

# Your Commissioners

# Make your voice heard!



## Washington State Redistricting Commission



**Lura Powell, Ph.D.**  
Non-Voting Chair  
Richland



**Slade Gorton**  
Senate Republican Appointee  
Seattle



**Tim Ceis**  
Senate Democratic Appointee  
Seattle



**Dean Foster**  
House Democratic Appointee  
Olympia



**Tom Huff**  
House Republican Appointee  
Gig Harbor

### How can I get involved in redistricting?

- Send us your comments and insights about your community and what makes it whole.
- Send us your idea of how voting district boundaries should be drawn in your community or throughout the state.
- Participate in a public forum. Visit our website to find out where and when. You can also attend via webcast.

### Contact Us

[www.redistricting.wa.gov](http://www.redistricting.wa.gov)  
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### Follow Us On



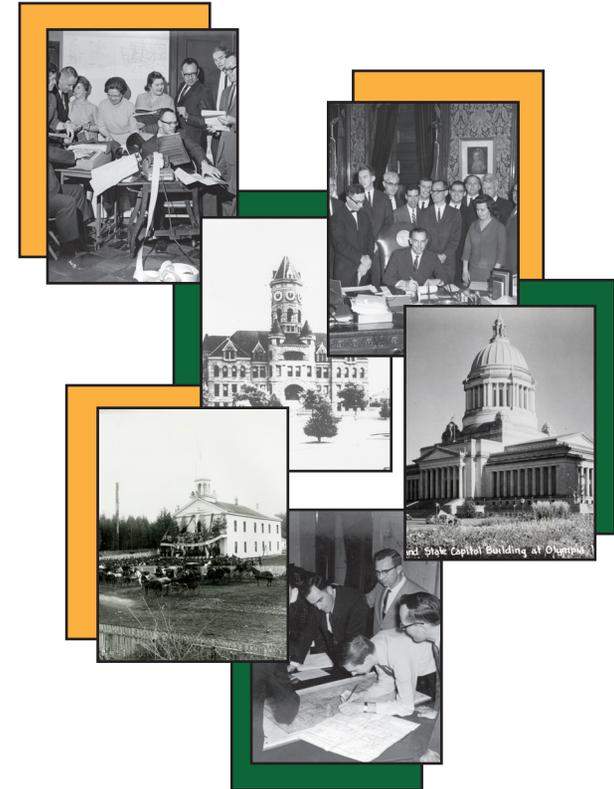
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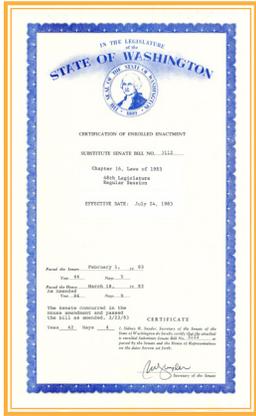
For links to these resources, visit our website [www.redistricting.wa.gov](http://www.redistricting.wa.gov)



Left to right: Commissioner Tom Huff, Commissioner Dean Foster, Chair Lura Powell, Commissioner Tim Ceis, Commissioner Slade Gorton



# Your voice, Your vote. Make it count!



The U.S. Constitution requires that all states evaluate electoral district boundaries every ten years following the U.S. Census. In 1983, Washington voters established the Washington State Redistricting Commission to ensure district boundaries are redrawn through a fair and bipartisan process. The Redistricting Commission includes two Democrats and two Republicans as voting members and a non-voting, nonpartisan chair.

## What is redistricting?

Redistricting is the process of changing the boundaries of voting districts so that all districts have nearly equal numbers of people, and groups that have minority interests in government are not divided. This ensures everyone has equal voting rights.

## Why redistrict?

As states and communities grow and change, people's representation in government begins to get out of balance. Redistricting brings everything back into balance to make sure that each person is represented fairly in the state Legislature and the U.S. Congress.

## Is the process influenced by political parties?

The process has been set up to make redistricting as fair as possible for everyone. Commission members are appointed by the legislative leaders of the two largest political parties in each house of the legislature. A majority of the four voting commissioners must agree on a final legislative and congressional redistricting plan by the deadline set in the State Constitution.

## What is reapportionment?

Reapportionment happens every ten years to redistribute congressional seats among the 50 states so everyone is fairly represented in the U.S. Congress. Federal law requires that the U.S. House of Representatives have 435 seats divided between all 50 states.

Each state receives at least one congressional seat. The remaining 385 are divided or "apportioned" according to population. As the population of some states grows faster than that of others, congressional seats move from the slow-growing states to the fast-growing ones.

The 2010 Census counted just over 6.7 million people living in Washington. With our significant growth, Washington will gain a 10th congressional seat. The Redistricting Commission must draw the voting boundaries for this new congressional district.

## How many people will be in each district?

The number of people per district is based on the 2010 Census. Each district must have a population that is "as nearly equal as is practicable." That means that with a population of 6.7 million and 49 legislative districts, ideally each one should have 137,235 people and the ten congressional districts should have 672,454 people.

## What criteria have to be considered in redrawing voting district boundaries?

The criteria for redrawing boundaries are laid out in state and federal law. Voting district boundaries must be drawn to:

- Encompass equal numbers of people or as nearly equal as can be done (or is "practicable").
- Comply with the Voting Rights Act to ensure minorities have an equal opportunity to elect representatives of their choice.
- Ensure that each district is contiguous, compact and convenient to the extent reasonable.
- Respect boundaries of cities, counties, neighborhoods and communities that have common interests and minimize their division.
- Establish boundaries that do not favor or discriminate against an incumbent, candidate, or political party.



Pre - 1950s

**1889** - The state Constitution requires that the Legislature redistrict based on "the number of inhabitants" after each U.S. Census.

**1889** - The original Legislature consists of 70 representatives and 35 senators. More are added in 1890 and 1901 to keep up with the state's population growth.

**1931** - Citizens complain that representation is badly apportioned and debate using an initiative to redraw district boundaries.

**1954** - The League of Women Voters proposes its own redistricting initiative—Initiative 199—after legislators battle along party lines to redraw voting boundaries.

**1956** - Initiative 199 passes, linking redistricting to population trends in the state. But in the next session, the Legislature amends the resulting redistricting plan significantly.

**1958** - The League of Women Voters proposes an amendment to the state Constitution that would establish a commission to take over redistricting if the Legislature failed to quickly adopt a redistricting plan. Voters reject the amendment.

**1960s** - The League of Women Voters proposes another initiative to improve redistricting. The federal court gets involved after finding that the districts drawn in 1957 were discriminatory. The Legislature takes three years to pass compromise legislation that satisfies federal justices.

**1970s** - The U.S. District Court finds that the 1965 redistricting legislation is unconstitutional. The state is restricted from holding further elections under the existing law. The court gives the state until February 25, 1972, to create a fair redistricting plan. The Legislature fails to meet the deadline, and the court draws the redistricting plan for the state.

**1980s** - In 1982, growing weary of the constant battles, the Legislature proposes a bill to create an independent, bipartisan redistricting committee to begin work in 1991. But facing another court imposed 90-day mandate, it appoints a temporary five-commissioner panel, which successfully meets the 1983 redistricting deadline.

**1983** - Voters approve a ballot measure to amend the state Constitution and institute the commission. Washington becomes the third state in the U.S. to redistrict by commission.

**1991** - The first Redistricting Commission meets and successfully creates a redistricting plan by the constitutional deadline.

**2001** - The second Redistricting Commission generates a redistricting plan by the constitutional deadline.

**2011** - The third Redistricting Commission convenes.

1950s

1960s

1970s

1980s

1990s

2000s

