

## REDISTRICTING FAQ

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.

Historically, politicians have used the redistricting process to dilute the influence of Black and Brown voters via a strategy known as **gerrymandering**. The redistricting process must allow all voters the same opportunities to elect their candidates of choice.

**Redistricting is not something best left to politicians.** Every voter has a vital stake in redistricting because it determines the composition of districts that elect public officials at every level of government.

### Q: What is redistricting?

**A:** Redistricting is the process of redrawing the lines of districts from which public officials are elected takes place after each census and affects all districts, whether for members of Congress, state legislatures, county commissions, city councils, etc. The purpose of redrawing the district maps is to rebalance the districts to reflect population changes, that one person has one vote, and every vote has the same weight.

### Q: When does the redistricting process happen?

**A:** After each new Census report has been completed, the state legislature redraws districts maps. This occurs every ten years. The legislature elected during the year a federal census is taken must redistrict and the legislature must adopt the new plan during its first session after the census.

The Indiana legislature is tasked to vote on new district maps. If legislators fail to adopt a plan in its legislative session, a backup commission draws the lines and this plan is not subject to veto by the governor.

### Q: Who decides the new district maps?

**A:** In an effort to draw fair districting maps, some states have tasked independent commissions with drafting the changes. But in Indiana, this consequential work falls to the legislators themselves.

### Q: For which elected offices will the State legislature draw boundaries?

**A:** (9) Congress members  
(100) State House Representatives  
(50) State Senators

### Q: What should state legislators consider when drawing the district maps?

**A:** First and foremost, state legislators must adhere to the principle of one person, one vote. In other words, individuals should have equal representation in voting

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

Third, the **Indiana Constitution** mandates that state legislative districts be contiguous.

**Contiguity** refers to the rule that electoral districts in a state be physically adjacent. A district is considered contiguous if all parts of the district are in physical contact with some other part of the district.

**Q: What is gerrymandering?**

**A:** Gerrymandering is when district boundaries are drawn to manipulate electoral outcomes. In political gerrymandering, district lines are changed to predetermine the political outcome of elections, suppressing the voice of some voters.

In racial gerrymandering, state legislatures attack the right to vote and dilute the influence of voters of color. One method involves “packing” communities of color into a small number of districts to weaken their voting power when they would otherwise be an influential voting block across multiple districts. Districts can also be drawn to reduce the voting power of communities of color by “cracking” the community into several districts that are overwhelmingly white.

**Q: How does gerrymandering impact Constitutional rights?**

**A:** Gerrymandering substantially burdens voters’ fundamental rights, including their First Amendment right to associate for the advancement of political beliefs, to express political views, and to participate in the political process; their First and Fourteenth Amendment right to cast a meaningful vote; and their Fourteenth Amendment right to equal protection and treatment under the law.

**Q: How can redistricting advance systemic equality?**

**A:** Legislators have used gerrymandering throughout history to attack the right to vote and dilute the voting power of communities of color. We need fair redistricting in Indiana to ensure that voters of color are represented.

Legislators have used their power to manipulate voting district lines in ways that weaken the voting power of minority groups that would otherwise be an influential voting block. Fair redistricting is one critical way to fight structural racism in Indiana.

**Q: What is ACLU of Indiana’s biggest concerns regarding redistricting?**

**A: Fairness.** We believe that voting should be safe, secure, and fair. Each vote should count the same. Redistricting is how we help each vote count equally. 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. **Fair redistricting is one critical way to fight structural racism in Indiana.**

**Transparency.** Fair maps require that legislators conduct the redistricting process with transparency and allow for meaningful public input in the redistricting process.

**Q: When do the new district maps 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 delivered to states. The arrival is expected on August 16, 2021.