It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

SECTION 1. Establishment of commission. - (a) There is hereby created a special commission on reapportionment, which shall consist of eighteen (18) members: four (4) of whom shall be from the house of representatives, to be appointed by the speaker; two (2) of whom shall be from the house of representatives, to be appointed by the minority leader of the house of representatives; four (4) of whom shall be from the senate, to be appointed by the president of the senate; two (2) of whom shall be appointed by the minority leader of the senate; three (3) of whom shall be members of the general public to be appointed by the speaker; and three (3) of whom shall be members of the general public to be appointed by the president of the senate.

(b) It shall be the purpose and responsibility of the commission to draft and to report to the general assembly an act to reapportion the districts of the general assembly and the state's United States congressional districts and to perform the necessary functions incident to drafting such an act including, but not limited to, the division of the state into seventy-five (75) state representative districts, thirty-eight (38) state senatorial districts and two (2) United States congressional districts as near equal as possible, subject to the final 2020 census data provided by the United States Census Bureau.

(c) Forthwith upon the passage of this act, the members of the commission shall meet and organize, and shall select from among themselves a chairman. Vacancies in said commission shall be filled in like manner as the original appointment.

(d) The membership of said commission shall receive no compensation for their services.
The commission may engage such clerical, technical and other assistance as it may deem necessary and spend such other funds as may be necessary to accomplish its purposes.

(e) All departments and agencies of the state shall furnish such advice and information, documentary and otherwise, to said commission and its agents as is deemed necessary or desirable by the commission to facilitate the purposes of this act.

(f) The joint committee on legislative services is hereby authorized and directed to provide suitable quarters for said commission, and provide technical and other assistance to the commission as it may deem necessary to facilitate the purposes of this act.

(g) The commission is hereby authorized to accept from local, state and federal government agencies, grants in money, services or other types of assistance in carrying out the purposes of said commission.

SECTION 2. Reapportionment standards. - (a) All districts shall be single member districts.

(b) Congressional and state legislative districts shall comply with all requirements of the United States Constitution. All state legislative districts shall comply with all requirements of the United States Constitution and of the Rhode Island Constitution, and recognize pertinent or applicable federal legislation and court precedent, including but not limited to, the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

(c) Congressional and state legislative districts shall be as nearly equal in population as possible, and:

(1) In no case shall congressional districts vary in population by more than one percent (1%) from each other as determined by the population reported in the federal census in 2020; and

(2) In no case shall a single state senate district have a population which varies by more than five percent (5%) from the average population of all senate districts as determined by the population reported in the federal census in 2020, and in no case shall a single state representative district have a population which varies by more than five percent (5%) from the average population of all representative districts as determined by the population reported in the federal census in 2020.

(d) Congressional and state legislative districts shall be as compact in territory as possible, and, to the extent practicable, shall reflect natural, historical, geographical, municipal and other political lines and communities of interest, as well as the right of all Rhode Islanders to fair representation and equal access to the political process.

(e) To the extent practicable, congressional and state legislative districts shall be composed of contiguous territory.
(f) To the extent practicable, the commission should endeavor to avoid the division of state representative districts in the formation of state senate districts and the division of state senate districts in the formation of United States congressional districts in any manner which would result in the creation of voting districts composed of fewer than one hundred (100) potential voters.

SECTION 3. Public access. - (a) The commission shall set its own rules of procedure.
(b) The commission shall be subject to the provisions of chapter 42-46 ("open meetings") and chapter 38-2 ("access to public records") of the general laws.
(c) The commission shall conduct public hearings prior to the issuance of its findings and recommendations.
(d) Members of the public shall have access to the technical software used for district mapping in a location to be determined, in the state house, on a sign up basis, during reasonable business hours as determined by the commission.
(e)(i) The commission shall have the discretion to determine if there exists a public health or other emergency or circumstance that could pose a risk to the health and safety of the public and members and staff of the commission, that would affect public access to the state house to utilize the technical software used for district mapping.
(ii) Due to the dangers to public health and safety posed by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and to provide the public with alternative means of accessing information, the commission, with public notice on the general assembly website, shall provide the public with access to the web-based software program used for district mapping.

SECTION 4. Reporting date. - The commission shall report its findings and recommendations to the general assembly on or before January 15, 2022.

SECTION 5. Severability. - The provisions of this act are severable, and if any provisions hereof shall be held invalid for any reason, such invalidity shall not affect the validity of any other provisions herein. This act shall be construed in all respects so as to meet any constitutional requirements in carrying out the purposes and provisions of this act, and all steps shall be taken which are necessary to meet constitutional requirements.
SECTION 6. This act shall take effect upon passage.
This act would create an eighteen (18) member special commission on reapportionment whose purpose is to draft and to report to the general assembly an act to reapportion the districts of the general assembly and the state's United States Congressional districts.

This act would take effect upon passage.