Ohio voters overwhelmingly gave approval in May to a legislatively referred constitutional amendment that encourages a bipartisan approach to how congressional maps are drawn. Under SJR 5, which takes effect with the next round of redistricting, the state General Assembly will get the first chance at drawing new U.S. House district lines. Any plan must receive a three-fifths “yes” vote in both the Ohio House and Senate, including support from at least half of the members of each of the state’s two largest political parties. The plan also would require gubernatorial approval.

If the General Assembly does not approve a plan, congressional redistricting is turned over to a commission: the governor, secretary of state, state auditor and four legislative representatives from both parties. Any commission-drawn map will require “yes” votes from at least two Republican and two Democratic members. If the commission cannot reach an agreement, the General Assembly regains control of the process. At this stage, a new map can be approved with a simple majority vote, but it would then to have comply with several “anti-gerrymandering requirements” and expire after only two general elections.

Voters in a second Midwestern state, Michigan, may vote in November on a proposal to create a 13-member Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission.