Commonwealth after the
8 release of a proposed congressional district map under
9 paragraph (1) and accept comments on the commission's
10 publicly accessible Internet website under section 307(c) and
11 through paper submissions. The commission may not hold more
12 than one hearing in a congressional district.

13 (3) Upon releasing a proposed congressional district map
14 under paragraph (1), the commission shall release population
15 data, geographic data, election data and any other data used
16 to create or evaluate the proposed congressional district
17 map.

18 (4) Before approving a final congressional district map,
19 the commission must make the final congressional district map
20 available for public view and comment for at least seven
21 days. No later than October 15 of each year ending in one,
22 the commission shall act to approve a final congressional
23 district map. Upon approval, the commission shall certify the
24 final congressional district map to the secretary.

25 (5) The commission shall release with a proposed
26 congressional district map and the final congressional
27 district map written evaluations that measure the maps
28 against external metrics. The metrics shall include the
29 following information:

30 (i) The impact of the congressional district maps on

1 the ability of racial or language minorities to elect
2 candidates of choice.

3 (ii) Measures of partisan fairness using multiple
4 accepted methodologies.

5 (iii) The degree to which the congressional district
6 maps preserve or divide communities of interest and
7 counties.

8 Section 309. Prioritized redistricting criteria.

9 (a) Map drawing criteria.--The commission shall establish
10 single-member congressional districts using the following
11 criteria specified in the following order of priority:

12 (1) Congressional districts shall comply with the
13 Constitution of the United States and all applicable Federal
14 laws.

15 (2) Congressional districts shall comply with the
16 Constitution of Pennsylvania.

17 (3) Congressional districts shall be geographically
18 contiguous.

19 (4) Congressional districts shall provide racial and
20 language minorities with an equal opportunity to participate
21 in the political process and shall not dilute or diminish
22 their ability to elect candidates of choice by themselves or
23 in a coalition with others.

24 (5) Congressional districts shall respect the integrity
25 of communities of interest to the extent practicable. Absent
26 compelling evidence to the contrary, respecting communities
27 of interest shall include minimizing county, city, borough
28 and township boundary splits to the extent practicable. As
29 used in this paragraph, the term "community of interest"
30 shall not include common relationships with political parties

1 or political candidates.

2 (b) Prohibitions.--The commission shall comply with all of
3 the following when drawing a final congressional district map:

4 (1) A final congressional district map shall not, when
5 considered on a Statewide basis, unduly favor or disfavor any
6 political party, candidate or incumbent.

7 (2) A congressional district in a final congressional
8 district map shall not dilute or diminish the ability of
9 racial and language minorities to elect candidates of their
10 choice by themselves or in a coalition with others.

11 (3) The commission shall not consider the addresses of
12 incumbent members of Congress in the drawing of a final
13 congressional district map and may only consider election
14 data after the nine hearings soliciting public input on
15 communities of interest have been conducted under section
16 307(e).

17 (4) The commission shall not split precincts unless
18 necessary to satisfy the congressional district map drawing
19 criteria specified under subsection (a). If the commission
20 finds it is necessary to split a precinct, the commission
21 shall explain its decision in its written evaluation and
22 inform the secretary.

23 Section 310. Failure to adopt final congressional district map.

24 (a) Transmission to General Assembly.--If the commission
25 fails to adopt a final congressional district map by October 15
26 of each year ending in one, the final congressional district map
27 made available for public view under section 308(b)(4) shall
28 be transmitted to the General Assembly with the written
29 evaluations under section 308(b)(5) no later than October 21 of
30 each year ending in one. A commissioner may submit additional

1 written comments with the final congressional district map
2 transmitted under this subsection.

3 (b) Approval of final map.--No later than December 1 of each
4 year ending in one, the Senate and the House of Representatives
5 must approve the same congressional district map transmitted
6 under subsection (a) by a majority vote before the congressional
7 district map can be certified as the final congressional
8 district map by the secretary.

9 (c) Process.--Within seven calendar days, the President pro
10 tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of
11 Representatives shall promptly bring the congressional district
12 map transmitted under subsection (a) to the floor of the
13 appropriate chambers for a floor vote. If the congressional
14 district map does not garner votes totaling 50% plus one of the
15 total number of voting members of the General Assembly in both
16 chambers, the commission shall submit a new congressional
17 district map to the General Assembly within seven days. The
18 General Assembly shall vote on the new congressional district
19 map in accordance with this section and the process specified
20 under this subsection shall continue until a congressional
21 district map garners a majority vote in the Senate and the House
22 of Representatives.

23 Section 311. Judicial review.

24 (a) Legal standing.--The commission shall be the only entity
25 with standing to defend a legal action regarding a final
26 congressional district map from money appropriated by the
27 General Assembly funding to defend any such action. The
28 commission shall select the legal counsel to defend a legal
29 action regarding a final congressional district map.

30 (b) Jurisdiction.--The Supreme Court shall have original

1 jurisdiction in all proceedings in which a final congressional
2 district map is subject to a legal action.

3 (c) Petitions.--A registered voter in this Commonwealth may
4 file a petition for legal action within 45 days after the final
5 congressional district map has been certified by the secretary
6 or approved by the General Assembly under section 310(b). The
7 Supreme Court shall consolidate legal actions if multiple
8 petitions are filed and prioritize redistricting-related
9 petitions.

10 Section 312. Funding of commission.

11 (a) Compensation.--Commissioners shall be compensated at the
12 rate of \$300 for each day the commissioner is engaged in
13 commission business. The compensation under this subsection
14 shall be adjusted for inflation for each commission. Employees
15 of the Department of State and commissioners shall be reimbursed
16 for reasonable personal expenses incurred in connection with
17 duties performed in accordance with this act and as otherwise
18 prescribed by the laws of this Commonwealth for employees of
19 this Commonwealth.

20 (b) Funding.--The General Assembly shall allocate sufficient
21 funding for the commission to meet estimated expenses for a
22 three-year period, including, but not limited to, expenses
23 incurred in the selection of commissioners, hiring staff and a
24 Statewide public education and outreach program.

25 (c) Office space.--The Department of General Services shall
26 make adequate office space available for the operation of the
27 commission.

28 (d) Commission staff.--

29 (1) The commission shall hire technical staff,
30 administrative staff, legal counsel, a web manager and other

1 technical consultants as necessary through a public bid
2 process in accordance with 62 Pa.C.S. (relating to
3 procurement).

4 (2) A person employed by the commission shall act in the
5 public interest of the residents of this Commonwealth and not
6 any individual, entity or special interest.

7 CHAPTER 21

8 MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

9 Section 2101. Severability.

10 The provisions of this act are severable. If any provision of
11 this act or its application to any person or circumstance is
12 held invalid, the invalidity shall not affect other provisions
13 or applications of this act which can be given effect without
14 the invalid provision or application.

15 Section 2102. Effective date.

16 This act shall take effect immediately.