

REDISTRICTING FAQ

ACLU of Georgia position on Redistricting:

The right to vote is one of the most sacred civil liberties we have as citizens. We believe voting should be easy for every citizen and that each vote should count the same. We seek to ensure that the new maps ensure that all voters of color have the same opportunities as white voters to elect their candidates of choice regardless of where they live in the state and regardless of who they vote for.

Q: What is redistricting?

A: The U.S. Constitution requires that we count all the people every 10 years. State legislators are required to take those numbers and draw districts that protect the value of every vote - one person, one vote. The state legislature modifies the boundaries (lines) of the districts for various elected officials so that each elected office represents close to the same number of people.

The purpose of redrawing districts is to rebalance following population changes on the principle of one person, one vote and every vote has the same weight. That is why we count the people, first through the census. In a democracy, voters pick their representatives instead of politicians picking their voters.

The ACLU of Georgia believes that voting should be easy and for every adult/citizen. Each vote should count the same. Redistricting is how we help each vote count the same. This is a solid, democratic principle.

Q: How often are these boundaries (lines) modified?

A: These boundaries are revisited and adjusted every ten (10) years.

Q: When do these modifications occur?

A: After each new census has been completed, the state legislature modifies the districts.

Q: Which public offices will be impacted?

A: The state legislature decides the boundaries for the following elected officials.

- Congress members (14)
- State House Representatives (180)
- State Senators (56)
- Public Service Commissioners (5)

Q: What are the ACLU-GA's biggest concerns regarding redistricting?

A: The ACLU of Georgia is fighting for voters of color in this process. We want to ensure that the maps that legislators draft ensure that all voters of color have the same opportunities as white voters to elect their candidates of choice regardless of where they live in the state and regardless of who they vote for.

Q: What must the legislators take into account when drawing the boundaries?

A: First and foremost, state legislators must adhere to the principle of one person, one vote. In other words, the idea is that individuals should have equal representation in voting with each vote counting the same.

Second, the boundaries of the districts must be drawn in a way that ensure that the resulting maps comply with the federal Voting Rights Act which prohibits the boundaries of the districts (maps) discriminating against citizens on the basis of race, color, or membership in a language minority group.

Third, Georgia's constitution requires that the boundaries of the district connect geographically.

Q: What factors should the legislators take into account when drawing up the boundaries for each district?

A: Legislators should ensure that the boundaries of each district reflect the state's diversity. Voters of color now make up a significant portion of Georgia's population. Voters of color must have the same opportunities to elect candidates of their choice as white voters do in districts throughout the state.

Q: Who decides the new boundaries?

A: The Georgia state legislature and the governor decide the boundaries of the districts.

The members of the House Legislative and Congressional Reapportionment Committee and the Senate Reapportionment and Redistricting Committee conduct the bulk of the work that create proposed boundaries. Then, members of the State House and State Senate vote on those proposed boundaries. After the majority of the State House and Senate vote to approve them, the bill is sent to the governor who can reject the boundaries or sign them into law.

Q: How can I make the most impact to ensure that my family and community are taken care of?

A: Show up at town halls with members of your community and make your voices heard
Contact members of redistricting committee. [Click here for contact info.](#)

Q: When do those new districts take effect?

A: The new districts will take effect either on the day the governor signs the bill into law or on the date specified in the new law.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the full 2020 census data has been delayed in being transmitted to the state. The arrival is expected in late August or September 2021.