



March 4, 2013

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Rep. Chris Garrett, Chairman
House Rules Committee
900 Court Street, NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Garrett:

AARP Oregon supports House Joint Resolution 17 and House Bill 2686.

The resolution amends Oregon's constitution to create an independent commission to perform the decennial redistricting of Oregon's legislative and congressional districts and the bill establishes provisions for selection and conduct of the commission. HJR 17 and HB 2686 are aligned with AARP's public policies addressing government integrity and civic engagement.

AARP endorses independent redistricting commissions as a means of assuring that legislators with partisan interests cannot draw district lines favorable to their own or their party's election, avoiding conflicts of interest and public cynicism of the process.

Our public policy calls for independent commissions that are diverse in membership, and representative of the state both geographically and demographically. In addition, our policy calls for a redistricting process that is transparent and provides meaningful opportunity for interested parties and the public to participate effectively. And finally, our policy states that districts established through the process have the following characteristics (listed in priority order): equal populations; comply with the Voting Rights Act; contiguous; respect communities of interest, city and county boundaries, and visible geography features; and geographically compact.

As I indicated, HJR 17 and HB 2686 are in keeping with AARP public policy and principles for government integrity and civic engagement. AARP Oregon urges your support of both.

Sincerely,

Rick Bennett
Director, Government Relations
AARP Oregon