

Equal Voices Act Summary

The Equal Voices Act directs that after the next Census, the size of the House be equal to the total US population divided by the population of the smallest state and rounded to the nearest whole odd number. The bill includes guardrails to prevent excessive fluctuations in House size, after the initial expansion.

This bill will increase the responsiveness of Members of Congress to their constituents, bring the relative power of states more in line with their populations, and rebalance our Electoral College to be more reflective of the popular vote.

Equal Voices Act Section by Section

Section 1: Short Title; Findings

- Short title shall be the “Equal Voices Act.”
- Congressional Findings related to representation and population.

Section 2: Establishment of Number of Members of House of Representatives

- Amends “An Act to provide for the fifteenth and subsequent decennial census and to provide for apportionment of Representatives in Congress” from 1929 to establish that the size of the House shall be the total population of the US divided by the population of the least populous state.
- Makes conforming amendments to US Code.
- This section will go into effect for the next reapportionment following enactment of the bill.

Section 3: Commission to Recommend Number of Members of House of Representatives in Event of Significant Population Change

- Establishes that in the event that the formula laid out in Section 2 calls for a change in the size of the House that is 15% greater or less than the size of the House at the time, a Commission shall be formed to identify the optimal size of the House and apportionment of seats.
 - The Commission will consist of 15 members, chosen by the Speaker of the House (5 members), the Minority Leader of the House (5 members), the Majority Leader of the Senate (2 members), the Minority Leader of the Senate (2 members), and a Chair chosen by the 14 appointed members.
 - The members must be qualified based on their expertise in politics and government, and their ability to work in a nonpartisan manner.
 - Appointments must be made within 30 days of the transmission of Census data to Congress.
 - The Commission shall analyze the population shifts and the implementation of Section 2 and recommend the optimal size of the House that reduces disparities in the size of Congressional districts and does not disenfranchise the representation of historically underrepresented populations. The Commission will issue a report with its recommendations within 6 months of the publication of the Census.
 - Lays out the administrative authorities for the commission related to compensation, staff, experts and consultants, hearings, subpoena power, and access to legislative branch services.

- This section will go into effect for the second reapportionment following enactment of the bill, so that the size of the House can grow more than 15% in the first reapportionment to better reflect the growth of the US population since the size of the House was capped in 1911.

Section 4: Authorization of Appropriations

- Authorizes such sums as necessary to provide for additional space, facilities, personnel, and other resources that may be required for a change in the size of the House.