

The Future of Hampton Roads, Inc.

Board of Directors

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF LEGISLATIVE REDISTRICTING REFORM IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

September 23, 2008

WHEREAS, as Americans and as Virginians, we live in a democracy which has been won and preserved by the blood, sweat and tears of our forebears and which remains a precious and effective form of government ; and

WHEREAS, as Americans and Virginians, we wish to continue to preserve our democratic heritage; and

WHEREAS, our democracy is endangered by the decline in participation of many of its citizens, as seen in public apathy on many fronts, including increasing disinterest in the electoral process and subsequent low voter turnout in state legislative and congressional elections; and

WHEREAS, Virginia is one of 36 states which permit state legislators of the party in power to redraw their own House and Senate districts following each census; and

WHEREAS, such partisan legislative and congressional redistricting to favor incumbents and the party in power is demonstrably a major factor in reducing competition and voter interest in the electoral process; and

WHEREAS, in Virginia and in other states with partisan redistricting, the majority of state legislative seats are often not even contested by both major parties, and a significant number of legislators regularly win re-election with more than 90% of the vote (in 2007, 55 House of Delegates candidates-54 of them incumbents- received 95% or more of the vote and only two of the 90 incumbents seeking re-election were defeated); and

WHEREAS, our country's founders- among them George Washington and James Madison-warned us of the dangers of failing to control the partisan excesses of political parties; and

WHEREAS, 14 states have adopted a redistricting process which removes the actual drawing of the new districts from the hands of state legislators and places it in the hands of non-partisan or bi-partisan commissions; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia State Senate in 2008 approved overwhelmingly a bi-partisan bill (SB 38) to replace the current system with a bi-partisan commission; and

WHEREAS, a subcommittee of the House Privileges & Elections Committee refused to even allow SB 38 to be heard by the full committee;

WHEREAS, the Future of Hampton Roads is a member of the Virginia Redistricting Reform Coalition, which helped push SB 38 forward; and

WHEREAS, the Redistricting Reform Coalition plans to support reform legislation again in 2009; and

WHEREAS, it is crucial that reform legislation be approved prior to the 2010 census; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of the Future of Hampton Roads reaffirms its support of legislative redistricting reform and renews its membership in the Virginia redistricting Reform Coalition; and

FURTHER that the Future of Hampton Roads Board of Directors calls on the Hampton Roads business community, the general public, the media and the members of the General Assembly to commit themselves to support of redistricting reform and to renewal and revitalization of our part in the democratic process; and

FURTHER that this resolution be posted on the FHR website and distributed to members of the General Assembly from Hampton Roads, to the Virginian-Pilot, the Daily Press and other news media outlets; and

FURTHER that FHR seeks to make redistricting reform a major issue in the 2009 elections for Governor, Lieutenant governor, Attorney General and the House of Delegates.

DONE, THIS 23rd DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 2008.