

Legislative News



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Ohio to redraw legislative and congressional districts following 2020 census

Though the 2020 elections are barely behind us, it's likely many in the political arena will soon start thinking about the 2022 elections — especially since new state legislative and congressional districts will be drawn as a result of the 2020 census. For political observers, it will be particularly interesting as the process by which Ohio draws its districts will be different next year than it has been for decades due to Ohio voters approving constitutional amendments to change the process. Also, part of the mix is the likelihood Ohio will be losing a congressional seat. How this all shakes out will undoubtedly be the subject of much press coverage in the coming months. For now, it may be interesting to refresh our collective memory on what the process will be going forward and to note the process is different for congressional and state legislative districts.

The numbers for the 2020 census are scheduled to be sent to the states by April 1, 2021. Using that information, state legislators tasked with drawing the congressional districts will set out to apportion Ohioans in districts of approximately the same size. The constitutional amendment approved in 2018 regarding how congressional districts are drawn outlines various scenarios under which the congressional map can be drawn and remain in place for the normal 10-year period. They are:

- 1) State legislators can adopt a new congressional district map if three-fifths of the Legislature's total membership vote to approve, including one-half of the minority party members;
- 2) If the Legislature proves unable to adopt a new map, a commission will be formed to adopt a map. That commission will include the governor, state auditor, secretary of state and four legislators, two of whom must come from the Legislature's minority party. A majority of the commission's members, including two members belonging to the minority party, must agree on a map;
- 3) If the commission proves unable to adopt a map, state legislators will be given a second chance to adopt a map. The map would have to be approved by three-fifths of the Legislature's total membership, including one-third of the minority party's members.

If all of the scenarios above fail to yield a new map, the majority party of the Legislature — without support from the minority party — can adopt one, but it would be limited to four years.

Maps drawn by the Legislature can be vetoed by the governor or a veto referendum campaign. The amendment prohibits the splitting of 65 of Ohio's 88 counties during redistricting, allows for 18 other counties to be split no more than once and allows the state's five most populous counties to be split no more than twice.

In November 2015, voters in Ohio approved a constitutional amendment to create a bipartisan state legislative redistricting commission for the purpose of drawing Ohio's 99 House and 33

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Senate districts. The commission is comprised of the governor, state auditor, secretary of state, one person appointed by the speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives, one person appointed by the House leader of the largest political party of which the speaker is not a member, one person appointed by the president of the Ohio Senate and one person appointed by the Senate leader of the largest political party of which the president is not a member.

The length of time for which the maps are valid depends on the bipartisan nature (or lack thereof) by which they are adopted. The maps are good for 10 years if at least two commissioners from each major political party vote for them. If they are adopted along party lines, the maps would be limited to four years.

The 2015 constitutional amendment calls for legislative districts to be compact and made of contiguous territory. Further, it forbids district plans from favoring or disfavoring either political party.

Ohio Retirement Study Council cancels Dec. 10 meeting

The Ohio Retirement Study Council canceled its meeting scheduled for Dec. 10, 2020.