



Participating in the Mapping Process

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California Common Cause

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About Common Cause

Common Cause was founded in 1970 by John Gardner as a vehicle for citizens to make their voices heard in the political process and to hold their elected leaders accountable to the public interest. Today, Common Cause is one of the most active, effective, and respected nonprofit organizations working for political change in America. Common Cause strives to strengthen our democracy by empowering our members, supporters, and the general public to take action on critical policy issues. Now with nearly 1.2 million members and 30 state organizations, Common Cause remains committed to honest, open, and accountable government, as well as encouraging citizen participation in democracy.

Mission Statement

Common Cause is a nonpartisan, grassroots organization dedicated to restoring the core values of American democracy, reinventing an open, honest and accountable government that serves the public interest, and empowering ordinary people to make their voices heard in the political process. We believe that by banding together, citizens can make a difference. We throw a spotlight on issues that affect all citizens. We work to strengthen public participation and to ensure that the political process serves the public interest, rather than the special interests.

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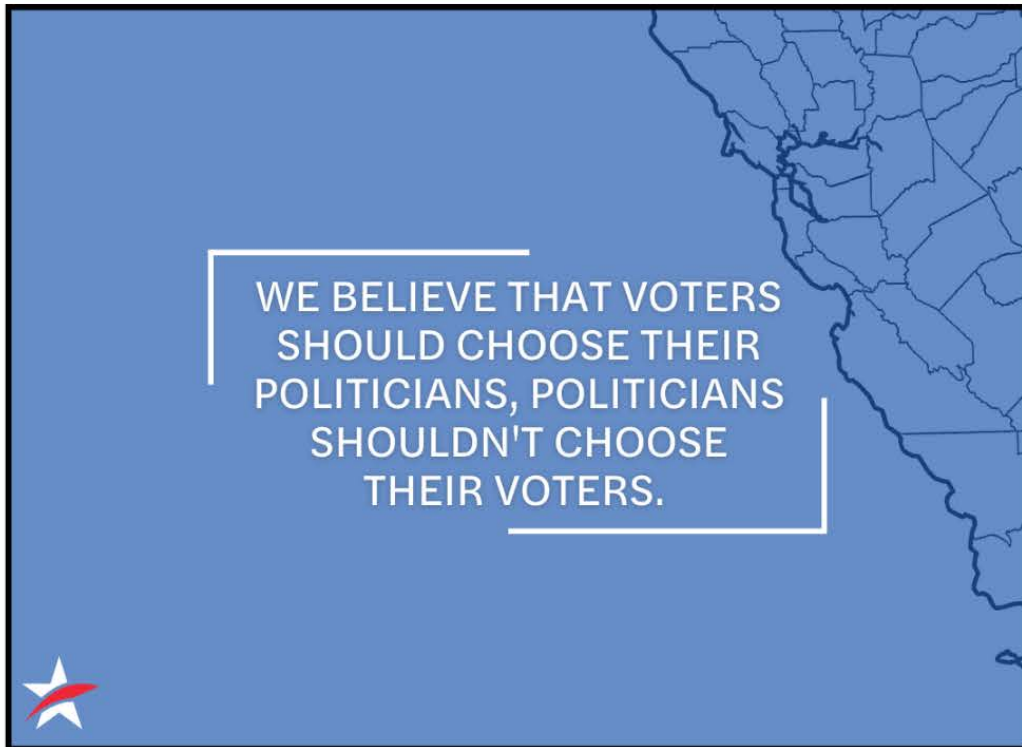
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Introduction

OUR MISSION

California Common Cause is dedicated to building a democracy that includes everyone. We work on voting rights, redistricting reform, government transparency, and money in politics to end structural inequalities in our state and local democracies and to create governments at all levels that are accountable to and reflective of California's communities.

"California Common Cause has led the charge to make California the nation's gold standard for voting rights. Their work has been vital to improving representation and increasing political participation among all Californians." – US Senator, Alex Padilla

OUR WORK

Since 1970, California Common Cause has led dozens of successful efforts to reform government and the political process, elevating the voices and power of everyday people. We have helped enfranchise hundreds of thousands of Californians through reform in three key areas: elections, redistricting, and money in politics.



