

# **REDISTRICTING HEARINGS SET THE STAGE FOR 2021**

Redistricting Hearings are happening NOW around the state. These hearings provide an opportunity for citizens to present testimony concerning local preferences, communities of interest, local voting patterns, and other issues that the legislature may consider when redrawing district lines. There are few issues that will affect us for the next decade as important as redistricting in keeping Texas RED. The Texas House Redistricting Committee will be holding a hearing in your area sometime within the next year and it is imperative that YOU show up and testify. This testimony becomes a part of the record, and we need to make sure that people who are like minded are making our voices heard in this process!

## **TALKING POINTS FOR REDISTRICTING HEARINGS**

**Fairly Represent the Voting Patterns of Texas** – Any new map should fairly represent the voting patterns of Texas. Texas is expected to receive three new Congressional Districts. In representing the voting patterns of Texas, it is important to remember that very statewide elected official is a Republican. Allocating all these to Democratic seats on the basis of race is neither Constitutional nor representative of the voting patterns of Texas.

**Reflect Commuting Patterns** – In general, districts should reflect commuting patterns. Transportation funding in particular is greatly impacted by which Congressional district a person lives in. For instance, if persons living in Washington County (Brenham) commute to Houston along 290, a district along 290 linking that rural county to suburban and urban jobs in Houston would be appropriate. The same holds for Dallas and Tarrant where a number of people enjoy residential life in rural communities while commuting into urban cores via I-35 and I-40.

**Future Suburban Growth** – It is important for legislators to take into consideration future suburban growth when drawing the maps so as to avoid the disproportionate representation that we experience at the end of the ten year cycle. For example, the House districts in suburban DFW and Harris County are disproportionately populated now, wherein a greater percentage of people are represented in one area, in comparison to a different district that has an acceptable percentage of people represented; where discretion on total population is allowed, such as Senate and State House Districts, these urban and suburban districts should account for a reasonable population growth over the next decade to cause an acceptable proportion of representation by the end of the current decade.

**Communities of interest** should be respected. Generally, bridges between urban areas should be avoided. Districts should be as compact as possible. To the extent possible, each of the top urban counties should have its own district, irrespective of racial or other impermissible factors.

**No Independent Panel** – we are a Republic and as such you are elected and accountable to the People of Texas. There is no such thing as a neutral panel. This panel hypothetically be made up of people who are appointed by someone, and every person on there would be coming at the situation with a viewpoint, with past experiences, and possibly with their own agenda. They would be unelected by the People and therefore unaccountable to the People of this State, taking away our voice in this very important process.

**One Person, One Vote** – Sec. 2, Article 1 of the US Constitution along with the Equal Protection Clause of Section 1 of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment requires the construction of legislative districts that are substantially equal in total population. According to the Supreme Court of the United States, taken together they establish the Constitutional guarantee of one person, one vote, or the idea that all voters have approximately equal voting power. There are several people who are ineligible to vote: felons, non-citizens, minors, people currently in jail, and those deemed mentally incompetent. If there are substantially more people ineligible to vote in the population of one district versus another, the result could be that citizen votes could be diluted, especially in the rural districts, violating the premise of one person, one vote.

## **COMMITTEE PROTOCOL FOR TESTIFYING**

It is suggested that attendees arrive around 30 minutes early if possible. Anyone who is going to testify will fill out some paperwork (similar to what they do on the Kiosk in Austin, but this is instead done on hardcopy).

**They generally take people testifying in the order that they fill out the paperwork. They do try to accommodate those who have to leave first.**

Anyone willing to testify should limit their remarks to 2-3 minutes.

**It is good to have people in the audience just listening. It lets the committee know that people are watching the proceedings.**

## **UPCOMING REDISTRICTING HEARINGS**

To receive alerts of upcoming hearings for Redistricting, please take the following steps:

- 1) <https://capitol.texas.gov/Committees/MeetingsHouse.aspx>
- 2) Select “ Receive [alerts](#) when committee notices are posted.”
- 3) Follow the instructions to create an account with My Texas Legislature Online. Once you’re logged in with your new account, you can select the tab called “Committee Notices”, check the box for “Redistricting”, and select “Save” at the top, and then you should receive notices automatically so you won’t miss a beat!