



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
TUESDAY, MARCH 2, 2021**

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PRESS RELEASE

2020 California Citizens Redistricting Commission Launches Communities of Interest Tool

SACRAMENTO, CA—Today, the 2020 California Citizens Redistricting Commission (Commission) and the California Statewide Database announced the launch of the Communities of Interest (COI) input tool, designed to make it easier for Californians to participate in the redistricting process.

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 state's population is evenly allocated among the new districts. When the Commission creates new districts, it must follow certain guidelines, one of which is to learn about communities across California and to keep communities together in the new districts when possible.

Through the COI tool, Californians can tell the Commission about their community, draw their community on a map, and submit it directly to the Commission as public input.

"We are ecstatic to announce the launch of the COI tool, which will make participating in the redistricting process that much easier," stated Chair Pedro Toledo. "The best part is that Californians do not have to wait to attend a public input meeting to submit testimony. They can do it from the comfort of their own homes right now by visiting: DrawMyCACommunity.org. For those without internet access, the Commission is preparing a paper-based form to gather similar input."

"The COI tool is an innovative engagement tool for the 2020 California Citizens Redistricting Commission to utilize in their outreach efforts statewide. The tool will be made available in multiple languages to capture a larger audience and an increased response from the California constituency," said Karin Mac Donald, Director of the Statewide Database.

Field Code Changed

In addition to the map drawing feature, the COI tool will capture anecdotal information that will be used to help shape the boundaries of a community. Visitors to the site will be asked to describe their community by answering the following questions:

1. Give your community a name.
2. Tell us about your community. What are your shared interests? What brings you together? What is important to your community?
3. Are there nearby areas you want to be in a district with? Nearby areas you don't want to be in a district with? Why or why not?
4. Is there anything else you can tell us about your community?

Participants may submit anonymous submissions. The tool is currently available in English and Spanish. The interface and additional materials such as tutorials and the user guide will be made available in the following additional languages: simplified Chinese, traditional Chinese, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Korean, Armenian, Farsi, Arabic, Russian, Japanese, Punjabi, and Khmer. The Commission has requested cost estimates for additional languages and will consider expanding the list once it receives them.

In November 2008, California voters passed the Voters FIRST Act, authorizing the creation of the Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission to draw new district lines, taking the job out of the hands of the California Legislature and transferring it to the citizens. In 2010, the VOTERS FIRST Act for Congress added the responsibility of drawing Congressional districts to the Commission. The 2020 California Citizens Redistricting took over from the 2010 Commission last summer following a year-long application, review, and selection process.

For more information, please visit WeDrawTheLinesCA.org.

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