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I. Compactness and Contiguity

With our plan, all 100 of our House districts are contiguous. All of the districts have achieved a minimum compactness of around 50%. In the more rural areas of the state the districts cover more square miles as the population of these areas is severely lower compared to the urban centers of Northern Virginia and Richmond. These rural districts in turn have the compactness of the district at a lower number than the urban centers. About three new districts were created in the Northern Virginia area, two taken from the rural Southwest and Southside, and one from the Newport News area.

II. Population

The ideal goal of population for a House district is 80,010 people according to the numbers released by the United States Census. We were required to keep the districts within four percent of this number and all the districts were able to meet this quota. Our largest district is District 2, which has a population of 83,753 people. The smallest district was District 12 with a population of 76,234. While all districts were not able to meet the ideal goal of 80,010, if this was to be accomplished many counties and towns would have to have been split up.

III. Accordance to the Federal Voting Rights Act

To be in accordance with the Federal Voting Rights Act our plan has created districts that have a minority majority. In the current districting being used there are twelve minority majority districts. In this new redistricting we have placed the number of minority majority districts at ten in accordance with the population data. The reason that the number of minority majority districts decreased was because the data showed us that over the last ten years many African Americans have moved away from their old districts into new districts. The data also shows that while the Hispanic population of the state is increasing there is still not enough to have a minority-majority district for the Hispanic population.

In the first Redistricting Competition plan, ten districts were drawn in accordance to the VRA. However, we deemed it important and equally challenging, to draw twelve minority-majority districts. We were able to do this in the second Governor's Commission plan. Although the districts are less compact in this version of the map, it makes sense to keep some sort of continuity in representation for these areas. Because much of redistricting involves balance between different objectives, for the competition map we thought it was more important that we favor compactness while on the Governor's Commission map we forfeited a little compactness for greater minority representation.

IV . Respectful to Existing Political Subdivisions

Throughout the process we tried to keep current political subdivisions in the same district. We accomplished this by trying to keep as many of the counties as possible in the same district. We also tried to keep as many of the urban centers in as many

of the same districts as possible as well. The amount of county splits were minimized by drawing the districts in the south first, moving up towards the Alexandria area, and moving back down to the Norfolk area. It was particularly difficult to find appropriate means to split up the urban areas. All efforts were undertaken to keep voting precincts together; however, several districts were unable to meet this criteria.

V Representation and Fairness

Admittedly, the State House map was difficult to draw in a way that respected political boundaries while maximizing competitive districts. Most small political communities clearly favored one party of the other. So, we focused more on balancing the number of Democratic and Republican districts rather than balancing each small district internally. The result is a more fair political landscape without sacrificing minority representation or compactness.