Elections

CCC reshapes elections for today's voter by:

- Making voter registration simple, streamlined, and same day
- Ensuring voters can choose when, where, and how they vote
- Simplifying elections, ballots, and the voter experience
- Making voting meaningful and accessible to all



Redistricting

CCC advocates for redistricting by the people, for the people by:

- Empowering people, not politicians, to draw the lines
- Driving change with tools, support, and community organizing
- Ensuring line-drawing is fair, transparent, and representative
- Preparing diverse communities to lead and inform redistricting



Money in Politics

CCC builds a better democracy by:

- Lifting voters' voices above big money
- Creating people-focused campaign finance systems
- Making government responsive to everyday people

For more information, visit us at commoncause.org/California.
Contact us at (213) 623-1216 or california@commoncause.org.

OUR APPROACH

California Common Cause engages the left, right, and center to enact reforms that strengthen our democracy. Key elements of our approach include:

Finding common ground to push for uncommon solutions

With a reputation as a trusted, good government organization with partnerships across the political spectrum, we have been able to bridge divides among diverse stakeholders and forge solutions to intractable issues that curb political participation.

Guiding policy change from start to finish



California Common Cause takes a comprehensive approach to policy change. We have a track record of success at every stage of the policymaking process.

Making sure the political process works for everyone

Communities of color, youth, language communities, and other marginalized groups are more likely to face barriers to political participation. California Common Cause works with diverse communities to knock down these barriers and elevate their voices.

OUR IMPACT



We made voting more accessible by sponsoring and passing Online Voter Registration in 2011. This work contributed to nearly **850,000 CALIFORNIANS REGISTERING TO VOTE** within the first months of its implementation.



We led the effort to pass the Voters FIRST Act, establishing an open independent redistricting process that resulted in a **29% INCREASE IN CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVES OF COLOR** in the first election with the new maps. **36,000+ CALIFORNIANS** applied to serve on or gave testimony to the commission.



We led coalition efforts to **IMPROVE TRANSPARENCY** and pass bills that strengthen disclosures by candidates, initiatives, and elected officials. Our advocacy helped secure **\$14 MILLION FOR A MODERN, USER-FRIENDLY DISCLOSURE PORTAL** for the public to access.

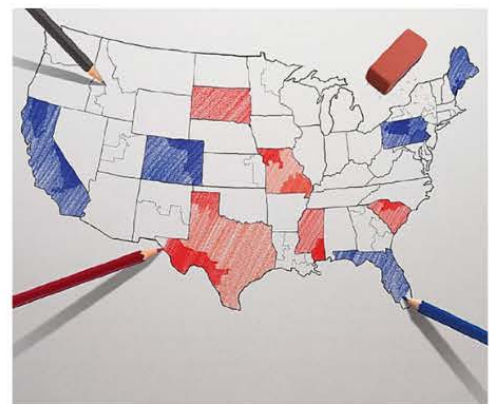
Our Work to Establish Fair Redistricting in California

On February 14th 1990, Ed Salzman, a political savant in the mid to late 20th century, claimed in his opinion article “Seeking Villains in a Sacramento Swamp” that legislative districts in California were gerrymandered. This meant incumbents drew their own lines to make it easier for themselves to get reelected and harder for regular communities to have a voice. In essence, politicians could choose their voters instead of the voters choosing their politicians. Given there were no reforms passed, in the year 2000, the next decennial, the majority party ran the redistricting process.

Finally, in 2008 California Common Cause and our allies successfully passed the Voters First Act, Proposition 11, which changed the California Constitution to create the Citizens Redistricting Commission. This commission was formed to amend the redistricting process by giving citizens the power to draw fair district boundaries without the influence of special interests and politics. Specifically, the reform tasked the commission with redrawing the California Senate and Assembly districts.

Two years later, Proposition 20 was passed, again amending the California Constitution to give the California Redistricting Commission the power to draw Congressional districts. Proposition 20 also defined communities of interest and deemed that they should be included in a single district. Also in that same election, Proposition 37, a ballot measure which sought to return the redistricting process back to the politicians, failed.

The California Citizens Redistricting Commission has been regarded throughout the nation as the best practice for redistricting. Since its establishment, some California counties and cities have adopted redistricting commissions, as well as other states. The purpose of this toolkit is to continue our work to reform the redistricting process by providing residents the information and steps necessary to establish redistricting commissions in their county, city, or school board.



