

2020 California Citizens Redistricting Commission Clears One Legal Challenge Hurdle for Final Maps

SACRAMENTO, CA—Today, the 2020 California Citizens Redistricting Commission (Commission) announced the absence of a lawsuit challenging the new Congressional, Senate, Assembly, and Board of Equalization maps. Article 21, section 3(b)(2) of the California Constitution states that any registered voter in this state may file a petition for a writ of mandate or writ of prohibition, within 45 days after the commission has certified a final map to the Secretary of State (SOS). Because maps were certified to the SOS on December 27, 2021, the deadline to file a lawsuit was February 10, 2022, at midnight.

“We're glad to cross this first legal threshold to effectuate the people’s maps,” stated Commission Chair Russell Yee. “The absence of a state lawsuit challenging these maps is a testament to the effectiveness of California's open, publicly accessible redistricting process and the design of its independent redistricting commission. We worked hard to apply the constitutional redistricting criteria and consider testimony from throughout the state, especially from minority communities. While the maps do not please everyone, we believe they are fair and equitable. We would have confidently defended these maps in court but are thankful we now won't need to.”

The possibility of other legal challenges remains. Article 21, section 2(i) of the state Constitution states that the map enactment date (12/27/2021) triggers the 90-day period for a referendum petition to be filed. In the absence of a sufficient and timely referendum petition being filed, the maps would otherwise become “effective” 90 days after enactment/certification (3/27/22).

On Monday, the U.S. Supreme Court reinstated a congressional map in Alabama that a lower court ruled hurt Black voters. The state Constitution's legal challenge deadline does not apply to any challenge that might be filed in federal court alleging a violation of the U.S. Constitution or the federal Voting Rights Act.

Every 10 years, after the federal government publishes updated census information, California must redraw the boundaries of its electoral districts so that the state’s population is evenly allocated among the new districts.

In 2008, California voters passed the Voters First Act, authorizing the creation of the independent California Citizens Redistricting Commission to draw new

State Senate, State Assembly, and State Board of Equalization district lines. In 2010, the Voters First Act for Congress gave the Commission the responsibility of drawing new Congressional districts following every census.

For more information, please visit www.WeDrawTheLinesCA.org.

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