



THE ALABAMA LEGISLATURE

STATE OF ALABAMA

REAPPORTIONMENT COMMITTEE GUIDELINES

FOR CONGRESSIONAL, LEGISLATIVE, AND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION REDISTRICTING

May 2011

Pursuant to the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Alabama, the Alabama State Legislature is required to review 2010 Federal Decennial Census data provided by the U.S. Bureau of the Census to determine if it is necessary to redistrict Alabama's congressional, legislative, and State Board of Education districts because of population changes since the 2000 Census. Accordingly, the following guidelines for congressional, legislative, and State Board of Education redistricting have been established by the Legislature's Permanent Joint Legislative Committee on Reapportionment, (hereinafter referred to as the "Reapportionment Committee").

I. POPULATION

The total Alabama resident state population of 4,779,736 persons, and the population of defined subunits thereof, as reported by the 2010 Census, shall be the permissible data base used for the development, evaluation, and analysis of proposed redistricting plans. It is the intention of this provision to exclude from use any census data, for the purpose of determining compliance with the one person, one vote requirement, other than that provided by the United States Census Bureau.

II. EQUAL POPULATION REQUIREMENT: ONE PERSON-ONE VOTE

The goal of redistricting is equality of population of congressional, legislative, and State Board of Education districts as defined below.

1. Congressional Districts

The Apportionment Clause of Article I, Section 2, of the United States Constitution requires that the population of a state's congressional districts in a state be "as nearly equal in population as practicable." Accordingly, Congressional redistricting plans must be as mathematically equal in population as is possible.

2. Legislative And State Board of Education Districts

In accordance with the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, legislative and State Board of Education districts will be drawn to achieve "substantial equality of population among the various districts."

a. Any redistricting plan considered by the Reapportionment Committee will comply with all relevant case law regarding the one person, one vote principle of the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment of the United States Constitution, including but not limited to the cases of *Larios v. Cox*, 300 F. Supp. 2d 1320 (N.D. Ga. 2004) *aff'd sub nom Cox v. Larios*, 542 U.S. 947 (2004), and *White v. Regester*, 412 U.S. 755 (1973). When presenting plans to the Reapportionment Committee, proponents should justify deviations from the ideal district population either as a result of the limitations of census geography, or as a result of the promotion of a consistently applied rational state policy.

b. In keeping with subpart a, above, a high priority of every legislative and State Board of Education redistricting plan must be minimizing population deviations among districts. In order to ensure compliance with the most recent case law in this area and to eliminate the possibility of an invidious discriminatory effect caused by population deviations in a final legislative or State Board of Education redistricting plan, in every redistricting plan submitted to the Reapportionment Committee, individual district populations should not exceed a 2% overall range of population deviation. The Reapportionment Committee will not approve a redistricting plan that does not comply with this requirement.

III. VOTING RIGHTS ACT

1. Districts shall be drawn in accordance with the laws of the United States and the State of Alabama, including compliance with protections against the unwarranted retrogression or dilution of racial or ethnic minority voting strength. Nothing in these guidelines shall be construed to require or permit any districting policy or action that is contrary to the United States Constitution or the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

2. Redistricting plans are subject to the preclearance process established in Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act.

IV. CRITERIA FOR CONGRESSIONAL, LEGISLATIVE, AND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION DISTRICTS

1. All congressional, legislative, and State Board of Education districts will be single-member districts that comply with the population-equality standards discussed above.

2. A redistricting plan will not have either the purpose or the effect of diluting minority voting strength, shall not be retrogressive, and shall otherwise comply with Sections 2 and 5 of the Voting Rights Act and the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution.