Plans

Support the Commission & Community's Redistricting Process

Now that you have established your redistricting commission, the work begins to draw and adopt the maps. The information below will guide this process. Beginning with the application being created, you advertise the application throughout your community, the commissioners get selected, a demographer is chosen, and the community is educated on how to use the demographer's tools. Then, residents testify at community public hearings on district lines to support or oppose both the district map(s) and the adopted map. Finally, the community follows the work of the commission through its term.



Promoting/advertising the commission application process

Once the redistricting commission is established the city will announce it on their website and create materials to promote it.

Here is Berkeley's website: <https://www.cityofberkeley.info/redistricting/>



Below is one of the advertisements CA Common Cause created to help promote Roseville's independent redistricting commission:



Organize your community to comment on the need for diverse residents to be selected for the commission

Here is a sample email that CA Common Cause sent out to help promote Berkeley's independent redistricting commission:

Berkeley

Application Deadline: October 9, 2020

Website: <https://www.cityofberkeley.info/redistricting/>

Subject: Shape Berkeley's Future as a Redistricting Commissioner

Friend,

We're writing to share a once-in-a-decade opportunity: Berkeley is seeking residents to serve on its very first independent redistricting commission! Will you serve on the commission or nominate a friend to ensure fair representation in Berkeley?

Berkeley is one of a handful of cities in California where residents, not politicians, will have the power to draw its City Council district boundary lines. The Berkeley Independent Redistricting Commission gives power back to the people and allows for a transparent redistricting process that incorporates public feedback into the district maps. The City Council district maps that are drawn in this process will last for the next decade -- and will determine how well Berkeley's communities are represented in local government.

As a Berkeley resident, YOU can shape the redistricting process by serving as a commissioner. You don't need to be a redistricting expert to apply. We are looking for community members who are impartial, representative of the city's diversity, and committed to creating fair maps for Berkeley's communities. As a commissioner, you hold public hearings to hear public feedback and direct the redistricting process. You will also be provided training and tools to prepare you for the role.

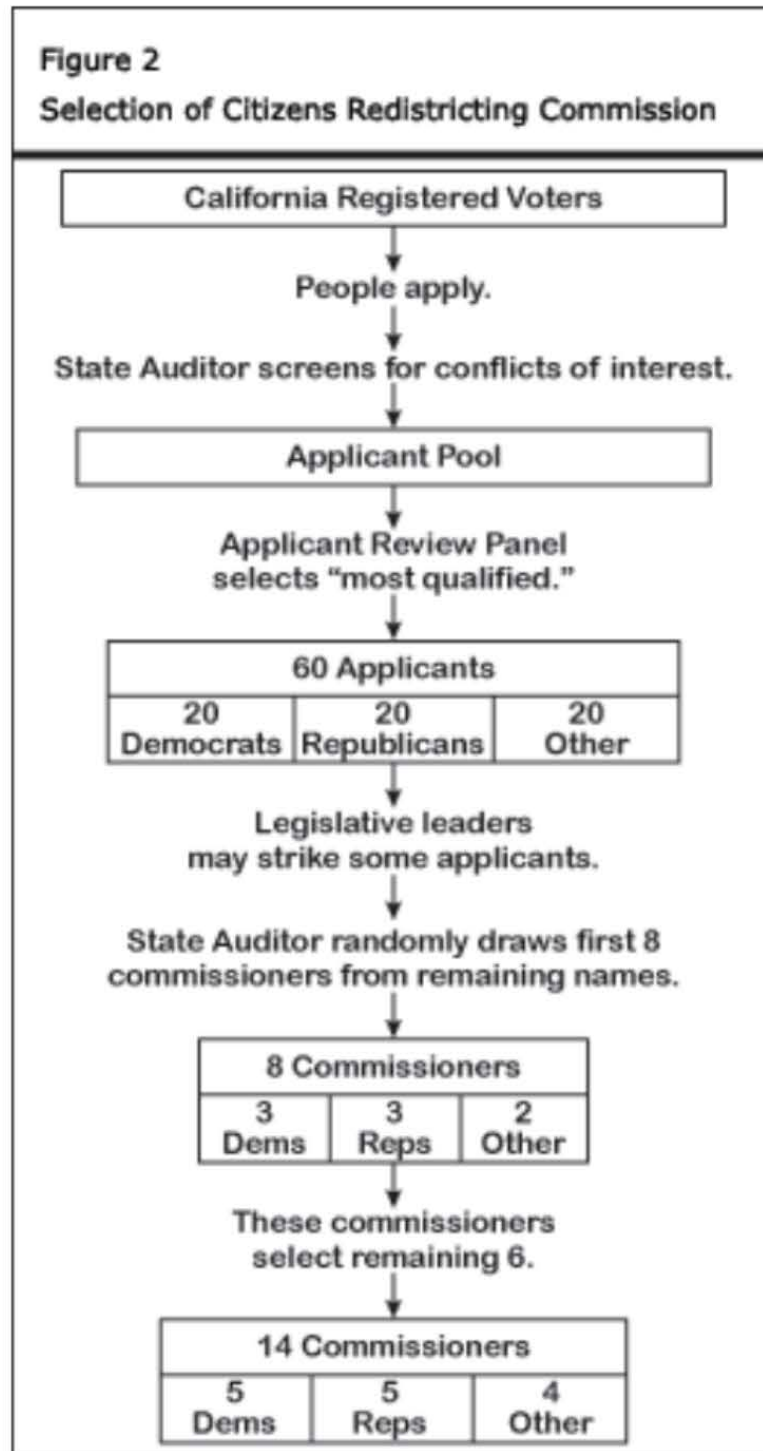
How you can help ensure the Berkeley redistricting process is a success:

