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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NAACP PA CALLS FOR STATEWIDE MEMBER ACTION
FOLLOWING SENATE GOP LEADERSHIP BETRAYAL OF SB 22

Glen Mills, PA June 15, 2018. Today the branches of the Pennsylvania State Conference of NAACP call on our statewide membership to voice joint and collective disappointment regarding the reprehensible sabotage of highly vetted, bipartisan Senate Bill 22. SB 22 proposed to create an independent citizen commission tasked with drawing state and federal voting districts in Pennsylvania for the purpose of ending the practice of gerrymandering and guaranteeing the integrity of each person's vote.

On June 12, 2018, in a cunning, foul and shocking betrayal of citizens across Pennsylvania, the Senate GOP rammed through an unvetted amendment submitted by Sen. Ryan Aument (Lancaster Co. GOP). This amendment was introduced one day prior to the final vote on Senate Bill 22 and was designed to use SB 22 as a vehicle to create seven (7) regional judicial elections for appellate judges — including state Supreme Court justices. Unlike Senate Bill 22, the Aument Amendment was passed with no hearings, no expert testimony, and no analysis as to the benefit of this change to the Pennsylvania Constitution. The intent of this amendment is to eliminate Pennsylvania's statewide election system for appellate judges. In the end, through a crafty set of legislative steps, those judicial regions would be created by the legislature – effectively resulting in a gerrymandered court system.

“It was the hope of our more than 10,000 voting members from all ethnicities and political affiliations that Pennsylvania's leadership would stand for democracy and the integrity of the vote,” said Dr. Joan Evelyn Duvall-Flynn, president of the Pennsylvania State Conference of NAACP Branches. “While the traditions of our nation speak to the power of the citizen voice, it is clear to the NAACP PA that while the Aument amendment is wrapped in contemporary sophistication and the pretense that it was meant for the public good, this amendment can be rightly seen as a present day iteration of the shameful and abusive ‘Jim Crow’ style use of the legislative process to legalize the subjugation and oppression of citizens,” Duvall-Flynn said.

“From the perspective of NAACP PA, the Aument Amendment is intended to take citizen voices away from electing the top court of the state,” said Dr. Duvall-Flynn. “The “yes” vote on this amendment is a statement of the willingness by GOP Senate leadership to practice a “Jim Crow” philosophy and approach to governing in Pennsylvania, said Duvall-Flynn.

Democracy is in jeopardy in Pennsylvania. The original version of SB 22 was the result of widespread stakeholder engagement and collaboration. The current version of this legislation is not. Therefore, please contact Senators Folmer, Rafferty and Costa and thank them for standing up for an independent citizens' redistricting commission. At the same time, as citizens, we cannot tolerate being governed by elected officials who betray us and plot against us. Contact your Senator and share your determination to have fair, transparent representation.

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The **mission** of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate race-based discrimination.