

SOUTH CAROLINA SENATE
REDISTRICTING PUBLIC HEARINGS
INFORMATION AND REQUEST FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

What is the purpose of the public hearings?

The South Carolina State Senate Judiciary Committee's Redistricting Subcommittee is holding hearings across the state to receive information from the public about how to conduct the upcoming redistricting process. While the Subcommittee is charged with drawing districts that reflect new population totals and comply with federal law, it also wants to provide for districts that are truly representative of the people who live in them. In order to do this, the Subcommittee needs first-hand information from people all around the state about the areas in which they live. These hearings are not being held to receive comments on specific redistricting plans. Rather, their purpose is to gather information about how the public would like the redistricting process carried out, and to identify specific communities of interest that the public believes the Subcommittee should take into account when drawing new district boundaries.

What is the census and reapportionment?

A census is a government-sponsored periodic counting, or enumeration, of the total resident population (citizens and non-citizens). The United States Constitution requires that an enumeration be made every 10 years in order to determine the number of members each state will have in the U.S. House of Representatives. Congress has established the United States Census Bureau to conduct the census. The Census Bureau defines "apportionment" as "the process of dividing the 435 memberships, or seats, in the House of Representatives among the 50 states." The results of the 2010 Census Bureau may be found on the internet at www.census.gov. Publications of the Census Bureau also are available in libraries. After the census is taken, an announcement is made concerning how many seats each state will have in the U.S. House of Representatives. This process is called "reapportionment." According to the 2010 Census figures released so far, the total resident population for the United States is 308,745,538, representing nationwide growth of about 9.7%. **The total resident population for South Carolina is 4,625,364, representing statewide growth of 15.3%.** As the result of the reapportionment process, **South Carolina will have 7 seats in the United States House of Representatives beginning in 2012, a gain of one congressional seat.**

What is redistricting?

Redistricting is the process by which a state legislature or other government entity divides an area into new representative districts based upon the area's population. The South Carolina General Assembly will have to draw the state's **7 congressional districts, 46 State Senate districts, and 124 districts for the State House of Representatives.** The Subcommittee plans to propose Senate and Congressional districts. The population for **each new congressional district** should be approximately **660,767 persons.** The population for **each new Senate district** should be approximately **100,552 persons.**

What rules apply to redistricting?

Congressional and legislative districts must be redrawn following the census in order to comply with the requirements of federal law and to ensure that the representatives are elected from districts with approximately the same population. For example, members of the U.S. House of Representatives would have districts with approximately 660,767 persons, and State Senators would have districts of approximately 100,552 persons.

Generally, redistricting plans must adhere to the principle of “one person, one vote,” the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution, the Voting Rights Act, and federal constitutional and statutory provisions as interpreted by case law. However, the U.S. Supreme Court has recognized that states may follow “traditional redistricting principles” which are reasonable state policies.

What are “traditional redistricting principles?”

Traditional redistricting principles are guidelines or criteria a state may choose to follow in redrawing district lines. Examples of traditional redistricting principles would include that: (1) districts be compact and contiguous; (2) district boundaries follow natural, man-made, or political geographic boundaries (like mountain ridges, roads, or county or municipal lines or precinct boundaries); (3) cores of existing districts be maintained in order to allow for a continuation of similar representation; or (4) communities of interest be kept together in the same district. We would like to hear your ideas about which principles are important.

What are Guidelines or Criteria?

In the past, the Senate Judiciary Committee’s Redistricting Subcommittee has adopted specific guidelines or criteria to be followed in redrawing districts. These guidelines or criteria take into account federal requirements; however, they also incorporate traditional redistricting principles recommended to the Subcommittee during public hearings.

How can you help?

At the public hearings being conducted around the State, let the Subcommittee know what guidelines or criteria it should adopt as standards when the Senate begins to draw district lines, and about communities of interest in your area. We want to identify neighborhoods, towns, political subdivisions, or other geographical areas that you believe the Subcommittee should take into account when drawing new district boundaries. Be as specific as possible. Please tell us whether your suggestions pertain to the Senate or Congressional districts. Explain why you believe that a certain area is a “community of interest,” and describe it for us. Maps will be available for you to mark in the hearing room.

If you cannot attend a public hearing or wish to submit your recommendations in writing, send them to **S.C. Senate Judiciary Committee, Redistricting Subcommittee, P.O. Box 142, Columbia, S.C. 29202** or **e-mail them to SenateRedistricting@scsenate.gov**. Please provide this information to the Subcommittee by no later than **Friday, April 8, 2011**. Again, the Subcommittee will receive proposed redistricting plans for the Senate and Congress later in the process, and you will have an opportunity to submit a plan if you wish to do so at that time. **We also invite you to stay involved in the process by referring to our website, <http://redistricting.scsenate.gov> for more information and updates.**