



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo urges New Yorkers to not support redistricting ballot proposal

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New York State Sen. Joseph Griffo, R-I-C-Rome, today urged New Yorkers to vote against a constitutional amendment that will be on the November ballot that will return redistricting to a partisan, gerrymandered process. The senator was joined at a news conference by Kari Puleo, executive director of the Greater Utica Chamber of Commerce, and Dianne DiMeo, vice president of the League of Women Voters, Utica/Rome Metro Area.

Once a decade, New York State is required to draw new district lines that reflect population and demographic changes reported in the most recent Census. Unlike in previous years when politicians drew those lines, more than 2 million New Yorkers voted in a 2014 referendum to give that responsibility to a new “Independent Redistricting Commission.”

The commission, which was the result of a bipartisan effort between Senate Republicans and Assembly Democrats supported by former Gov. Andrew Cuomo, ensured that the redistricting process was independent and bipartisan.

However, the proposed constitutional amendment, which is one of five proposals that the public will vote on this Election Day, would make it easier for the Legislature and Albany insiders to decide legislative districts and representation for voters across New York. The amendment would essentially neuter the Independent Redistricting Commission and allow the majorities in the Legislature to redraw district lines that are favorable to them and not voters.

“New Yorkers previously supported a fair and independent redistricting process and having an independent commission free of political influence redraw legislative district lines,” **Sen. Griffo said.** “Now, the majorities have egregiously put forth modifications to the redistricting process that only serve to sustain their political superiority and will ultimately lead to perpetual power, which is not in the best interest of the state of New York.”

“The Greater Utica Chamber of Commerce urges all voters to carefully read and review this proposal as it is part of an important process that will shape political representation at all levels for the next decade,” **Puleo said.** “While necessary changes need to be made to the redistricting process, Proposal 1 is overly complicated and effectively weakens the voice of the minority party, therefore falling short of a truly independent redistricting committee. Additionally, the proposal curbs public participation in the redistricting process. For these

reasons, we urge voters to vote no on Proposal 1.”

“The League of Women Voters of Utica/Rome, in conjunction with the League of New York State, has taken a position of not being in favor of Proposition 1,” **DiMeo said.** “Although we feel there are some positive aspects of the proposed amendment, New York State is currently in the middle of redistricting its congressional and legislative maps and this amendment will create further complications if it is adopted. The League’s primary opposition has to do with the proposed voting process. The current redistricting amendment ensures fair representation of the majority and minority parties by including a special voting process if the Assembly and Senate are both controlled by a single party. This proposition removes those fail-safe procedures so that maps only need to be approved by just a simple majority of Commissioners and Legislators. The League is strictly nonpartisan and believes that all New Yorkers must be equally represented regardless of their party affiliation or non-affiliation. If a single party has the ability to control the approval of new legislative district lines, there is a much greater risk of gerrymandering.”