



California's New Redistricting Commission

*Our once-in-a-decade opportunity
to map California's future.*



Published January 2011 by
California Common Cause. To order more copies or
to inquire about updates, go to:
www.RedistrictingCA.org

Made possible with generous support from
The James Irvine Foundation.

Table of Contents

What's inside?

<i>What is redistricting?</i>	3
<i>Why is redistricting important to me?</i>	5
<i>Who draws the lines in California?</i>	7
<i>How can I participate in redistricting in CA?</i>	9
<i>How do I talk about my community?</i>	11
<i>What redistricting terms should I know?</i>	13
<i>RedistrictingCA Partners</i>	15



DID YOU KNOW?

**Reapportionment is
different from
redistricting.**



Reapportionment is the process that decides how many representatives each state gets in the United States House of Representatives. Because California's population is the largest of all states, California has 53 out of the 435 representatives in the House of Representatives.

Redistricting is the process of drawing the lines of the districts.

What is redistricting?

Redistricting is the process where district lines are redrawn within a state. This includes drawing districts for Congress, State Board of Equalization, State Senate, State Assembly, county boards of supervisors, city councils, and school boards.

Every ten years, the census count gives us a snapshot of how many people there are in the United States and where they live.

Once we know how many people live in California, we redistrict. That is, we draw new lines that put the same number of people into each electoral district.

Redistricting ensures every person has equal representation by drawing districts with an equal number of people – one person, one vote.



Each district must have the same number of residents

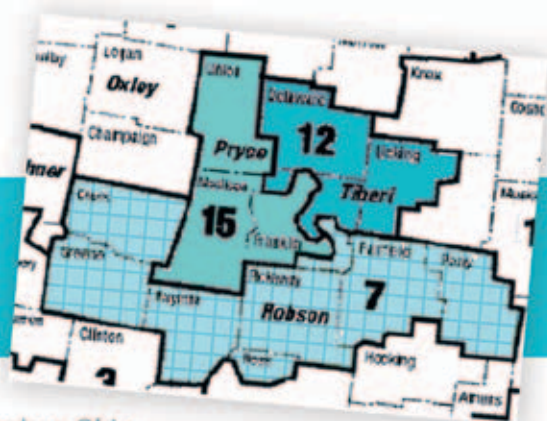
Why is redistricting important to me?

It is essential that elected officials listen to constituents – in fact, it's the cornerstone of our democracy. Fair, representative redistricting plans help ensure that elected officials will be responsive to the voters in their communities.

Public participation in map-drawing is critical to ensuring that communities have the strongest voice possible to express their preferences. When voters with similar interests are drawn into a district together, their voices multiply, giving them a greater opportunity to express their views, elect candidates of their choice and hold their leaders accountable.

Voters are empowered when districts are drawn to give communities a recognizable voice.

What can happen when you don't get involved?



Urban communities in Columbus, Ohio were split into three segments. Each population segment of the city was then placed in a district where they were outnumbered by suburban populations which had different political leanings and interests. These urban voters lost their political voice.

Speaking up about your community is important to ensure that the district lines that are drawn protect your political voice.

DID YOU KNOW?

How many districts there are?

In California, the Citizens Redistricting Commission will have to draw:

- 53 congressional districts
- 4 Board of Equalization districts
- 40 State Senate districts
- 80 State Assembly districts

At the local level, there are even more county, city, school, and special districts that will be re-drawn. In some cases, local elected officials draw the lines; in others, commissions are created to redistrict for the local jurisdiction.



Who draws the lines in California?

In 2008 and 2010, the voters passed Propositions 11 and 20. For the first time in California, a new 14-person commission called the Citizens Redistricting Commission will draw the district maps for Congress, State Board of Equalization, State Senate and Assembly.

The Citizens Redistricting Commission meets for the first time in January 2011. It will hold meetings around California to listen to residents describe their communities, neighborhoods, and what issues are important to them. Based on the public input, the commission will draw new district maps. The Commission has until August 15, 2011 to approve final district lines.

For more information about what the Citizens Redistricting Commission is doing, visit the official site:

www.wedrawthelines.ca.gov

You can also find updates at:
www.RedistrictingCA.org



DID YOU KNOW?

Congress passed the Voting Rights Act to protect racial minorities from discrimination.



Before the Voting Rights Act was passed, the practice of many Southern 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 if his or her grandfather was a voter. These practices were outlawed by the Voting Rights Act.

