

The CommUUnicator

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist
Fellowship of Waynesboro

Virginia Special Election: April 21

By Tom Gederberg

The upcoming special election, dealing with whether Virginia should proceed with redistricting prior to the 2026 November election is set to occur on Tuesday, April 21, with early voting scheduled to start on Friday, March 6th. A Yes vote will counter efforts by Donald Trump to influence the 2026 elections in Republicans' favor.

The president demanded that Texas, Florida and other Republican-led states redraw their congressional district lines ahead of the November 2026 mid-term elections to attempt to maintain Republican control of congress, rather than allow the normal process of basing district lines on the results of the census in 2030. Texas already has, without input from their voters, signed into law new maps which could result in an additional three to five Republican House seats from Texas. Florida, Louisiana, Alabama, North Carolina, and Missouri are currently following suit.

California, like Virginia, has an independent redistricting commission that evaluates the district maps every ten years upon completion of the census to fairly redraw the lines when necessary. In response to Trump's demand that Republican states redraw their lines NOW, the California legislature had proposed new temporary, emergency district maps to exactly counter the estimated three to five new Texas Republican seats. Unlike Texas, California put Proposition 50 – the "Election Rigging Response Act" on the ballot. The voters of California overwhelmingly approved Proposition 50 (64% to

34%) to allow the use of the new emergency district maps until 2030 at which time the independent redistricting commission will resume control of the redistricting process.

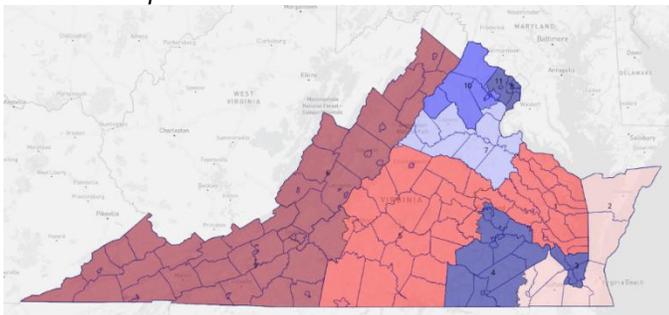
Similarly, the Commonwealth of Virginia's General Assembly has proposed a new congressional map that could potentially result in a net gain of four Democratic congressional seats to counter the redistricting efforts underway in Florida, Louisiana, Alabama, etc.

Currently, of the eleven congressional seats in Virginia, six are held by Democrats and five are held by Republicans. The new map could result in ten Democratic seats and one Republican seat. Like California's Proposition 50, the **Commonwealth of Virginia is asking the voters of Virginia to decide the outcome in a special election on April 21, 2026.** Also, like California, the proposed emergency maps would be temporary until 2030 at which time the independent redistricting commission would again be responsible for ensuring that the districts are fairly drawn. However, if Texas and the other Republican states do not proceed with their Trump-ordered redistricting, then per the proposed Virginia referendum, the Virginia redistricting will not move forward.

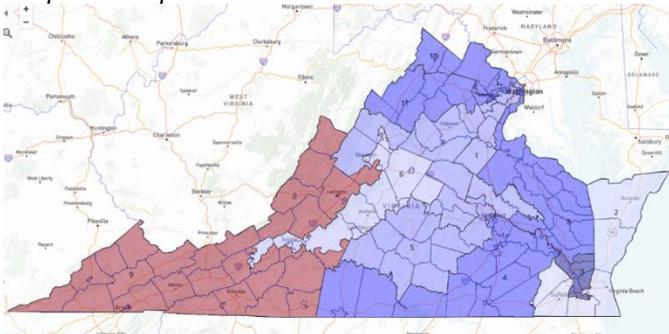
The proposed Congressional District 6 will include Waynesboro, Staunton, Harrisonburg, Charlottesville, Roanoke and Blacksburg (it is being nicknamed the College District). These maps from the [Dave's Redistricting](#) website are color coded based upon the estimated partisanship of the districts. The deeper blue the

district, the more Democratic and the deeper red the district, the more Republican.

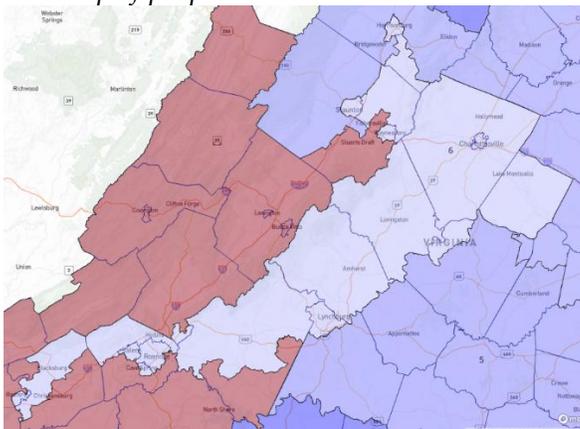
Current map



Proposed map



Close-up of proposed District 6.



New Art Show at UUFW

Sarah Beth Latane, a Staunton artist and mom with a background in studio art, worked in an entirely different field until she had her son 3 1/2 years ago. An experience with post-partum

depression brought her to paint again as a therapeutic support.

She began to experiment and take online art courses to explore her re-introduction to art making. Today she works mainly in mixed media, with layering of acrylic paint and various mark-making tools as well as hand cut collage materials. She particularly loves painting over found papers, such as old book pages, maps, sewing patterns, and music pages with inspiration coming primarily from nature, and she enjoys seeing how color changes and/or reacts to other colors around it.



Her works are layered, textural, and combine organic and geometric elements to create a positive tension within the works.

The show runs from March 1 through April 26th. All art pieces are for sale with 15% of sales coming back to the fellowship. Please see Maribeth Nolde or Kristin Maxwell if you wish to make a purchase.

A Visitor's Perception of UUFW

Luna, the guest speaker at our recent Social Justice service, posted this on her Substack newsletter.

"Yesterday I had the opportunity to be a speaker at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Waynesboro. A stark contrast to the Christian Nationalist meeting at a different fellowship. This one had more love and community than I have seen and felt in a long time. They give time to visitors, give space and time for joy and sadness as well. They give time and emotions to others and choose songs that relate to current times in this country and took the time to research for their messages."

