



# COALITION OF BAY AREA ELECTION OFFICIALS

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Bay Area Votes

## FACT SHEET

### Topic: Redistricting

#### What is Redistricting?

- Every ten years following the US Census count, district boundaries for federal, state and local elected offices are redrawn to reflect new population data.
- The constitution requires this process in order to accommodate for growth and demographic changes that have taken place over the past 10 years.
- California uses that census data in order to distribute the population equally amongst the Congressional, State Senate, State Assembly, and State Board of Equalization districts.

#### What are key points to consider when drawing lines?

- Districts must be of equal population.
- Districts must comply with the “one-person, one-vote” principle of the Voting Rights Act which ensures minority voters have an equal opportunity to elect representatives of their choice.
- Districts must be contiguous meaning all areas of the district need to physically touch each other.
- District lines should minimize the division of cities, counties, neighborhoods, and communities of interest.
- Districts should be geographically compact, meaning that everyone in the district should live as near to each other as possible not spread out across the district.
- Where possible each Senate district should be adjacent to Assembly Districts and Board of Equalization districts shall

be composed of 10 complete adjacent State Senate Districts.

#### Who draws the lines?

- On the state level, the California Citizens Redistricting Commission (CCRC) redraws the Congressional, State Senate, State Assembly, and State Board of Equalization district boundaries following each decennial census.

You can learn more about the CCRC at [www.WeDrawTheLinesCA.org](http://www.WeDrawTheLinesCA.org)

- Locally, the boundaries for districts such as county supervisorial, city council, schools, and special districts like fire, water and recreation districts are drawn by their governing bodies and not by the CCRC.

Local jurisdictions need to follow the same criteria as the CCRC when redrawing their district boundaries.

#### What changes will voters see in this election cycle relating to Redistricting?

At the June 7th Statewide Direct Primary Election, each voter in the state will be mailed a ballot including their new districts and those candidates for all Federal, State, County, and Local offices including:

- Congress
- State Assembly
- State Senate
- State Board of Equalization
- County Board of Supervisors

- And some Cities (where applicable)

At the November 8th General Election, voters will see the new local office boundary changes including:

- County Boards of Education
- School Districts
- Cities
- And Special Districts such as Community Services, Fire Protection, Sanitary, and Water districts.

## What does redistricting mean to voters?

- There are possibilities that the districts for Congressional, State Assembly, State Senate, and State Board of Equalization and County Board of Supervisors will change for some voters; that means the representatives in those elected offices may be different.
- Voters will be voting for candidates running for office using the new district lines for these contests on the ballot.

## Language Assistance

The results of the Census also affect which language assistance counties are required to provide for voters at their voting locations.

- Section 203 of the Federal Voting Rights Act uses the census data to review how language assistance is provided in state and local jurisdictions:
- The law includes provisions where there are either more than 10,000, or more than 5% of citizens of voting age who are members of a single language minority group who cannot speak or read English very well.
- Historically, the languages covered under Section 203 are of Spanish, Asian, Native American, and Alaskan Native groups.  
For more information on Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act, you can visit the Justice Department's website.
- Section 14201 of the California Elections Code requires the county elections official to provide facsimile (exact duplicate)

copies of the official ballot to voters in precincts where the Secretary of State has determined a need.

These determinations take place every four years by January 1st of each year that the Governor is elected, and is based on the following:

- There is a group of single language minority residents who have limited-English capabilities and cannot vote without assistance.
- That number equals 3 percent or more of the voting-age residents of a county or precinct; OR
- Interested citizens or organizations provide information giving the Secretary of State reason to believe there is a need for providing facsimile ballots.

## How will Redistricting look to a voter?

- Any voter can be assigned to one precinct today and in 10 years, be assigned to another precinct while still living at the same address.
- Voters are encouraged to look up their new districts so that they are prepared for their June Primary Ballot.
- Most Bay Area Counties have a look-up tool where a voter can type in their residential address and identify their new district changes, or a voter can contact their local election official directly.
- You and your neighbor may be in the same school district today, but it can change based on redistricting.
- Your ballot may not have the same familiar candidate because of the new district lines.