



April 28, 2021

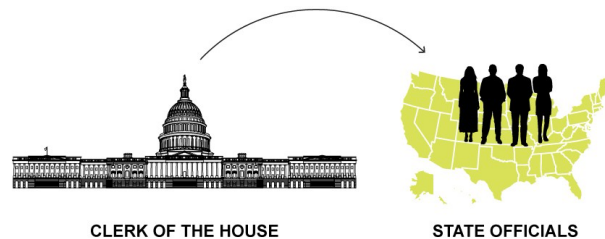
The Redistricting Process Explained

Every decade, following the U.S. census count and apportionment cycle, the redistricting process begins. Redistricting refers to the creating or redrawing of electoral districts within a state to ensure each is represented fairly. In general, this process is left up to individual states, but there are some federal parameters officials must adhere to — relating to population equality and protections for racial and language minority groups.

Typically, redistricting begins early in a year ending with “1” — such as 2021 — and is completed within the next year. However, states may revisit the process several times between apportionments, if allowed under state law or required by a legal challenge.

1 State officials receive updated population information from the Census Bureau and the new allocation of House seats from the House clerk

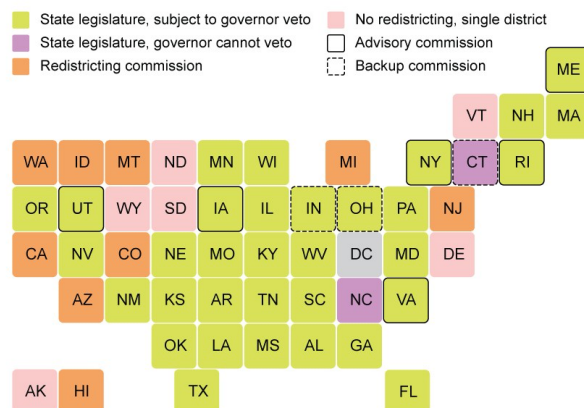
Redistricting is imperative for two reasons. Following apportionment, redistricting is necessary for states to account for House seats gained or lost. Also, states need to make sure that the population numbers across districts are approximately equal after each census count.



2 Committees and legislatures redraw district lines. While apportionment is a process established through federal statutes, states largely own their redistricting processes. Therefore, methods and timelines for redistricting tend to vary across states.

Congressional district boundaries are established mainly by state legislatures. However, a handful of states — such as California and Michigan — have started relying on nonpartisan redistricting commissions made up of designated officials or members of the public. Other states, such as Connecticut and Ohio, rely on such commissions as a backup, in case the legislature's plan is not enacted.

Majority of states rely on legislatures to determine congressional district boundaries
REDISTRICTING METHOD, BY STATE



Note: Iowa has nonpartisan legislative staff in charge of redistricting but relies on legislative approval to enact.

Source: Congressional Research Service, Ballotpedia, POLITICO staff reports



3

Officials consider federal and state-level criteria to ensure fair representation

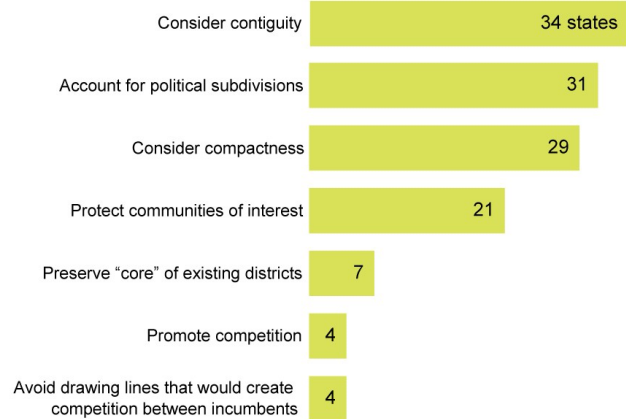
There are some federal standards in place to ensure that the redistricting process addresses population equality for districts within in an individual state and protections for racial and language minorities through the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

The Constitution does not specify how House seats should be distributed within individual states. However, many states have adopted a handful of similar, traditional redistricting principles. These include the consideration of compactness, which refers to keeping districts geographically consolidated (typically with an identifiable “center”), and the preservation of political subdivisions — like preexisting county or city lines.

Following a redistricting cycle, it is common for states to face legal challenges regarding the constitutionality of decisions made. For example, after the 2010 redistricting process, lawsuits were filed in 38 states and several of those challenges continued through to 2019.

Traditional districting criteria common across many states

REDISTRICTING SPECIFICATIONS BY STATES



Note: These criteria for congressional redistricting are not specified in the following states: AK, AR, CT, DE, IL, IN, MD, MS, MT, NH, NJ, ND, SD, TN, VT and WI.

Source: Congressional Research Service, Ballotpedia, POLITICO staff reports