

# **REDISTRICTING**

Even as we are celebrating the transition of power to the new administration of President Biden and Vice President Harris, we must remain vigilant to protect our rights as voters for future elections. This is especially important as Arizona begins the process of redistricting. Redistricting occurs every 10 years after the official census has been counted to represent the changes in population in each electoral district.<sup>1</sup>

An electoral district is also known as an election district, legislative district, constituency, or voting district. They are created to provide its population with representation in the federal and state governments. There are currently 435 congressional districts in the House of Representatives. Each district's boundaries must contain equal population and comply with the US constitution and the voting rights act. The districts in Arizona also are required by law to be compact and connected, respect communities of interest, use visible geographic features, especially city and county boundaries, and create competitive districts without interfering with the other guidelines.<sup>2</sup>

In 2000, Arizonans passed Proposition 106 to make this state a commission state, which placed the responsibility of redistricting with an independent redistricting commission (IRC). The IRC is made up of 5 Commissioners: 2 Democrats, 2 Republicans and 1 Independent who serves as the Chair.

The IRC will begin drafting maps and seeking public input after they have chosen their Chair from the 5 finalists who are allegedly non-partisan.<sup>3</sup> New lines must be implemented by December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021. There is no word yet if this deadline will be changed because of the current pandemic.

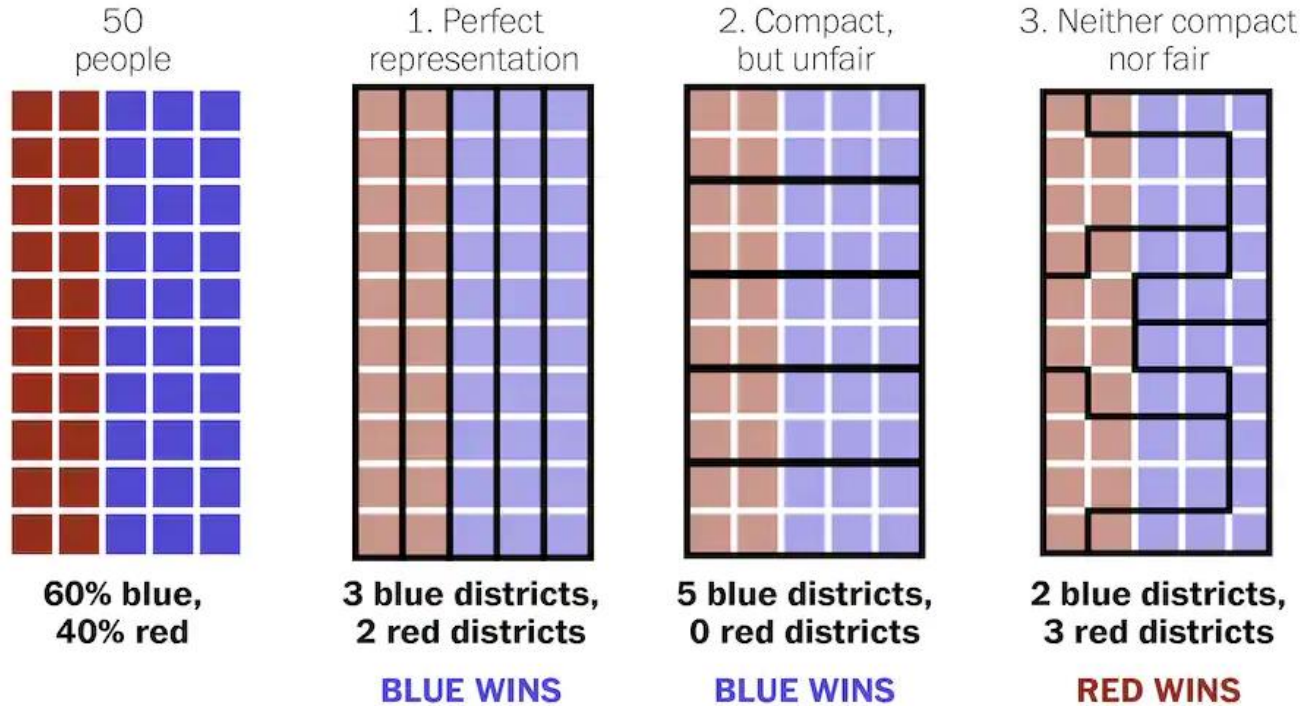
## **WHY DOES THIS MATTER?**

Electoral districts that are drawn up fair and equitable in an open and transparent process provides protection of racial minorities, respects consideration of communities of interest, and most importantly, ensures that your vote counts.

Oversight from the public also helps prevent attempts to gerrymander districts. What is gerrymandering? It is the manipulation of the boundaries of an electoral constituency to favor one party or class.

# Gerrymandering, explained

Three different ways to divide 50 people into five districts



WASHINGTONPOST.COM/WONKBLOG

Adapted from Stephen Nass

When the Republican party continues to run on platforms that are contrary to what most Americans want, they must use cheating and other unlawful tactics to remain in power. Gerrymandering is one of the tools they use to retain legislators that may be unpopular.

## WHAT'S NEXT AND WHAT CAN WE DO?

Providing comments and testimony in the public hearings is key to drafting the maps and providing oversight that the district boundaries are drawn fairly and legally. Ten years ago, there were 53 public hearings that were held around the state. This year may look a little different due to the pandemic. Regardless, it is vital that we make our voices heard. It is anticipated that the Republicans will be out in full force and will be very contentious. The first step to prepare for this is to sign up for the AZ DNC training. The training is quick, highly informative, and easy to follow. At the end of the Zoom presentation, you'll be able to evaluate the session and sign up for the redistricting updates. Sign up for an upcoming training:

[https://www.mobilize.us/az\\_dems/event/364952/](https://www.mobilize.us/az_dems/event/364952/)

Stay tuned to CG Dems for updates as well!

<sup>1</sup> <https://redistricting.ils.edu/redistricting-101/what-is-redistricting/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://azredistricting.org/2001/Prop-106.asp>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.azmirror.com/2021/01/14/redistricting-commission-interviews-chair-candidates-in-first-meeting/>