1. Submit an application to serve on the Berkeley Independent Redistricting Commission before October 9!
2. Forward this email to 5 friends who you think are fair, reflective of Berkeley's diversity, and committed to fair maps, encouraging them to apply to serve.

The future of our communities and how well they are represented by the City Council relies on a successful redistricting process. One of the most critical steps is ensuring the Commission has qualified members that are reflective of Berkeley's diversity. With your help, we can ensure that the commission has fair-minded and diverse community members. We hope you consider applying and ask your friends to consider applying as well.

Commissioner Selection Process

Here are the steps that are used by the California Citizens Redistricting Commission:



Demographers & How to Utilize Their Mapping Tools

Demography is the composition of a population. After the decennial census, governments contract political demographers to provide the necessary tools to draw/redraw electoral boundary lines as required by the U.S. Constitution.

Demographers provide online tools to governments and community members so they can create district maps for consideration. Demographers then develop, revise, and supply documentation about the map submissions. The demographers guide governments and their communities through the districting process to the final adoption of their maps.

Here is an example of the demographer's tools from this open-source district builder software: <https://www.districtbuilder.org> (Note: your local government will likely contract with a demography service, rather than use an open-source tool).

The screenshot displays the DistrictBuilder website. At the top, the logo "DistrictBuilder" is on the left, and "BLOG" and "CONTACT" links are on the right. The main heading reads "TOGETHER We can build a better map". Below this, a paragraph states: "DistrictBuilder puts the power of drawing electoral maps in the hands of the people. Redistricting can be a transparent process that represents communities fairly and prevents gerrymandering." A dark banner at the bottom of this section says "DistrictBuilder is a free and open source redistricting tool." Below this is a section titled "Accurate down to the block" with a "Start now" button. To the right is a screenshot of the DistrictBuilder software interface, which shows a map of Virginia with district boundaries and a table of district data.

| Districts | Number | Population | Deviation | Area | Comp. |
|-----------|--------|------------|-------------|------|-------|
| 1 | 1 | 7,842,239 | -17,842,239 | | |
| 2 | 2 | 306,892 | -418,764 | | |
| 3 | 3 | 55,148 | -684,218 | | 45% |
| 4 | 4 | 6,423 | -739,943 | | 32% |
| 5 | 5 | 10,812 | -762,178 | | 30% |
| 6 | 6 | 0 | -727,386 | | |
| 7 | 7 | 0 | -727,386 | | |
| 8 | 8 | 0 | -727,386 | | |
| 9 | 9 | 0 | -727,386 | | |
| 10 | 10 | 0 | -727,386 | | |
| 11 | 11 | 0 | -727,386 | | |

Below the screenshot are three icons with text:

- UNCOVER INEQUALITIES**
Evaluate population demographics and visualize the effects of gerrymandering.
- BUILD BEAUTIFUL MAPS**
Rapidly draw visually engaging and informative maps in our modern interface.
- ENGAGE YOUR AUDIENCE**
Easily export your custom map and share in an article, on social media, or anywhere online.

