# Amendment Proposal: Proportional Representation in the Michigan State House of Representatives

## Summary:

This proposed amendment to the Michigan Constitution aims to make the State House of Representatives more truly representative of Michigan's voters. It introduces two main changes:

1. **Replacing the current election method with a proportional representation system:** This ensures that the number of seats a party holds in the House more accurately matches its share of the statewide vote.
2. **Population-Based House Seat Size:** Attaching the total number of Representatives to the state's population as measured by the federal census every ten years. This ensures consistent representation based on Michigan's population, which also protects proper community representation.

These goals are achieved through the use of Multi-Member Districts (MMDs), "Open List" voting, Electoral Coalitions, and an automatically determined House size.

## Details:

This section is the basic description of each concept. This amendment creates larger electoral districts. Each of these districts shall elect multiple Representatives. There may be Compensatory (extra seats for balance) added at the state level to further maintain fair representation.

- **District Size and Seat Count:** Each district is allocated seats based on its population, using a ratio of approximately 75,000 residents for every 1 seat. This makes Representatives accountable to their local community instead of a large and vague region of under-represented voters.
- **Drawing District Lines:** The Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (MICRC) will draw the new districts following each federal census. The creation of 4-member districts shall be prioritized; 5-member districts will only be used when necessary to meet the number of allocated district seats. **See Example 1.**
- **District Candidates:** Since a district may have 4 or 5 seats, parties may run multiple candidates in each district. They may run a maximum of the district size plus two, so 6 candidates in a 4-seat district, or 7 candidates in a 5-seat district.

- **Coalitions and Vacant Seat Filling:** Independents and political parties (major or minor) are permitted to form official, publicly declared and binding coalitions prior to the election. The coalition appears on the ballot as a single entity to determine how many seats the coalition secures, then the distribution of those seats will follow the individual party/candidate vote counts **See Example 2.**
- **Voting Process (Open List):** Voters get a single vote for their State House Representative. They may choose to vote for the Coalition's list, or a specific Coalition candidate in their district.
- **Party Preference List:** Prior to each election, every party publishes default ranked list of its candidates. Voters can select the “Party Preference” or a specific candidate on the ballot. Specific candidate votes override the default list ranking.
- **District Seat Allocation:** Seats within each district are distributed to parties based on the percentage of votes they received. **See Example 3.**
- **Compensatory Seat Allocation:** Once the winners of district seats are determined, "Statewide Balance Seats" or "Compensatory Seats" are awarded to the respective party’s most popular unelected district candidates until we achieve proportionality **See Example 4.** Though the total number of seats in the House shall not exceed 130% of the base district seat count. If the cap is hit, all Compensatory Seats are reduced proportionally. **See Example 5.**
- **Vacancies:** If a Representative vacates their seat, it shall be filled by the next highest-ranked willing and eligible candidate from the same Party or Coalition, ensuring the House's representation maintains the voters' original intent without a special election.
- **Ballots:** The state shall provide a ballot design and distribution system that ensures the absolute secrecy of the voter's party preference. Each candidate on the ballot must be individually labeled by their party (since coalitions may have candidates from different parties).
    - Suggestion 1: Follow Sweden's model; A rack of ballots for each party behind a curtain. A voter walks behind the curtain, selects the ballot for the coalition they want, inserts it into their folder, then proceeds to a both to fill in the ballot.
    - Suggestion 2: Electronic ballot boxes that walk the voter through simple prompts, such as "which coalition would you like to vote for?" followed by "Which candidate from that coalition, if any, would you like to vote for?"
    - Suggestion 3: A single ballot that includes each coalition and their respective candidates.

# Examples:

This section gets into nitty gritty math, including potential outliers and clauses.

- **Example 1 (District Sizing):** Michigan currently has about 10.14 million residents. 10.14 million / 75,000 would result in 135 district seats. 135 does not evenly divide by 4. However, 120 / 4 = 30 districts with 4 seats. The remaining 15 seats requires 3 districts to have 5 seats.
- **Example 2***:* Party A, Party B, and Candidate X form a coalition. The coalition as a whole wins 50% of 10 million votes, so they are guaranteed 50% of the seats. A breakdown of their 5 million votes shows that Candidate X got 20% (1 million votes), the Party A got 10% (500,000 votes), and the remaining 70% (3.5 million votes) went to Party B. If any of the parties win more seats than are capable of filling (due to lack of candidates), the next most popular candidate inside the coalition shall fill that seat. So Party A wins 20 seats but only has 15 candidates, the remaining 5 seats will be filled by either candidates from Party B or Candidate X (whoever got the next-most votes).
- **Example 3 (Seat Allocation):** A district has 5 seats available. Party A wins 60% of the vote, earning them 3 seats (5 * 0.60). Party B wins 24% of the vote, earning them 1 seat (5 * 0.24). Party C wins 16% of the vote, earning them 1 seat (5 * 0.16).
- **Example 4:** After all district seats are allocated, there may be discrepancies between a party's statewide vote percentage and its share of district seats. For instance, if Party A only receives 6% of the vote in every district but fail to win any district seats, they are owed a number of Compensatory Seats which ensures they represent 6% of the House of Representatives. We start by determining what the total House size should be:
    - We need to determine the "Pivot Party." This is the party that is the most over-represented.
    - Let's assume Party B is the Pivot Party because they won 60 district seats with 40% of the votes. 60 / 0.40 = 150. If there were 135 total district seats, that means we'll need 15 Compensatory seats.
    - Party A needs enough seats to have 6% representation. 150 * 0.06 = 9 seats.
- **Example 5:** There are outlier circumstances that may require a significant jump in Compensatory seats. To prevent wildly unpredictable election seasons that would technically require jumping from 135 to over 200 seats, the 130% limit will cap the number of total seats to 175 (135 * 1.3 = 175.5, since 176 would be over 130%, this number is always rounded down).
    - Party A wins 2 district seats but only 1% of the statewide vote. 2 / 0.01 = 200 total seats. If there are 135 district seats, we limit it to 175.
    - Party B won 30% of the vote but only 35 seats. For absolute proportionality, they'd need 60 seats (200 * 0.30). However, since we're limited to 175 total seats, 175 * 0.30 = 52.5 = 53 total party seats. Party B receives very-near 30% representation and the size of the House stays relatively predictable and manageable.