

California Citizens Redistricting Commission
"Fair Representation—Democracy At Work!"



Citizens Redistricting Commission's Narrative
On Preliminary Final District Maps July 29, 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 and Board of Equalization districts. The 14-member independent Commission consists of individuals from diverse ethnic, geographic, and economic backgrounds. The Commission has released its preliminary final district maps. It is important to note that the Commission drew the maps with no reference to the current districts.

The Commission will vote to ratify the final maps on August 15th.

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 both verbally 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 and representative districts. This document is to provide a 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 it 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 it 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 worked with counsel to ensure the 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 Sections 2 and 5 of the Act.

PUBLIC INPUT

The Commission was committed to drawing the district lines in partnership with the people of California. The Commission held an unprecedented 34 public input hearings throughout the state receiving testimony from 2,731 speakers and written comment from nearly 20,000 individuals and organizations. The Commission has received invaluable insight into the composition and character of communities of interest and has used this information in drawing the preliminary final district maps.

POPULATION DEVIATION

In the case of drawing the preliminary final maps for the state Assembly, State Senate, and Board of Equalization, the Commission directed its technical line drawers to achieve reasonably equal population with other districts for the same office by maintaining a total population deviation of no more than 2%, except where deviation is required to comply with the federal Voting Rights Act or allowable by law. Congressional districts must be +/- one person.

- 53 Congressional districts (with a target population of 702,905)
- 40 State Senate districts (with a target population of 931,349)
- 80 State Assembly districts (with a target population of 465,674)
- 4 State Board of Equalization districts (with a target population of 9,313,489)

RESPECT FOR GEOGRAPHIC BOUNDARIES

To ensure fair representation and reasonable access to elected representatives, the Commission recognized that boundaries such as mountains, rivers, deserts, bridges and other transportation corridors often define communities.

STATE SENATE DISTRICTS

The Commission's numbering of Senate districts was designed to constructively address what is known as the deferral issue. That is when people scheduled to vote in 2012 (those living in existing odd numbered districts) are assigned to a new district that does not vote until 2014 (even numbered districts).

The approach used took into account the extent to which the newly drawn districts (developed independently from the existing districts) overlapped with those existing districts. The purpose of the analysis was to determine what proportion of the new district is made up of the population who previously resided in an odd or even numbered district. That ratio was then used to determine which of the 20 new districts had the highest percentage of residents who had resided in an existing district that had an odd number. Those 20 districts were then assigned an odd number.

Given that the new districts were drawn, by Constitutional mandate, independently of the existing Senate Districts, there will be some citizens whose vote for Senate will be deferred until 2014. This approach was designed to hold that number to the fewest people possible. Deferral occurs every ten years with redistricting.