

California State Redistricting

Mapping Our Representation

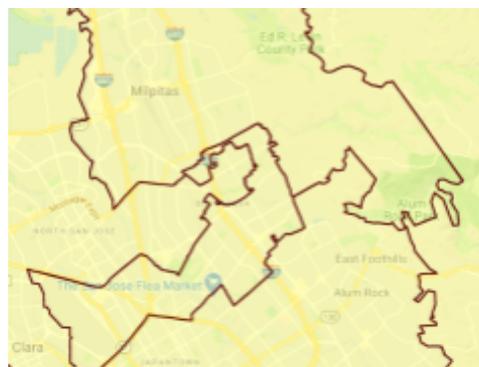
Redistricting is a once-in-a-decade opportunity to ensure our communities are represented fairly and accurately in the democratic process. When district lines are drawn in a way that keeps communities with shared interests together, we build political power in our communities, increasing our opportunities to affect elections and lift up priorities and concerns to our representatives.

Following the 2020 Census, the Census Bureau will release updated information on populations throughout California, including where communities have grown or shrunk. These changes need to be reflected in the district maps that define which areas elected officials represent, so that each office represents the same number of people. In 2021, the California Citizens Redistricting Commission will redraw statewide maps for Congressional districts, State Senate districts, and State Assembly districts. Local jurisdictions will also redraw the maps for local offices like city council or county board of supervisors.

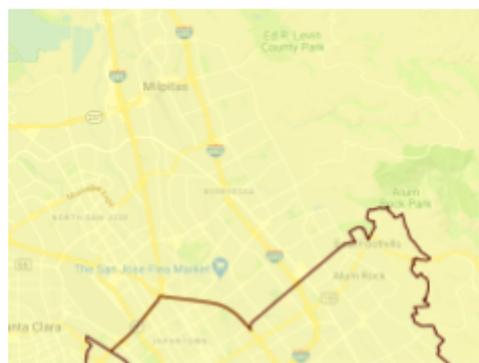
Drawing the Lines of Power

The exercise of line-drawing may be highly technical, but the resulting maps directly impact the everyday lives of our community members. District lines determine who gets to vote for a particular seat and, ultimately, to whom each elected official is accountable. Districts can be drawn to favor incumbents or political parties, or to amplify the voices of some while muting others' voices. The new maps that come out of the redistricting process will either build power in our communities or weaken our ability to have our voices heard.

When communities who have shared interests and priorities are kept together, they are better able to elect officials who will effectively represent them, and to organize and advocate for important causes. But when they are fragmented into multiple districts, community members are often unable to elect a candidate they prefer, and they may struggle to get those in power to pay attention to their issues.



Assembly District Lines in Berryessa 2001



Assembly District Lines in Berryessa 2011

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One example of this is the Berryessa neighborhood in San Jose. Before 2001, the 14-square-mile neighborhood knew exactly who represented their interests--they had one assemblymember and one state senator. After the redistricting process that year, Berryessa was split into four Assembly and two Senate districts, making it very difficult to get any single elected official to prioritize them. Before, they had power as a neighborhood and community to influence their representatives, but after 2001, they were unable to turn their organizing into real political change. During the next redistricting cycle in 2011, residents rallied to demonstrate that this splintering was bad for their community. As a direct result of their advocacy, Berryessa was reunited into a single Assembly district, restoring their voice and showing the importance of community input when drawing maps.

California's Unique Redistricting Process

In most states, the legislature controls redistricting. This means politicians get to draw the lines that may determine their electoral futures, giving them a strong incentive to create maps that maximize their own political power, regardless of community interests. In contrast, California has a robust public process and a panel of citizens draws the maps for state offices. That means we have an opportunity to directly influence how the lines of power are drawn.

California is at the forefront of the movement to make redistricting more accessible, fair, and non-partisan. In 2008 and 2010, Californians passed two ballot measures to take the responsibility of the redistricting process away from the State Legislature and give it to a citizen-led commission. The commission's selection process is complex and intended to help insulate the body from political influence and avoid conflicts of interest. You can find more information on the selection process at wedrawthelinesca.org/about_us. The commission's final makeup includes five registered Democrats, five registered Republicans, and four commissioners who are not registered with either party.

The CCRC will hire staff and bring in outside experts to interpret the data they receive from the 2020 Census and navigate the technical challenges presented by the map-drawing process. However, the final maps are created by and voted on by the commission.

The CCRC will hold online outreach events, public hearings to get input from Californians across the state, and public hearings to discuss draft maps. Outreach

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events will begin in February 2021, and the CCRC will hold hearings to get public input starting in June 2021. The commission plans to release draft maps in November 2021, and to finalize maps in December 2021 or January 2022.

The CCRC's process is fully public, which is in stark contrast to the previous practice of closed door meetings where legislators decided where district lines should fall. An important part of the commissioners' jobs is to receive, consider, and incorporate input from the public. That is why it is critical that we help our communities organize to expand their power in this process and the political system for the next ten years.

Community Voices in Redistricting

The CCRC must balance many factors when drawing new district lines. They must make sure that each district represents an equal number of people and must not draw maps that discriminate against minority communities by diminishing their voting power. There are additional principles to consider, like keeping communities with shared interests together, making sure all parts of a district connect, keeping each district somewhat compact, and respecting existing political and geographic boundaries. Redistricting uses objective data from the census but is ultimately a subjective process that can produce various outcomes.

Hearing from community leaders and community members about where they live, what matters to them, and who in their area shares similar interests and priorities will help line-drawers create maps that give communities the chance to be heard. "Communities of interest" is a redistricting term that means communities who share common characteristics and concerns that could align their political desires. The CCRC is required to consider communities of interest when drawing districts. Examples of communities of interest include a neighborhood where many families have immigrated from the same country and are facing similar linguistic and cultural challenges or a neighborhood where people work in similar industries and have shared economic concerns. Because communities of interest do not necessarily follow formal boundaries like city lines and they vary widely in size, commissioners must learn about them to keep them intact within district lines. This is where community input matters the most and where we have the greatest opportunity to build power.

How You Can Get Involved in California State Redistricting

There are multiple ways community members can help make sure the CCRC understands their community and how maps should be drawn to respect their voice.

The timeline for these activities is likely to change due to census data delays caused by COVID-19. You can get updated information at [WeDrawTheLinesCA.org/meetings](https://www.wedrawthelinesca.org/meetings).

February - May 2021	<p>Read more about the CCRC’s process at WeDrawTheLinesCA.org.</p> <p>Attend a regional information session put on by the CCRC or connect with a local community-based organization to find additional presentations you can attend to learn more.</p>
June - October 2021	<p>Provide input on your “community of interest” directly to the CCRC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the CCRC’s online tool to draw a map of your community and explain what shared interests define it at DrawMyCCommunity.org. • Send in a written description of your community. <p>Attend a regional hearing held by the CCRC to give verbal testimony about your community.</p> <p>Connect with local community-based organizations to get help with thinking about how to define your community and submit input to the CCRC. Local organizations may also be involved with larger advocacy efforts to create and submit draft district maps with suggested lines. Participating in these workshops is an opportunity to make sure community members’ input is incorporated into these larger advocacy efforts.</p>
Fall 2021	<p>Tune into the process as the CCRC creates initial draft maps: WeDrawTheLinesCA.org/meetings.</p> <p>Call or write to the CCRC with feedback on whether the proposed maps fairly represent your community.</p>
December 2021 - January 2022	<p>The CCRC will post draft maps in November 2021, and then revise the maps based on public input. The commission plans to finalize the maps in late December 2021 or early January 2022, but the timeline may change.</p>