In the 1970s, Congress heard extensive testimony about how state and local governments drew district lines and manipulated election 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 California Constitution mandates that the Citizens Redistricting Commission draw lines that comply with the Voting Rights Act. To be chosen, the commissioners had to show that they had an appreciation for California's diverse demographics and geography, and taken as a whole, the commission had to represent California's diversity.

How can I participate in redistricting California?

1 Attend a public meeting. Talk about your community. (More on page 11).

2 Submit your views and suggestions online. Describe your community, neighborhood, city or county.
Tip: Visit www.wedrawthelines.ca.gov to find out how
Tip: Visit www.RedistrictingCA.org to find free mapping help.

3 Visit one of 6 redistricting assistance sites to use special software and receive assistance in mapping your community.
Tip: Visit www.RedistrictingCA.org to find out where there is an assistance site near you.

4 Connect with organizations that are proposing statewide maps of all the districts to make sure your community is represented.
Tip: Check out these organizations:
African American Redistricting Coalition
Asian Pacific American Legal Center
Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund

5 Monitor the redistricting meetings to make sure the process is open and accessible.
Tip: Visit www.cavotes.org to learn to be a trained observer.
Tip: Tweet to [#redistrictingCA](https://twitter.com/redistrictingCA) to share your observations.



DID YOU KNOW?

You can draw maps of your community.



It is very helpful to provide maps of your community. With a map and a marker, you can outline what you consider to be your community boundaries.

Or you can go high tech and use GoogleMaps or other software to map your community.

Check out www.RedistrictingCA.org for a list of free assistance sites, free mapping software and other resources.

How do I talk about my community?

Imagine you are describing your community to a visitor from out of town.

You might talk about the kind of people who live in your community, important issues, community centers, and your community's history.

You should also describe where your community is – use streets or GPS points or landmarks.

Here is a quick checklist of things to consider including in your presentation about your community:

1

Important places, such as parks, cultural centers, religious or government buildings, a commercial area, schools or clubs.



2

Census and demographic data about the residents of your community.

3

Issues that bring residents together such as where to locate a new road or transit line, or traditions such as a Martin Luther King, Jr. Day march.



4

Important stakeholders who represent different parts of the community.

5

Be clear about the boundaries of your community. You can use street intersections or geographic markers.



DID YOU KNOW?

**You can get
redistricting advice by
emailing:**

redistrictingCA@gmail.com
and we'll try to answer it ASAP.

You can also tweet to
#redistrictingCA. Your tweets will be
part of a live conversation on the
www.RedistrictingCA.org
website!

What redistricting terms should I know?

1

Draw districts with equal population. Here's the ideal number of people that should be in each district:

- Congress: 702,905 people
- Senate: 931,349
- Assembly: 465,674
- Board of Equalization: 9,313,489

2

Comply with the federal Voting Rights Act. This means that districts should be drawn to ensure minority voters have an equal opportunity to elect candidates of their choice.

Tip: For a really great description of how the Voting Rights Act works, check out: maldef.org/assets/pdf/Redistricting.pdf

3

Draw districts that are contiguous, that is, connected at all points.

4

Keep counties, cities, communities (specifically "communities of interest") and neighborhoods intact, where possible.

Tip: Learn more about communities of interest at: www.RedistrictingCA.org/

5

Draw districts to be compact, where practicable. This rule should only be applied after the other earlier criteria have been satisfied.

6

Draw districts to nest within each other, where practicable. That means:

- 1 Senate district contains 2 Assembly districts
 - 1 Board of Equalization district contains 10 Senate districts.
- This rule should only be applied after the other criteria have been satisfied.

RedistrictingCA Partners



African American Redistricting Collaborative	aarc-ca.tumblr.com
Asian Pacific American Legal Center, a member of Asian American Center for Advancing Justice	www.apalc.org www.capafr.org
California Common Cause	www.commoncause.org/ca
Center for Governmental Studies	www.cgs.org
California Forward	www.cafwd.org
California National Association for the Advancement of Colored People	www.ca-naacp.org
Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy	www.coastalalliance.com

RedistrictingCA Partners



League of Women Voters of California

www.cavotes.org

Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund

www.maldef.org

National Association of Latino Elected & Appointed Officials Educational Fund

www.naleo.org

Rose Institute of State and Local Government at Claremont McKenna College

www.RoseReport.org

Statewide Database at Berkeley Law

www.swdb.berkeley.edu

The Greenlining Institute

www.greenlining.org

Notes

Notes

