

# California Voters FIRST Act

## November 2008 Redistricting Initiative Summary

### I. Overview: 14-Person Redistricting Commission (5 Democrats, 5 Republicans, 4 other)

### II. How is the Commission Chosen?

#### **Step 1: The Applicant Review Panel narrows the pool to 60 persons.**

- The State Auditor creates a public and transparent application process.
- The State Auditor establishes an Applicant Review Panel for the purpose of screening applicants, comprised of three randomly selected qualified independent state auditors (1 D/1R/1other)
- The Applicant Review Panel selects 60 of the most qualified applicants (20R/20D/20 other) on the basis of relevant analytical skills, ability to be impartial, and diversity.
- The Applicant Review Panel presents the pool of 60 nominees to the four leaders of the CA State Legislature.

#### **Step 2: The four Legislative Leaders have the option of striking applicant names from the pool of 60.**

- The Legislative Leaders may strike up to two applicants from each subpool of 20 (a total of 8 possible strikes per pool). The pools may be reduced to 12 D/12 R/12 other.

#### **Step 3: The 8 Commissioners are named through random drawing; 6 Commissioners are selected by the 8.**

- The State Auditor randomly draws 8 names from the remaining pool of applicants (3D/3R/2 other).
- The 8 Commissioners then review the names remaining in the pool and choose 6 Commissioners (2D/2R/2o). They will select to complement the balance of skills and diversity.

#### **Eligibility**

- a. California voter registered with the same affiliation for the past 5 years or more.
- b. Must have voted in two of the last three statewide general elections.

#### **Disqualifications and other restrictions**

- a. For the preceding 10 years, neither a commission member, nor a member of his or her immediate family, may have done any of the following:
  - Been appointed to, elected to, or have been a candidate for federal or state public office.
- b. For the preceding 4 years, neither a commission member, nor a member of his or her immediate family, may have done any of the following:
  - Served as an officer of a political party, or as an officer, paid staff, or paid consultant of a candidate's campaign committee.
  - Served as an elected or appointed member of a political party central committee.
  - Been a registered federal, state or local lobbyist.
  - Served as paid staff for the state legislature, Board of Equalization or Congress or any individual legislator, Board of Equalization member or member of Congress.
  - Given \$2,000 or more to a candidate for state legislature, Board of Equalization or Congress.
- c. Staff and consultants to, persons under a contract with, or immediate family relationship with the Governor, a member of the Legislature, a member of Congress, or a member of the State Board of Equalization, are not eligible to serve as members of the commission.
- d. Commissioners are not permitted to hold public office in California, serve as paid staff for the Legislature or any individual legislator or to register as a federal, state or local lobbyist during their terms on the Commission or for 5 years thereafter.

### **III. Mapping criteria (in ranked order)**

- a. Districts shall comply with the US Constitution, including equal population requirements.
- b. Districts shall comply with the Voting Rights Act.
- c. Districts shall be geographically contiguous.
- d. The geographic integrity of any city, county, or city and county, neighborhoods, or communities of interest shall be respected. Communities of interest shall not be defined as relations with incumbents, candidates, or parties.
- e. Districts shall be compact.
- f. To the extent possible, after the above criteria have been satisfied, districts shall be nested.
- Incumbent residences may not be considered; districts may not be drawn to protect incumbents.

### **IV. Public Input**

- a. The Commission shall establish and work through an open hearing process that subject to public notice and promoted through a thorough outreach program to solicit broad public participation.
- b. The Commission shall display draft maps for public comment to achieve wide public access.
- c. Public comment shall be taken for a minimum of 14 days from the date of public display.

### **V. Transparency**

- a. The Commission shall comply with the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act.
- b. The Commission shall provide a minimum of 14 days public notice for meetings (3 days for emergency meetings).
- c. All records related to and data considered by the Commission will be made broadly available, in multiple formats.
- d. Restrictions on ex parte communications
- e. The Commission shall issue a report explaining the basis upon which it made mapping decisions and include definitions of the terms and standards used in drawing the maps.

### **VI. Commission Support**

- a. The Citizens Redistricting Commission shall hire commission staff, legal counsel, and consultants as needed.
- b. Commission staff shall be subject to the same conflict-of-interest criteria as Commissioners, as appropriate.

### **VII. Adoption of a Plan**

- a. 9 members shall represent a quorum.
- b. 9 votes shall be required for any official action.
- c. 9 votes (3 D, 3 R, and 3 other) are required to adopt a plan.
- d. The Commission shall complete redistricting by a date-certain - September 30, XX11.
- e. The final redistricting plan shall be subject to referendum.

