

For Your Information

What is Redistricting and Why is it Important?

By Lauri Strauss

At some point this year, the Georgia General Assembly is expected to redistrict the state. Districts are geographical territories that determine how many elected officials represent each state in the U.S. House of Representatives, what district you live in and who are your state legislators. Redistricting takes place in every state every 10 years after the U.S. Census Bureau has collected its recent data.

In many states, including Georgia, legislators are responsible for redistricting. Other states may use special commissions. State legislators use the data collected from the Census to determine factors such as how many people live in the state and where they live. Depending on the data, legislators may determine the current district lines need to be redrawn. According to the Constitution, districts are intended to be nearly equal in population, so as populations change, so may the district lines and even the number of districts in each state. Georgia currently has 14 districts. You will find a current map of the districts [here](#).

How does redistricting impact you? Most people probably don't notice when redistricting occurs. But for some, it may mean you will be represented by a new U.S. congressperson or even state legislator.

Although most people were focused on the national elections in 2020, what was happening in the local elections was important in determining which party would control Georgia's state legislature. Even though Georgians voted democratic in the races for President and U.S. Senate, Republicans still control the state's house and senate chambers. This may be important when it comes time to redistrict. When a specific party controls their state legislature, they oversee the redistricting process. Although redistricting is supposed to be nonpartisan, some believe the political party in the majority uses redistricting to make it easier for their party to be elected to Congress and harder for their opponent's party. This is called gerrymandering.

As of today, Georgia's legislators have not announced a timeframe for redistricting. Some states have laws that determine when redistricting needs to be complete. Georgia laws do not. A recent [report](#) states legislators won't receive their Census data before July 30, so redistricting likely won't take place until the second half of the year.

You'll find more about redistricting at the following sites:

[All About Redistricting](#)

[Fair Districts Georgia](#)

[National Conference of State Legislatures](#)

[Redistricting in Georgia](#)

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