



ALL IN FOR DEMOCRACY

INDIANA COALITION FOR INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING

The Legal Process of Redistricting

- Redistricting happens every ten years, after the federal census. The purpose is to equalize the population of Congressional and legislative districts.
- In 44 of the 50 states, state legislatures are in charge of redistricting.
- In Indiana, the General Assembly draws the maps for Congress and the state legislature. Requirements are equal population, compliance with the Voting Rights Act and contiguity
- A 2014 study by the University of Chicago found that Indiana's House districts are among the most gerrymandered or partisan.

Why Redistricting Reform Matters

Voters are Misrepresented

- When districts are lopsided from a partisan perspective, it creates polarization, with candidates appealing to the fringes, instead of the middle. Compromise becomes a dirty word; there is no reward for consensus building.
- In 2012, Democratic candidates received a total of 999,219 votes (42.7%), Republicans received 1,342,237 votes (53.7%). But Republicans held a 69% majority, which has climbed to 70% currently.
- In 2017, Republicans are still overrepresented in the Indiana State House

Low Voter Participation and Turnout

The current redistricting process leads to uncompetitive districts & no competition leads to low voter turnout.

In 2014...

- More than one third (54) of Indiana General Assembly races were unopposed in the general election
- Indiana had the lowest voter turnout (28%) in America & worst turnout in 72 years
- 48% of likely U.S. Voters said American elections are not fair to voters

Communities are Divided

When legislative districts are drawn from a partisan perspective rather than based on communities of interest, like cities and counties, school districts, neighborhoods and minority groups, communities are often divided. This makes it difficult for them to make themselves heard, sometimes leading to their interests being ignored or under-served.



The Solution? Create an Independent, Bipartisan Process that Engages the Public

The Indiana Coalition for Independent Redistricting has put forth a proposal that merges the best features from redistricting laws across the country. This proposal is SB159, sponsored by Senators Ruckelshaus and Bohacek.

- Forming a Redistricting Commission
 - A citizen commission composed of Republicans, Democrats and voters who are neither R nor D would direct the redistricting process.
 - The four legislative leaders would select four Commission members and the remaining members would be chosen by a public process conducted by the seven public universities in the state. Any qualified voter could submit an application to any public university, each university would pick their three top nominees - one Republican, one Democrat and one who is neither Republican or Democrat.
 - The names of these twenty-one nominees will be given to the Legislative Services Agency and they will conduct a lottery to determine four additional commission members: One Republican, one Democrat and two who are neither Republican nor Democrat.
 - The eight Commission members will choose a person to chair the Commission. The Chair cannot be from the group appointed by the legislative leaders.
 - Commission members must be ethnically, geographically and gender diverse.
 - This group, representative of Hoosier voters would direct the nonpartisan Legislative Services Agency in drawing the maps, using ranked statutory criteria.
- Map-drawing criteria must be ranked in order of importance. Equal population and respect for the Voting Rights Act must come first because of legal requirements. Contiguity, compactness and political competition should also be considered.
- There should be special consideration giving to identifying communities of interest and care should be taken to ensure that district lines do not divide communities or inhibit their ability to make their voices heard in political and legislative arenas.
- The redistricting process must be open and transparent, with opportunities for citizens to impact the map-drawing throughout. The public should have access to map-drawing software and all tools available to the official map drafters, so they will be able to submit their own map proposals to the Commission.