Participating in the Districting or Redistricting Process

District lines must be drawn through a fair, transparent, accessible public process run by a commission composed of diverse residents. Here is the list of redistricting requirements that were made into law by California Assembly Bill 849:

AB 849 - Fair Maps Act

Criteria:

- Mandatory, ranked redistricting criteria
- Prioritizes keeping communities intact
- Bans partisan gerrymandering

Timing:

- Standardized deadline based on date of election
- Court imposed lines if deadline missed

Public Engagement & Transparency:

- Minimum 4 public hearings at different times
- Community outreach to diverse communities
- Live-translation available upon request
- Maps published online for 7 days before adoption

To learn more about redistricting legislation visit
<https://tinyurl.com/y532s567>





These requirements will apply differently in different cities and counties, and charter cities get to make their own rules in many respects. Confer with city or county staff to get more information, or email redistrictingCA@commoncause.org

Adopting Districts or Redistricted Maps

Organize your community to testify in support of the district maps that best represent all neighborhoods. Contact your local media and make your support or opposition known.

Advocate for Your Community

Community members can attend and participate in redistricting hearings. Here are some ways to prepare:

- Research the timelines, rules, and process type of redistricting that your local government is using. Federal and state redistricting often start before local efforts.
- Find out the hearing schedule and the rules for testifying, such as registering, time limits, and submitting written testimony into the record.
- Be prepared to participate early and often. Being at hearings early in the process will let decision-makers know you are serious.

- Connect with civil rights groups who are drafting maps for your area. Make your concerns known and work with them to keep your community together in their maps.
- Staying engaged will let you respond quickly to proposed ideas and maps. Since this can be a long process, organizing more people to cover the different hearings will spread the workload to more than a small set of people or organizations.
- Monitor the process and give feedback on the maps as to whether they meet your (or your coalition's) goals.

Your Testimony

An important way for your community to have your voices heard during redistricting is by providing testimony about your community. Use the questions below as prompts to prepare your testimony.



1. Introduce yourself, your organization, and/or coalition:

- Describe yourself and the organizations you are working with.
- What are your goals?
 - Ex. Keeping your community together in one district, uniting your communities, or recommending a larger map with coalition partners.

2. Include data from reliable sources such as the US Census Bureau to describe your community more completely.

- What is the average level of education or graduation rates? What is the average income level?
- What kind of housing is common? Do people rent or own their homes?
- Are neighbors mostly immigrants? Is there a common language?
- What are the different ancestries, races, and ethnicities of the neighborhood? (Race and ethnicity may be one factor, but it cannot be the predominant reason that a community is unique and needs to be kept united during redistricting.)

3. Describe how your community is different or alike from the communities around you. Highlight community issues and history using personal stories.

- Has your community come together to advocate for important services?
- Have you worked for more recognition or support of your community?
- What harms have been caused because your voice has been ignored? What are the barriers to solving these issues?
- Use data on income, housing, etc. to compare your neighborhood to ones nearby.

4. Close your testimony:

- Thank the members of the redistricting commission
- Provide them with written testimony and exhibits.
- Restate your goals, acknowledge your community members and partners in attendance.

Following the Commission's Work Throughout Its Term

Follow the work of the commission and respond to their actions with support or criticism as appropriate.

Honoring the Work That Established Your Redistricting Commission!

Always remember to thank the residents, city officials, and the commissioners who worked to achieve a redistricting commission. Send thank you letters, host a party to celebrate this momentous achievement, and give out community civic service awards.

We need to reward public servants who protect and promote the best practices in our democracy. Thank you for your interest in districting and redistricting. We invite you to contact us (redistrictingCA@commoncause.org) if you have any questions. Fundamentally, we believe that voters should choose their politicians, politicians shouldn't choose their voters.



Redistricting: Key Terms

Census

- The counting and survey of every person in a population. In the U.S., a census is taken every ten years. The census is required by the Constitution for reapportionment and is used in the redistricting process.

Census Bureau

- The federal government agency that administers the census.

Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP)

- Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) is the total population age 18 and over and a citizen. (Related to VAP)

Coalition District

- A district where the combined racial minorities make up a majority of the population and where the voters from these different racial groups vote together to elect the minority-preferred candidate. Coalition districts are not legally required by the Voting Rights Act. (Also called Minority Coalition District)

Community of Interest

- A neighborhood, community, or group of people who have common policy concerns and would benefit from being maintained in a single district.

