



## **Citizens Redistricting Commission's Narrative** **On Preliminary District Maps Released June 10, 2011**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The California Citizens Redistricting Commission was created by the Voters First Act approved by the voters for the Commission to draw Congressional, Assembly, State Senate districts. The 14-member independent Commission consists of individuals from diverse ethnic, geographic, and economic backgrounds. The Commission has released its first round of preliminary district maps. It is important to note that the Commission drew the draft maps with no reference to the current districts.

The Commission's entire process in drawing the districts is an open and transparent one. The public has been able to watch the Commission deliberate, discuss and ultimately draw the lines. All the while they have been able to give the Commissioners their thoughts in hearings and in writing. The Commission has carefully considered the varied interests throughout the state and has successfully balanced those interests in crafting fair representative preliminary districts. This document is to provide a detailed narrative of the process which the Commission followed in drawing the district boundaries.

### **VOTERS FIRST ACT CRITERIA FOR DRAWING DISTRICTS**

The California Constitution lists and ranks the criteria drawing district boundaries as follows

- (1) Districts shall comply with the United States Constitution. Congressional districts shall achieve population equality as nearly as practicable, and Senatorial, Assembly, and State Board of Equalization districts shall have reasonably equal population with other districts for the same office.
- (2) Districts shall comply with the Federal Voting Rights Act (42 U.S.C. Sec. 1971 and following).
- (3) Districts shall be geographically contiguous.
- (4) The geographic integrity of any city, county, local neighborhood, or local community of interest shall be respected in a manner that minimizes their division to the extent possible without violating the requirements of any of the preceding subdivisions. 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 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.

- (5) To the extent practicable and where this does not conflict with the criteria above, districts shall be drawn to encourage geographical compactness such that nearby areas of population are not bypassed for more distant populations.
- (6) To the extent practicable, and where this does not conflict with the criteria above, each Senate district shall be comprised of two whole, complete, and adjacent Assembly districts, and each Board of Equalization district shall be comprised of 10 whole, complete, and adjacent Senate districts.
- (7) The place of residence of any incumbent or political candidate shall not be considered in the creation of a map. Districts shall not be drawn for the purpose of favoring or discriminating against an incumbent, political candidate, or political party.

Cal. Const., art. XXI, 2(d)

## **VOTING RIGHTS ACT**

As described above, one of the constitutional criteria is compliance with the federal Voting Rights Act. The Commission has taken preliminary steps to ensure the draft maps comply with the federal Voting Rights Act, and will continue to work with counsel to ensure subsequent versions of the maps comply with the federal Voting Rights Act, including section 2 and section 5 of the Act.

## **PUBLIC INPUT**

The Commission is committed to drawing the district lines in partnership with the people of California. The Commission has held an unprecedented 23 public input hearings throughout the state hearing testimony from 1,533 individuals and received comment from thousands of others in writing. The Commission received invaluable insight into the composition and character of communities of interest using this information in drawing the preliminary district maps.

Now with the release of the first draft maps, the Commission is asking for public testimony specific to the proposed lines for the 53 Congressional, 80 State Assembly, 40 State Senate and 4 Board of Equalization districts.

## **POPULATION DEVIATION**

The Commission decided that in drawing the draft maps there would be a population deviation of no more than 5% from the optimum population desired for the district. In preparing the preliminary districts the actual population deviations are much less than that. Note that as population deviation is minimized, the number of city, county and community splits will increase. For example, where the population deviance in Congressional districts must be +/- one person, the number of community splits will be higher. Legislative districts offer the Commission more flexibility to keep communities whole.

## **RESPECT FOR GEOGRAPHIC BOUNDARIES**

To ensure fair representation and reasonable access to elected representatives the Commission considered boundaries such as mountains, rivers, deserts, bridges and other transportation corridors in drawing the lines.