

What is Redistricting?

Redistricting is the process of redrawing the boundaries of election districts: your Congressman, state senator, representative, etc. This is done every ten years, right after the Census data has been collected, to ensure that each district has equal population. When districts have equal population, your vote counts the same as everyone else's vote.

Who Does This?

In New Mexico, the Legislature is responsible for developing and approving the plans, by majority vote of both the House and Senate. Then the Governor must sign, in order for the new plans to be enacted into law.

What Does It Mean for You?

Redistricting affects

- the education your children get
- the taxes you pay
- the condition of the roads
- whether or not there is public transportation
- whether your same senator or representative continues to run unopposed, or if you get a choice in the next election.

Changes in district lines can impact how interested my representatives are in my concerns and the concerns of my community.

For example

- ➔ My small city has a total population less than one district, but it's split among two or more districts. When community problems come up, we have to contact two or more state representatives - and some of them live out of town.
- ➔ I live in the country but my district is part of a big city urban district. My voice is drowned out by the city folks.
- ➔ My community has existed for 400 years, but is being split across district lines so its voice is lost among the newcomers.

Redistricting Principles

Districts should be drawn to these criteria

- equal population
- protect minority voting rights
- be contiguous (all parts should touch)
- be compact
- protect communities of interest

'A "community of interest" is a contiguous population which shares common social and economic interests that should be included within a single district for purposes of its effective and fair representation.' From California Proposition 20: "Voters FIRST Act"

How You Can Make a Difference

Know *and map* your local communities.

- ◆ Does the community want to be kept together, or divided into more than one district for added impact?
- ◆ If divided, where should the splits occur?
- ➔ Attend hearings and present your maps. Educate your representatives.
- ➔ Educate the media.
- ➔ Insist that the public be able to review all map concepts before they are voted on, in order to weigh in.

Questions To Ask

- How did you arrive at this plan? What factors did you take into account?
- Where are the city and county boundaries? Are boundaries kept intact, or divided? Why?
- Where are the ethnic, racial, or language communities, relative to the district lines? Why were the lines drawn that way?
- Where do the incumbents live, and where do their main challengers live? Were boundaries moved to favor one or the other?
- What is the political balance in each district, based on past election results? Were districts drawn to give one party or the other an advantage?

References

- League of Women Voters of New Mexico's Redistricting resource page lwvnm.org/representation.html
- NM Legislature's redistricting page nmlegis.gov/lcs/redcensus/

Contact Information:

You are encouraged to fill these in to use for your own future reference!

League of Women Voters of New Mexico 505.884.8441

Your county _____ Precinct _____

Your New Mexico Representative (District _____)

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Your New Mexico Senator (District _____)

Name: _____ Phone: _____

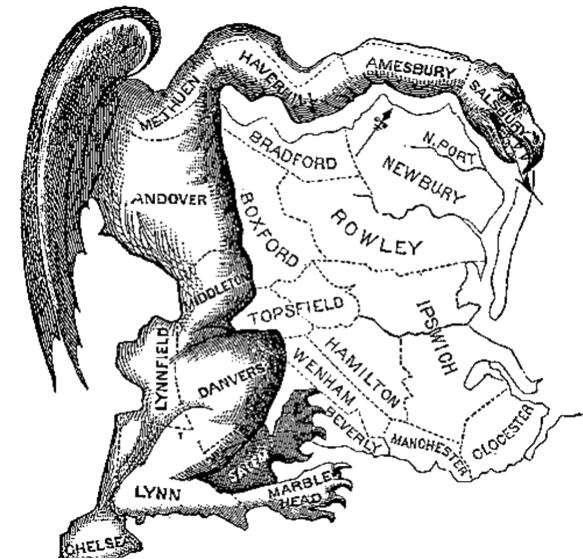
Your Congressman (District _____)

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Redistricting Matters

"The way the lines are drawn can keep a community together or split it apart, leaving it without a representative who feels responsible for its concerns. The way the lines are drawn can change who wins an election. Ultimately, the way the lines are drawn can change who controls the legislature, and which laws get passed."

from "A Citizen's Guide to Redistricting" by Justin Levitt,
published by the Brennan Center for Justice



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