



ACLU of Georgia
Testimony on S.R. 6 and S.R. 7
Before the Georgia Senate Reapportionment and Redistricting Committee
February 27, 2017

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and Members of the Senate Redistricting Committee. My name is Christopher Bruce and I am the Director of Political Affairs for the American Civil Liberties Union of Georgia. I am here on behalf of our Executive Director, Andrea Young. First, I would like to say thank you for the opportunity to testify this afternoon about an issue that is central to the integrity of our democracy, and lend our support to Senate Resolutions 6 and 7.

Fair and equal representation is the cornerstone of American democracy, and as the state's guardian of constitutional rights, the ACLU of Georgia is committed to ensuring that redistricting upholds the Fourteenth Amendment's guarantee of equality for every Georgian.

The pitfalls of partisan gerrymandering are well-documented: partisan discrimination, non-competitive elections, and skewed overall outcomes. That is why the ACLU of Georgia supports efforts to reduce the role of partisanship in the redistricting process.

But any attempt to reform the redistricting process must meet a high standard: First, it must ensure transparency and accountability. And second, redistricting reforms must protect - and not dilute - the voting power of communities of color.

The independent bipartisan redistricting commission and standards and procedures envisioned by Senate Resolutions 6 and 7 achieve both of these goals.

These proposed pieces of legislation allow for a robust process of public hearings and comments - ensuring the voice of the people is heard. Public input is essential to promote accountability to marginalized communities.

To protect minority communities, the amendment requires that districts quote "shall not be drawn with the intent or result of denying or abridging the equal opportunity of

racial or language minorities to participate in the political process or diminish their ability to elect representatives of their choice.”

For these reasons, we believe the proposed redistricting commission and new procedures will strengthen our democracy by ensuring fair and equal representation for all Georgians. Again, thank you Mr. Chairman and Senators. We strongly urge you to seriously consider Senate Resolutions 6 and 7.

Thank you.