



## 2020 Citizens Redistricting Commission FAQs

### 1. Why should I care about redistricting?

One of the greatest powers that the people of California 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 California Citizens Redistricting Commission is committed to drawing fair districts that reflect the best interests of the people, not the incumbent political parties.

Speaking up about your community is critical to ensuring district lines are drawn to keep your community whole and grouped with nearby communities with similar interests. This ensures that your voice is heard by your elected leaders when making such decisions as the quality and funding of your child's education or determining your tax rates.

Your input is valuable in shaping the new political boundaries.

### 2. How do I get involved?

There are several ways that you can provide the Commission with testimony.

#### During a Public Meeting:

In the spring and summer of 2021, the Commission will hold hearings where you can provide testimony by phone during the meeting or electronically prior to the meeting. You can find out more about upcoming community input meetings by visiting the 'meetings' section of our website.

#### Electronically:

You can also provide testimony to the Commission via the website by emailing: [info@crc.ca.gov](mailto:info@crc.ca.gov) or draw your map using the "Draw My Community" tool and submitting it to the Commission, visit: [wedrawthelines.ca.gov/drawmycommunity](http://wedrawthelines.ca.gov/drawmycommunity).

#### In Writing:

##### **You can mail your paper testimony to:**

California Citizens Redistricting Commission  
721 Capitol Mall, Suite 260  
Sacramento, CA 95814

#### Through a community based organization (CBO):

There are many CBOs that are working with communities and presenting testimony to the Commission. Please visit this site to review a listing of CBOs: [www.RedistrictingCA.org](http://www.RedistrictingCA.org).

### 3. How do I describe my community?

The Commission needs to know three key things from you about your community:

- The economic and/or social interests that bind your community together.
- Why your community should be kept together for fair and effective representation.
- Where your community is located.

Use the "Draw My Community" tool to draw a map. Visit:

[wedrawthelines.ca.gov/drawmycommunity](http://wedrawthelines.ca.gov/drawmycommunity).



#### **4. What is a community of interest?**

The California Constitution defines a community of interest as 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*

#### **5. What is the Commission?**

Every 10 years, after the federal government publishes updated census information, California must redraw the boundaries of its Congressional, State Senate, State Assembly, and State Board of Equalization districts, so that the districts correctly reflect the state's population. The 2020 Commission will be selected from a group of California citizens and will be charged with drawing all district lines.

#### **6. Why do we have a Commission?**

California voters authorized the creation of the Commission when they passed the VOTERS FIRST Act (Act) in 2008. It authorized the Commission to draw the new district lines for the State Assembly, State Senate, and State Board of Equalization. In 2010, the Voters FIRST Act for Congress added the responsibility of drawing the Congressional districts to the Commission.

#### **7. What are the laws regulating the Commission?**

- [California Code of Regulations](#)
- [Recent Final Changes to the Regulations for Citizens Redistricting Commission \(PDF\)](#)
- [Recent Changes to the Regulations for Citizens Redistricting Commission \(Strikeout Version\) \(PDF\)](#)

#### **8. What is the Voting Rights Act and why is it important?**

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>.

#### **9. What criteria is used when drawing maps?**

The criteria the Commission must follow when drawing district maps includes:

- 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.

In addition, the place of residence of any incumbent or political candidate may not be considered in the creation of a map, and districts may not be drawn for the purpose of favoring or discriminating against an incumbent, political candidate, or political party.

#### **10. How will new district boundaries be approved?**

The Commission is required to define the geographic boundaries for the Congressional Districts, State Senate districts, State Assembly districts, and State Board of Equalization districts so that they contain reasonably equal populations. The Commission will determine the precise process in its outreach plan. The 2010 Commission engaged in meetings throughout the State to identify communities of interest, holding meetings during the evenings and on weekends to make them more accessible to Californians.

Once the Commission has agreed on the geographic boundaries of the districts, the districts will be displayed on four maps: one map displaying the revised Congressional districts, a second map displaying the revised State Senate districts, a third map displaying the revised State Assembly districts, and a fourth map displaying the revised State Board of Equalization districts. The Commission will then vote to approve the four maps.

To be approved, each map must receive the affirmative vote of at least three Commissioners who are Democrats, three Commissioners who are Republicans and three Commissioners from neither of those parties. Once the Commission has approved the final maps, the maps are certified to the Secretary of State with a report explaining the basis on which the Commission made its decisions.

#### **11. Who can serve on the Commission?**

- The Commission will be comprised of 14 members – five members who are Democrats, five members who are Republicans and four members who are from neither of those parties.
- Registered voters are eligible to serve on the Commission if they have been continuously registered in California with the same political party, or with no political party, for the five years immediately prior to being appointed to the Commission; and they have voted in at least two of the last three statewide general elections.
- A voter may not serve on the Commission if the voter or a member of their immediate family has been appointed to, elected to, or been a candidate for a California congressional or state office; served as an officer, employee, or paid consultant of a California political party or of the campaign committee of a candidate for California congressional or elective state office; or has been a registered lobbyist.

#### **12. How were Commissioners selected?**

The initial and supplemental applications were forwarded to an Applicant Review Panel (panel) consisting of three independent auditors from the California State Auditor in mid-October 2019 (deadline extended). After the panel reviewed all the applications, the panel selected up to 120 of the “most qualified applicants,” who the panel then personally interviewed initially in Sacramento, California, and then switched to virtual interviews due to the COVID-19 restrictions. The 120 applicants were divided into three



sub-pools according to party affiliation. One sub-pool consisted of 40 applicants who were Democrats, a second sub-pool consisted of 40 applicants who were Republicans, and a third sub-pool consisted of 40 applicants who were from neither of those parties

On May 15, 2020, the panel presented the names of the applicants who remained in the three sub-pools to the California State Legislature, where leadership has the option of removing up to 24 names from the list—eight from each sub-pool. The names of the applicants not removed from the sub-pools were then submitted to the State Auditor on June 26, 2020.

On July 2, 2020, the State Auditor randomly drew from the names remaining in the three sub-pools, three applicants who were Democrats, three applicants who were Republicans, and two applicants who were from neither of those parties. These eight applicants became the first eight members of the Commission.

The first eight members of the Commission then selected the final six members of the Commission by selecting two commissioners from each of the three sub-pools that the State Auditor used when drawing the names of the first eight commissioners. The last six commissioners were appointed on August 7, 2020.

### **13. How much time do commissioners spend performing their duties?**

While there is no minimum or maximum amount of time that members must spend performing Commission-related work, typically such work consumes 10 to 40 hours a week, with less time committed initially and more time committed as the deadline to finalize maps approaches. Much of the work will likely not be performed during a typical workday (i.e., 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.). A significant amount of work will likely be performed on the weekends and in the evenings when more people can participate in public meetings.

The Commission operates as its own entity and hires staff to assist in its duties. Further, the Commission itself sets its own schedule—it determines where to meet to conduct business; how often it will meet; when and where to hold public meetings to solicit public input; how much staff to hire and for what purposes; and other determinations, as necessary.

### **14. How much time will Commissioners spend at public hearings?**

The Commission is subject to the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act, which requires that any meeting consisting of nine or more members of the Commission (and five of the first eight members of the Commission prior to the entire Commission being formed) to decide issues or even to receive information must be conducted in public. With that in mind, the number of public hearings the Commission will hold is entirely at the discretion of the Commission. Similarly, whether the hearings will be attended by all Commission members, or just a subset of members, will be up to the Commission to decide.

