



# REDISTRICTING IN THE SUNSHINE STATE

## BACKGROUND:

Redistricting is the redrawing of boundaries of electoral districts.

It's done every 10 years following the U.S. Census. After the Census, each state's number of Congresspeople in the U.S. House of Representatives is recalculated based on the current population. Florida's population was found to have grown by **2.9 million residents** in 2020, giving the state one additional congressional representative (from 27 to 28).

In Florida, the state legislature redraws the state's U.S. congressional districts to reflect its number of representatives. It also redraws its state house and state senate districts.

Redistricting is often influenced by gerrymandering.

Gerrymandering is the politically motivated manipulation of district boundaries to deliberately disadvantage a group of voters based on their party affiliation or race. It's used by the party in power to retain power, regardless of the voice of the voters.

## WHERE WE'VE BEEN:

The League of Women Voters of Florida believes congressional districts and government legislative bodies should be apportioned substantially on population. In 2010, **63% of Florida voters** approved two constitutional amendments written by the League and our partners to help ensure fair redistricting. The Fair Districts provisions require that district lines: **not be drawn to favor one political party**, **not be drawn to harm voting power of racial or language minorities**, and be **contiguous**. In addition, if possible, and so long as it does not violate the mandatory requirements above, the districts should: be **compact**, take into account **jurisdictional lines**, and take into account **geographical boundaries**. The amendments are widely referred to as the "Fair Districts" amendments. In 2012, following the enactment of the Fair Districts amendments, the League and a coalition of civil rights groups filed **two lawsuits** in response to **gerrymandering by political party operatives** in Florida and **won!** During our litigation the state legislature spent **\$11 million of taxpayer dollars unsuccessfully defending its illegally drawn district maps**. In 2015, the courts approved new Congressional district boundaries **drawn by the League** and its partners. The fairly balanced districts directly contributed to the electoral wins of three non-white candidates in 2016.

## WHERE WE'RE GOING:

During the current redistricting cycle, the League has already started work on ensuring the process is transparent and that districts are drawn fairly. Independently, and in conjunction with the recently formed **Fair Districts Coalition**, the League has mobilized Floridians to pay attention to this historically secretive process and demand legislators make map drawing open and accessible with adequate input from the public. The League has plans to continue our work in this area by keeping citizens informed, exerting pressure on elected officials, attending public hearings and encouraging our members to involve themselves in both the state and local processes. The League also has a constant presence in the state capitol to meet with legislators and attend legislative committee meetings. If the process is kept from the public or if maps drawn and approved are not compliant with the Fair Districts amendments, the League stands ready to pursue legal avenues once again.



## HOW YOU CAN HELP:

Pay attention and stay informed! **Believe what you see over what you hear.**

- Voters should contact their elected officials to demand an open, fair process.
- Encourage others to be vocal about transparency and fairness
- Organize fellow voters to exert pressure on elected officials
- Attend public hearings and participate in local redistricting
- **Join your local League!**