My name is J.H. Snider. Assuming that by early next year Maryland’s legislative and congressional districts end up being gerrymandered as much as ever, I hope you will consider endorsing a redistricting jury when the gerrymanders are subsequently litigated. I briefly discussed the redistricting jury mechanism with two of this [commission](https://redistricting.maryland.gov/Pages/default.aspx)’s members several years back when they co-chaired the [Governor’s 2015 redistricting reform commission](https://governor.maryland.gov/redistricting-reform/). Now that that initiative has gone nowhere, I hope you will reconsider the fallback position of redistricting juries. I’ve discussed this proposal at a DC think tank event and in a series of op-eds published in Florida, North Carolina, and Maryland.

The basic idea of a redistricting jury is very simple: let a supersized jury choose among the competing redistricting plans as presented by their advocates, including, say, this commission’s redistricting plan. Let a judge or team of judges convene the jury, explain Maryland redistricting law to the jury, and then moderate the proceedings.

Illustrious redistricting lawyers from the Campaign Legal Center and elsewhere have confirmed that judges have the inherent power to convene such a jury if they want to, even a supersized jury with hundreds of jurors. But as a practical matter it has been exceedingly hard to get judges to enter the political thicket, including in Maryland with its highly politicized judiciary. I don’t know how to solve that political problem. For example, judges notoriously lack the power of the purse and the sword. But it seems to me that however daunting it is, it is much less daunting than trying to get the Maryland General Assembly to propose and approve both legislative and Congressional redistricting plans not in its narrow political self-interest.

As September rolls around and the redistricting process starts in earnest, I hope you will carefully consider the merits of this proposal. Thank you for your time.

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Sign-ups for this meeting: 33 speakers, 211 attendees.