

Redistricting Reform: Quick Facts

Redistricting refers to the process by which new congressional and legislative boundaries are drawn. District lines are redrawn every 10 years following the U.S. Census. The federal government requires that districts have nearly equal populations, be competitive, and not discriminate based on race or ethnicity.

Bipartisan commissions currently draw the maps for Missouri's 163 House districts (average population of 37,000) and 34 Senate districts (average population of 174,000). The state of Missouri requires that boundaries be contiguous (physically adjacent), compact (constituents live close to one another), and account for county boundaries.

For decades, the League of Women Voters of Missouri has fought for fair maps. In 1991, Sydell Shayer said the purpose of apportionment (redistricting) "is to guarantee fair and equal access to the political process for all citizens. The probability of political participation increases if citizens believe that they have equal opportunity to influence government." Ten years later, Linda McDaniel said, "Districts should be apportioned substantially on population with compact and contiguous districts, recognizing that there are diverse interests within them and that broad communities of interests should be kept intact. Minority representation should be protected."

Gerrymandering is the practice of drawing electoral district lines to favor one party, individual, or constituency over another. The two most common forms are partisan and racial gerrymandering.

Amendment 1 Includes Redistricting Reform to Make Maps More Fair

Amendment 1 on November's ballot will increase fairness, accountability, integrity and transparency in Missouri politics. The CLEAN Missouri Initiative would ban most lobbyist gifts to legislators, lower campaign contribution limits for legislative races, require that legislative records be open to the public, and require a legislator to wait two years before becoming a lobbyist.

Most importantly for the League of Women Voters, **Amendment 1 would ensure that neither party has an unfair advantage when state legislative maps are drawn after each census and protect minority communities from vote dilution.** An independent demographer would draw district maps that would then be reviewed by a citizen commission that must hold public hearings. Currently, politicians draw the maps to protect incumbents and their parties.

Amendment 1 sets the following criteria, in order of priority, for redistricting state legislative seats:

- ★ make districts as equal in population as practicable;
- ★ comply with requirements of U.S. Constitution and applicable federal laws, such as the Voting Rights Act of 1965;
- ★ promote partisan fairness, which would be defined as parties being able to translate their popular support into legislative representation with about equal efficiency;
- ★ promote competitiveness, which would be defined as parties' representation in the state legislature being similarly responsive to changes in the electorate's preferences;
- ★ create districts composed of contiguous territory;
- ★ create districts which coincide with the boundaries of political subdivisions of the state; and
- ★ create districts compact in form.