

What New Districts Mean?

It has been brought to our attention that there is much confusion over when the new maps go into effect. Here's our explanation:

Pursuant to Article 21, section 2(i) of the state Constitution, the final maps are deemed to have been “enacted” on the date of their certification to the Secretary of State (12/27/2021). The “enactment” date 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). **But the maps and the new district boundaries don’t actually become “operative” until the 2022 primary and general elections; the new boundaries are used for those elections and the new districts don’t actually “exist” until after the 2022 general election is completed.**

This distinction is important for two purposes:

One, the current boundaries still apply for purposes of determining who are the constituents of the various elected officials and offices; in other words, until the 2022 general election, constituents are still represented by the representative of their old/existing district, and not by the existing representative of the new district in which they might find themselves following the 2022 election.

Two, and perhaps more important, a special election to fill a vacancy in an existing district uses the “old” boundaries and takes place in the district as it existed when that candidate was last elected, despite the fact that this special election may take place after March 27, 2022 (when the new districts became “effective” but were not yet “operative”).