### **VIII. Scope**

- a. Senate, Assembly and Board of Equalization seats will be drawn by the Commission in the next redistricting, 2011.
- b. Congressional seats will be drawn by the state legislature, following the same mapping criteria and hearing requirements as the Commission.

**Voters FIRST**

## California Voters FIRST Initiative

Currently, the California state legislature draws district lines for themselves and the Board of Equalization. Allowing politicians to draw their own districts is a serious conflict of interest that harms voters. That is why in recent elections, 99% of incumbent politicians were re-elected in the districts they had drawn for themselves. Communities, cities and counties are the losers because they are carved up for political purposes.

### Californians Are Ready For a Citizens Redistricting Commission

**66% support creating an independent redistricting commission** to draw district lines instead of incumbent legislators

**86% want an open process** and an **end to back room deals** in redistricting

**78 - 81% want a redistricting process that keeps their neighborhoods and cities together** and divided as little as possible

### Support Fair Independent Redistricting Standards Today!

It's time to end the secret deals by incumbents to gerrymander our state's districts. We propose creating a Citizens Redistricting Commission that draws maps in the open.

We need to ensure that redistricting follows clear criteria that prioritize Constitution, the Voting Rights Act, counties, cities and communities.

The **California Voters FIRST** initiative will place voters' interest ahead of politicians' interest.

Fairly drawn districts will increase voter engagement in elections.

### Help Restore Our Democracy!

**We need to gather 1 million signatures to put the California Voters FIRST initiative on the ballot and we need your help!**

**Endorse the California Voters FIRST initiative.**

**Volunteer to gather signatures beginning in December.**

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**I Support the California Voters FIRST Initiative!**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Endorsement Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Individual Endorsement     Organizational Endorsement

Count me in! I will help gather petition signatures.

**Fax to California Common Cause at (916) 443-1897**

1005 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite C, Sacramento, CA 95814  
T: (916) 443-1792, CA-Info@CommonCause.org

# California Voters FIRST Initiative

## Fair Independent Redistricting Standards Today

### Background: What is redistricting?

- Every 10 years, after the census, new boundary lines for Congress and CA Senate, Assembly and Board of Equalization districts. Currently, the CA State Legislature draws those lines. This is a major conflict of interest.

### How would California Voters FIRST Act change redistricting?

- **14-Person Citizens Redistricting Commission.** The California Voters FIRST Act would create a politically balanced Commission - 5 Democrats, 5 Republicans, 4 others. Commissioners would be chosen for their impartiality, skills, and to reflect our State's demographic and geographic diversity.
- **Protecting communities, cities, and counties.** The California Voters FIRST Act would create a list of prioritized mapping criteria for the Commission to follow. This would ensure that our Constitution, federal and state laws are followed.
- **Open and public process.** The Commission would hold hearings to receive public input. The California Voters FIRST Act would end the closed-door political deals. Legislators have a conflict of interest. Instead of drawing districts to reflect California's population changes, they draw lines to maximize their own ability to get elected.

### How would the Commission be formed?

- California registered voters are invited to participate.
- A pool of 60 (20 Ds, 20 Rs, 20 others) is selected based on their skills, ability to be impartial, and diversity by a review panel of state auditors.
- The 4 Legislative Leaders can each strike up to 24 people from the pool.
- 8 Commissioners are chosen through random drawing by the State Auditor from the remaining pool. (3 Ds, 3 Rs, 2 others).
- The final 6 Commissioners (2 Ds, 2 Rs, 2 others) are chosen by the 8 Commissioners from the remaining pool based on the balance of skills and diversity they would bring.

### What Mapping Criteria would the Commission have to follow? In ranked order, the criteria are:

- a. Districts shall comply with the US Constitution, including equal population requirements.
  - b. Districts shall comply with the Voting Rights Act.
  - c. Districts shall be geographically contiguous.
  - d. The geographic integrity of any city, county, or city and county, neighborhoods, or communities of interest shall be respected. Communities of interest shall not be defined as having a relationship with incumbents, candidates, or parties.
  - e. To the extent possible, after the above criteria have been satisfied, districts shall be compact.
  - f. To the extent possible, after the above criteria have been satisfied, districts shall be nested.
- \* *Incumbent residences may not be considered; districts may not be drawn to favor politicians or parties.*

### What is the scope of the Citizen's Redistricting Commission?

- The Commission will draw California Senate, Assembly and Board of Equalization seats in the next redistricting, 2011 and after each decennial census.
- The State Legislature will draw Congressional seats, following the same mapping criteria and hearing requirements as the Commission.

Please go to [www.commoncause.org/cavotersfirst](http://www.commoncause.org/cavotersfirst)  
for more information and to read the full initiative.