3. No district will be drawn in a manner that subordinates race-neutral districting criteria to considerations that stereotype voters on the basis of race, color, or membership in a language-minority group.
4. All legislative and congressional districts will be composed of contiguous and reasonably compact geography.
5. The following legislative redistricting requirements prescribed by the Alabama Constitution shall be complied with:
 - a. Sovereignty resides in the people of Alabama, and all districts should be drawn to reflect the democratic will of all the people concerning how their governments should be restructured.
 - b. House and Senate districts shall be drawn on the basis of total population.
 - c. The number of Senate districts is set by statute at 35 and, under the Alabama Constitution, may not exceed 35.
 - d. The number of Senate districts shall be not less than one-fourth or more than one-third of the number of House districts.
 - e. The number of House districts is set by statute at 105 and, under the Alabama Constitution, may not exceed 106.
 - f. The number of House districts shall not be less than 67.
6. The following redistricting policies contained in the Alabama Constitution shall be observed to the extent that they do not violate or conflict with requirements prescribed by the Constitution and laws of the United States:
 - a. Each House and Senate district should be composed of as few counties as practicable.
 - b. Every part of every district shall be contiguous with every other part of the district. Contiguity by water is allowed, but point-to-point contiguity and long-lasso contiguity is not.
 - c. Every district should be compact.
7. The following redistricting policies are embedded in the political values, traditions, customs, and usages of the State of Alabama and shall be observed to the extent that they do not violate or subordinate the foregoing policies prescribed by the Constitution and laws of the United States and of the State of Alabama:
 - a. Contests between incumbent members of Congress, the Legislature, and the State Board of Education will be avoided when ever possible.
 - b. The integrity of communities of interest shall be respected. For purposes of these Guidelines, a community of interest is defined as an area with recognized similarities of interests, including but not limited to racial, ethnic, geographic, governmental, regional, social, cultural, partisan, or historic

interests; county, municipal, or voting precinct boundaries; and commonality of communications. Public comment will be received by the Reapportionment Committee regarding the existence and importance of various communities of interest. The Reapportionment Committee will attempt to accommodate communities of interest identified by people in a specific location. It is inevitable, however, that some interests will be advanced more than others by the choice of particular district configurations. The discernment, weighing, and balancing of the varied factors that contribute to communities of interest is an intensely political process best carried out by elected representatives of the people.

c. Local community and political leaders and organizations and the entire citizenry shall be consulted about new district lines.

d. In establishing congressional and legislative districts, the Reapportionment Committee shall give due consideration to all the criteria herein. However, priority is to be given to the compelling state interests requiring equality of population among districts and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended, should the requirements of those criteria conflict with any other criteria.

V. PLANS PRODUCED BY LEGISLATORS

1. The confidentiality of any Legislator developing plans or portions thereof will be respected. The Reapportionment Office staff will not release any information on any Legislator's work without written permission of the Legislator developing the plan, subject to paragraph two below.
2. A proposed redistricting plan will become public information upon its introduction as a bill in the legislative process, or upon presentation for consideration by the Reapportionment Committee.
3. Access to the Legislative Reapportionment Office Computer System, census population data, and redistricting work maps will be available to all members of the Legislature upon request. Reapportionment Office staff will provide technical assistance to all Legislators who wish to develop proposals.
4. In accordance with Rule 23 of the Joint Rules of the Alabama Legislature (2011) all amendments or revisions to redistricting plans, following introduction as a bill, shall be drafted by the Reapportionment Office.
5. Drafts of all redistricting plans which are presented for introduction at any session of the Legislature, and which are not prepared by the Reapportionment Office, must be presented to the Reapportionment Office for review of proper form and for entry into the Legislative Data Bank.

VI. REAPPORTIONMENT COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. All meetings of the Reapportionment Committee and its sub-committees will be open to the public and all plans presented at committee meetings will be made available to the public.

2. Minutes of all Reapportionment Committee meetings shall be taken and maintained as part of the public record. Copies of all minutes shall be made available to the public.
3. Transcripts of all public hearings shall be made and maintained as part of the public record, and shall be available to the public.
4. The Reapportionment Committee will hold public hearings at different locations throughout the State in order to actively seek public participation and public input.
5. All interested persons are encouraged to appear before the Reapportionment Committee and to give their comments and input regarding congressional, legislative, and State Board of Education redistricting. Reasonable opportunity will be given to such persons, consistent with the criteria herein established, to present plans or amendments redistricting plans to the Reapportionment Committee, if desired, unless such plans or amendments fail to meet the minimal criteria herein established.
6. Notices of all Reapportionment Committee meetings will be posted on the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth floors of the Alabama State House, the Reapportionment Committee's website, and on the Secretary of State's website. Individual notice of Reapportionment Committee meetings will be sent by email to any citizen or organization who requests individual notice and provides the necessary information to the Reapportionment Committee staff. Persons or organizations who want to receive this information should contact the Reapportionment Office.

