



To the Redistricting commission,

This petition asks that “The Commission” keep Santa Clarita Valley whole as one community and combines us with a “Like” community, who currently share resources and commonalities.

Redistricting FAQ

Q. What is the Santa Clarita Valley?

A. The Santa Clarita Valley is bordered by Ventura County to the west, Aqua Dulce to the east, Castaic to the north, and the San Fernando Valley to the south. We cite the following reasons for keeping us together:

Q. Why should I care about redistricting?

A. One of the greatest powers that the people have is the right to elect their own representatives to conduct the business of their government. How the district boundaries are configured can make the difference between empowering and maximizing the voters’ voices or minimizing and muting those voices. The independent Citizens Redistricting Commission is committed to drawing fair districts that reflect the best interests of the people not the incumbent political parties.

Q. What is the Citizens Redistricting Commission?

A. Every 10 years, after the federal census, California must redraw the boundaries of its Congressional, State Senate, State Assembly, and State Board of Equalization districts, to reflect the new population data. Now those lines will be drawn by the Commission. California voters authorized the creation of the Commission when they passed the Voters First Act, which appeared as Proposition 11 on the November 2008 general election ballot. Under the Act, the Commission is charged with drawing the boundaries of California’s Congressional, Senate, Assembly and Board of Equalization electoral districts.

Q. How many Commission members are there?

A. The commission has 14 members from varied ethnic backgrounds and geographic locations in the state and includes five Democrats, five Republicans, and four Decline to State.

Q. Why should Californians have confidence that 14 Commissioners who are unelected and therefore unaccountable to the voters be able to produce district boundaries that are in the voters’ best interests?

A. It was the voters themselves that took the job of redistricting out of the elected legislators hands because of their frustration with a process which served to protect incumbents. The voters supported a new process which would choose 14 citizens with a myriad of backgrounds, skills and from varied geographic locations to draw district boundaries based on criteria designed to preserve communities of interest.



Q. What criteria will the Commission consider in deciding the districts?

A. The criteria for the Commission to follow is laid out in the Act:
Districts must be of equal population to comply with the US Constitution.
Districts must comply with the Voting Rights Act to ensure that minorities have an equal opportunity to elect representatives of their choice.

Districts must be contiguous so that all parts of the district are connected to each other.
Districts must respect the boundaries of cities, counties, neighborhoods and communities of Interest, and minimize their division, to the extent possible.

Districts should be geographically compact, that is, have a fairly regular shape.
Where practicable each Senate District should be comprised of two complete and adjacent Assembly Districts and Board of Equalization districts shall be composed of 10 complete and adjacent State Senate Districts.

Districts shall not be drawn to favor or discriminate against an incumbent, candidate, or political party.

Q. What is the Voting Rights Act and why is it important?

A. Before the Voting Rights Act was passed, the practice of many states was to require qualified African Americans to pass literacy tests in order to register to vote. Other states only allowed a person to register to vote if his or her grandfather was allowed to vote. The Voting Rights Act was passed in 1965 to outlaw these practices.

In the 1970s, Congress heard extensive testimony about how state and local governments drew district lines and manipulated elections rules to prevent newly-registered African American voters from being able to elect candidates. Today, the Voting Rights Act protects all racial and language minorities, including African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, Native Americans and Pacific Islanders.

The Commission will consider public input and legal and expert advice to meet the Voting Rights Act requirements.

For a more detailed description of how the Voting Rights Act works, visit the U.S. Department of Justice at: <http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/vot/redistricting.php>.

Q. What is a community of interest?

A. The California Constitution defines a community of interest as:
A community of interest is a contiguous population which shares common social and economic interests that should be included within a single district for purposes of its effective and fair representation. Examples of such shared interests are those common to an urban area, a rural area, an industrial area, or an agricultural area, and those common to areas in which the people share similar living standards, use the same transportation facilities, have similar work opportunities, or have access to the same media of communication relevant to the election process. Communities of interest shall not include relationships with political parties, Incumbents, or political candidates.



-Section 2(d)(4) of Article XXI of the California Constitution

Q. Does the Act require that districts be more competitive, rather than dominated by one political party?

A: No. Historically, districts were drawn to favor incumbents and this naturally led to dominance by one political party. Under the Act, districts must be drawn to maximize voters' opportunity to elect representatives of their own choosing, and this may lead to more competitive races

Q. Can't this whole process be done by a computer program?

A: The Commission is relying on the active participation of citizens across California to weigh in on how the districts should be drawn, since information about "communities of interest" is not collected in the Census. This is an open conversation that will assist the Commission in evaluating citizen input and exercising responsible judgment about what districts should look like – a computer could never do that.

Q: What is the difference between the Commission's work and what was done in the past?

A: Historically, legislators drew the district boundaries in closed meetings, often favoring incumbents or their own party. This Commission is independent and committed to including the voices of all Californians in the process. In addition to holding public hearings throughout the State, the Commission is soliciting citizen participation through its website. So log onto <http://wedrawthelines.ca.gov/> to learn more. You can also email the commission at votersfirstact@crc.ca.gov

Q. What if the Commission cannot agree on the final redistricting maps?

A. Each of the 14 Commissioners is committed to delivering fair district boundaries. To accomplish that goal the Commission is undertaking a deliberative and open process engaging citizens from every corner of the state. Through that process, and working with all the critical data available, the Commission will have a clear understanding to enable them to draw the lines and agree to final maps.

In the unlikely scenario that the Commission does not come to agreement on final district boundaries the matter goes directly to the California Supreme Court which will appoint three masters to draw the lines.

Q. What happens if there is a legal challenge to the district maps adopted by the Commission?

A. The Act provides that any legal challenge is sent straight to the California Supreme Court for review. This provision was written to expedite any legal challenge straight to the state's highest court so a decision could be made on the maps in time for the June 2012 elections.

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Note: this email was sent as part of a petition started on Change.org, viewable at www.change.org/petitions/keep-santa-clarita-valley-whole-2. To respond, email responses@change.org and include a link to this petition.

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