Redistricting Petition Instructions **for Petitioners** (Do not share this document)

1. **Review background materials**, including the “Why Redistricting Matters” handout and page 2 of this sheet.
2. **Start the form by printing YOUR name, address and email, clearly and legibly, in the petition top line.** This sets an example for people to PRINT names and enter all info fully and correctly in subsequent entries.
3. **Options for engaging:** These vary, dependent on context and your own style/comfort level.
* Cut straight to the ask*:**Hi, would you like to sign a petition to help prevent partisan gerrymandering in MN? (*Many people appreciate you getting to the point quickly. Often you can stop there, because they’re already reaching for the clipboard. If so, as they sign, share the basics of the bill, the process so far, the fairness and transparency of the process, info about our multi-partisan coalition, etc).
* Develop a dialog to engage*: Our current system doesn’t protect us from partisan gerrymandering. Incumbent MN legislators draw our US Congressional District boundaries, plus the MN House and Senate Districts. Yep, the fox guards the henhouse. Now the Supreme Court says that we’re the only ones who can fix this to prevent partisan gerrymandering. If you believe in fair voting maps and in protecting our right to choose who represents us, please support our bill to put redistricting in the hands of a citizens’ commission of 9 public members.*
* Combination of the above, whatever works best for you. Smile a lot. You’ll get the hang of it!
1. **Encourage signers to:**
* **PRINT their names and write legibly** (no signature required).
* **Fill out all contact info.** Addresses are important so that we can map to legislative districts and make our petition directly relevant to specific legislators. Explain this. If people aren’t comfortable giving a full address, encourage them to at least provide their city and zip code.

If they still don’t want to provide any address info and they leave the address space blank, it’s okay. Get their name +/- email address and then **start a new sheet**. We’ve found that, once folks see that others have left the address info blank, they tend to follow suit. We want to avoid this whenever possible.

* **Provide their email address** if they want to ask questions and/or receive follow-up on from Deb onquick, easy ways they can help with MN redistricting reform. They will NOT be hit up for money.
* If signers want more info, give them the “Why Redistricting Matters” handout.
1. **Check to ensure that ALL INFO IS LEGIBLE**. This is critical. Confirm with the signer and make any necessary clarifications to ensure accuracy (particularly the email address, so we can maintain contact).
2. **When petition sheets are completed – but do NOT wait more than 1 week after the first entry**:
* **Enter info into the footer fields** (Group name; pages submitted, your name, email, date submitted, petition location(s), and date(s) of petitioning. Provide any additional notes about signers on a separate piece of paper (i.e., if/how they’ve offered help or specific questions for us to answer).
* Take a clear and full photo of the petition page and any additional info pages with notes about signers.
* **Email the photo(s)** with Subject Heading “PETITION SIGNATURES” to: MNVolunteer@commoncause.org. AFTER you get confirmation of receipt from Keira, DELETE the photos from your phone.
* **KEEP THE ORIGINALS** and give them to a member of the Redistricting Convening Roundtable
(e.g., Annastacia Belladonna Carrera, Deb Zvosec/BirdDogs, Eva/OFA, etc.) or your team lead.

*(see reverse side for Background Info)*

**BACKGROUND INFO for Petitioners (Do not share this document)**

**What is in the bill?** A statewide coalition led by Common Cause MN developed a bill for a citizens’ advisory redistricting commission in the last legislative session. That bill passed the MN House but failed to get a hearing in the MN Senate. Now we’re working with legislators of both parties to develop a revised bill that can pass in 2020.

Our coalition has developed a model bill that calls for:

* A 9-member redistricting commission of citizens who will be guided by new fairness principles and follow a transparent process, with public input, to redraw district maps after the 2020 Census. It will bring redistricting out into the open.
* Any voter who is not a current or former elected official, party or campaign official or lobbyist can apply.
* The Secretary of State will verify applicant availability and send the list to the legislature. The legislature will use a balanced process akin to jury selection to winnow the pool. Random selection of 9 members will then be made to balance representation of major parties with small parties and unaffiliated voters.

Although particulars of a final bill may change, the bill establishes an advisory commission and presents the option of permanently establishing a fully independent redistricting commission via constitutional amendment in 2020.

**A back-up plan for an advisory commission is critical.** If the bill is passed, a constitutional amendment (CA) question to establish a fully independent commission will be put on the 2020 ballot. The CA must be approved in the 2020 election in order to be implemented in time for the 2021 redistricting cycle. In Minnesota, a CA must receive a majority of total ballots cast, not just a majority of votes on the CA. Thus, a skipped vote on the CA question equals a “No” vote. It will be challenging to educate voters between now and November 2020, so our bill provides for a citizen’s advisory commission in case the CA for a fully independent commission fails to pass.

**How is a commission different than what we do now?** Currently, the majority party has the power to draw district maps to their advantage. If there’s a split majority, the parties may not agree. And the governor can veto maps. If the maps are not passed by both the legislature and the governor, the process goes to the courts, as has happened in Minnesota for the last 40 years. Minnesota currently has a divided legislature, but depending on who wins the 2020 elections, that could change, opening the door for more significant partisan gerrymandering.

**Who is in the Common Cause Coalition?** Common Cause is a nonpartisan, grassroots organization dedicated to upholding the core values of American democracy. Common Cause Minnesota works to educate and engage all citizens to make redistricting a more fair and transparent process in our state. It draws upon the expertise of its national organization and the experience of other states that have implemented redistricting reform. Other members of the coalition include the League of Women Voters, Citizens League, MN Women’s March, Minnesotan Citizens for Clean Elections, MN Voices, and Let The People Vote. Grassroots political action groups include several small parties, civic groups, chapters of Indivisible MN, Isaiah MN and Organizing for Action MN. Individual activists from both major parties are also represented.

**How will we use this petition?** This petition process:

1) raises public awareness about the problem of gerrymandering behind closed doors and our proposed solution;

2) provides us with evidence to share with legislators that voters across the state (including in their own districts) care about the problem and support this work;

3) connects us with community members who will assist us so that we can get legislation passed.

**Thank you for your time and help!**