



FIGHT FOR FAIR DISTRICTS

Redistricting is the process of drawing electoral district boundaries after the Census is completed every 10 years. In Florida, drawing begins the year after the Census is complete. The effectiveness of our local, state, and federal government depends on fair and accurate districts. This ensures the electoral and decision-making processes truly reflect the will of the people.



Don't let power-hungry politicians weaken your vote.

During every election cycle, there are a huge block of voters who, for one reason or another, are disillusioned with our electoral process. The question of whether or not individual votes matter always arises, as communities that are canvassed the most during election cycles often see the least amount of change. Many have found themselves reaching out to local, state, and federal representatives in desperate attempts to stop them from voting in favor of bills that hurt our communities. Too often, those pleas go unanswered.

The reality is that partisan politicians at the state level have weakened our collective voices in a deliberate scheme to minimize community power and influence.

How does this continue to happen in a democracy?

There are many ways that lawmakers and political operatives subvert the will of the people. One of the most damaging is a process known as "gerrymandering," the manipulation of district lines in favor of one political party.

Most elected officials only represent a small part of our state, known as districts. But political districts are not set in stone, they are redrawn every ten years based on the changes in population reported by the Census Bureau.

The mischief lies in the drawing of these districts.

Partisan gerrymandering allows politicians to choose their voters rather than voters choosing their politicians. It also allows them to unfairly pack minority communities into one district or split them up into several different districts; both methods are an attempt to weaken minority votes.

How should lines be drawn?

Districts should be drawn in a way that keeps communities who have common culture, history, and policy concerns together. Residents of the United States almost always live in areas that are represented by different elected officials at many levels of government. This decentralized and hierarchical system of government depends on fair and accurate districts. This ensures the electoral and decision-making processes truly reflect the will of the people.



Who draws the lines?

The Florida Legislature draws the political district maps for both the State Legislature and Florida's federal Congressional Delegation. Local governments draw their own districts, as needed. The districts for the federal United States Senate are not changed by population. Every state automatically has two Senators, no matter how many people call that state home.

HOW DO WE ENSURE FAIR DISTRICTS?



Hold elected officials to the Fair District Amendments:

- Federal equal population requirements and adherence to the Voting Rights Act and constitutional rules on race.
- Cannot abridge equal opportunity of racial or language minorities to elect candidates of their choice, no retrogression
- Contiguity: for all districts where it does not conflict with minority rights, using existing geographical and political boundaries where possible
- When possible, districts must be compact*
No plan or district can be drawn to favor or disfavor a party or incumbent (Fla. Const. Art. III, §§ 20, 21)

Educate

Do research on redistricting in Florida and learn about its history. Attend/participate in community workshops on redistricting to sharpen your understanding of what the process is going to be for 2021.

Empower

Talk to your family, friends, and neighbors about redistricting and let them know that they too can submit maps to make sure your communities are accurately drawn to reflect your community.

Act

Keep your representatives accountable to the Fair Districts Amendments, let them know that this process should and will be public and that their constituents are watching. When local and state officials begin to host meetings for community input on redistricting, show up and make sure your voice is heard by giving testimony and submitting your map.

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?



Just take some time and think about where you were in life 10 years ago. There's so much that has changed over that time, right? Participating in the redistricting process helps us lay the foundation for a Florida future that ensures that all of our communities are represented by the elected officials that we choose; that we will have representatives who put the wants and needs of the majority of their constituents at the top of the priority list when making decisions. Our communities deserve to be heard and properly represented and holding our lawmakers accountable is one of the most impactful ways we can do that.

Contact us at dfafl@fcvoters.org with the subject line "Redistricting."