VII. PUBLIC ACCESS

1. The Reapportionment Committee seeks active and informed public participation in all activities of the Committee and the widest range of public information and citizen input into its deliberations. Public access to the Reapportionment Office computer system is available every Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Please contact the Reapportionment Office to schedule an appointment.
2. A redistricting plan may be presented to the Reapportionment Committee by any individual citizen or organization by written presentation at a public meeting or by submission in writing to the Committee. All plans submitted to the Reapportionment Committee will be made part of the public record and made available in the same manner as other public records of the Committee.
3. Any proposed redistricting plan drafted into legislation must be offered by a member of the Legislature for introduction into the legislative process.
4. A redistricting plan developed outside the Legislature or a redistricting plan developed without Reapportionment Office assistance which is to be presented for consideration by the Reapportionment Committee must:
 - a. Be clearly depicted on maps which follow 2010 Census geographic boundaries;
 - b. Be accompanied by a statistical sheet listing total population and minority

population for each district and listing the census geography making up each proposed district;

c. Stand as a complete statewide plan for redistricting, or, if presenting a partial plan, fit back into the plan which is being modified, so that the proposal can be evaluated in the context of a statewide plan (i.e., all places of geography must be accounted for in some district);

d. Comply with the guidelines adopted by the Reapportionment Committee.

5. Electronic Submissions

a. Electronic submissions of redistricting plans will be accepted by the Reapportionment Committee.

b. Plans submitted electronically must also be accompanied by the paper materials referenced in this section.

c. See the Appendix for the technical documentation for the electronic submission of redistricting plans.

6. Census Data And Redistricting Materials

a. Census population data and census maps will be made available through the Reapportionment Office at a cost determined by the Permanent Legislative Committee on Reapportionment.

b. Summary population data at the precinct level and a statewide work maps will be made available to the public through the Reapportionment Office at a cost determined by the Permanent Legislative Committee on Reapportionment.

c. All such fees shall be deposited in the state treasury to the credit of the general fund and shall be used to cover the expenses of the legislature.

Appendix.

ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION OF REDISTRICTING PLANS REAPPORTIONMENT COMMITTEE - STATE OF ALABAMA

The Legislative Reapportionment Computer System supports the electronic submission of redistricting plans. The electronic submission of these plans must be on either a flash drive or CD ROM. The software used by the Reapportionment Office is the Esri Redistricting Online (RO) Solution.

The electronic file should be in DOJ format (Block, district # or district #, Block). This should be a two column, comma delimited file containing the FIPS code for each block, and the district number. The Esri RO Solution has an automated plan import that creates a new plan from the block/district assignment list.

Web services that can be accessed directly with a URL and ArcView Shapefiles can be viewed as overlays. A new plan would have to be built using this overlay as a guide to assign units into a blank RO Solution plan. In order to analyze the plans with our attribute data, edit, and report on, a new plan will have to be built in the RO Solution.

In order for plans to be analyzed with our attribute data, to be able to edit, report on, and produce maps in the most efficient, accurate and time saving procedure, electronic submissions are REQUIRED to be in DOJ format.

Example (DOJ FORMAT BLOCK, DISTRICT #)

SSCCCTTTTTTBBBB,D

SS is the 2 digit state FIPS code

CCC is the 3 digit county FIPS code

TTTTTT is the 6 digit census tract code

BBBB is the 4 digit census block code

, a comma goes before the district number

DDDD is the district number

(The above format is also acceptable with a blank space in place of the comma).

Contact Information:

Legislative Reapportionment Office
Room 811, State House
11 South Union Street
Montgomery, Alabama 36130
(334) 242-7941

For questions relating to reapportionment and redistricting, please contact:

Ms. Bonnie Shanholtzer
Supervisor
Legislative Reapportionment Office
district@al-legislature.gov

Please Note: The above e-mail address is to be used only for the purposes of obtaining information regarding redistricting. Political messages, including those relative to specific legislation or other political matters, cannot be answered or disseminated to members of the Legislature. Members of the Permanent Legislative Committee On Reapportionment may be contacted through information contained on their Member pages of the Official Website of the Alabama Legislature.