Compactness

- Compactness refers to the shape of the district. It describes boundaries that are drawn closely and neatly packed together unless there are good reasons such as VRA compliance or following oddly shaped boundaries, like city boundaries or rivers.

Contiguity

- A characteristic describing a boundary's single and uninterrupted shape (i.e. all areas in the district are physically connected to each other).

Cracking

- A splitting of a racial minority community into two or more districts so that the minority community is not a significant portion of any district. For example, cracking occurs when a minority population is big enough that it can make up 50% of one district but, instead, is divided into two or more districts so that the minority community makes up a small percentage in each district.

Crossover or Opportunity District

- A district where some majority voters “cross over” to vote with racial minorities to elect the minority-preferred candidate. Crossover or opportunity districts are not legally required by the Voting Rights Act.

Deviation and Deviation Range

- A district’s Deviation is the difference of a district’s population from the Ideal Population. The redistricting plan’s Deviation Range is the plan’s largest deviation to the plan’s smallest deviation.

Ideal Population

- The total population goal for districts in a redistricting plan. It is computed by taking the total population of the jurisdiction and dividing it by the total number of districts in the redistricting plan.

Incumbency (Criteria)

- Making sure the current elected official’s house remains in a district.

Influence District

- A district where a racial or ethnic minority group does not make up a majority of voters but does have enough members of the minority group to influence substantially an election or the decisions of an elected representative.

Gerrymandering

- Drawing of district lines to give one group an unfair advantage over another group. Gerrymandering is not the same as redistricting, but gerrymandering can occur during redistricting. Drawing majority-minority districts to comply with the Voting Rights Act is not gerrymandering.

GIS (Geographic Information System)

- Computer software used to create redistricting maps.

Majority-Minority District

- A district where one racial minority equals 50% or more of the citizen voting-age population. In combination with a few other factors, a majority-minority district may be required by the VRA. ([See Rules of Redistricting: The Voting Rights Act](#))

Minority vote dilution

- Drawing districts which result in minority voters having less of a chance of electing their candidate(s) of choice. This is often done by “[packing](#)” or “[cracking](#).”

Nesting

- A redistricting rule where each upper house (such as the state senate) district is made up of two lower house districts (such as the state assembly).

One Person, One Vote

- The Equal Population rule. A phrase that describes the constitutional requirement that each district be substantially equal in total population. Typically, this means that every district in a redistricting plan should contain the same number of people, regardless of age or citizenship.

Packing

- An overconcentration of a minority population into a suboptimal number of districts. For example, packing occurs when a minority population makes up 90% of the district instead of two districts where the minority population makes up 50% of each district.

Reapportionment

- The redistribution of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives based on changes in a state's population. This occurs so that a state's representation in Congress is proportional to its population. Reapportionment is not redistricting, although some states use the terms interchangeably.

Redistricting

- The process used by governments to redraw political district boundaries and applies to all levels of government where district elections are held. Maps are redrawn every ten years after the Census to create districts with substantially equal populations to, at minimum, account for population shifts. There are many types of Redistricting Processes (see Strategies for Different Redistricting Processes)

Unity Map

- A proposed map drawn by a coalition of multiple community groups that demonstrates their multiple communities of interest can be simultaneously respected.

Voting Age Population (VAP)

- The total population ages 18 and over. (Related to CVAP)

Voting Rights Act (VRA)

- The federal legislation passed in 1965 to ensure state and local governments do not pass laws or policies that deny American citizens the equal right to vote based on race. Section 2 of the VRA protects voters from discrimination based on race, color, or membership in a language minority group in all election procedures.

Resources

[Toolkit on Redistricting in CA at Local Level](#)

[Info about all Commissions in Cali](#)

[Image for Our Work to Establish Fair Redistricting](#)

[Image for Representative Democracy](#)

[Image for Why Districting and Redistricting Matter to You](#)

[Image for Our Constitution Requires a Census](#)

[Image for Practices: Introduction](#)

[Image for Why Districting and Redistricting Matter to You](#)

[CA Congressional Districts](#)

[CA Counties Map](#)

[Quote about the Census \(Article 1 Sec. 2\)](#)

[Image of CRC selection for prop 11](#)