



FAIR DISTRICTS COLORADO (FDC)

Who We Are

- Our Team includes Republican, Democratic, and Unaffiliated Colorado leaders as well as nonpartisan organizations.
- Our Leadership: League of Women Voters of Colorado, former Secretary of State Bernie Buescher (D), former Speaker Frank McNulty (R), former Speaker Mark Ferrandino (D), former State Rep. Kathleen Curry (U), former State Rep. Rob Witwer (R), former Senate Minority Leader Josh Penry (R), and former Deputy Secretary of State Bill Hobbs (U).
- Fair Districts Colorado, through Kathleen Curry and Toni Larson (Vice Chair, League of Women Voters of Colorado) as proponents, today filed three initiatives to reform congressional and legislative redistricting in Colorado.

Our Principles

- Redistricting should be done by an independent commission consisting, to the extent possible, equally of Republicans, Democrats, and Unaffiliated and non-major party members. It should reflect Colorado's geographic and racial/ethnic diversity. Both parties should have equal input on the composition of the commission, and processes should be put in place to ensure that neither party can gain control over the non-major party members.
- The commission should be required to obtain a supermajority in order to pass any map.
- Maps should be drawn by nonpartisan staff, instead of political insiders.
- The commission and its staff should be guided by neutral, fair, good-government criteria in drawing maps, such as U.S. Constitutional requirements, the Federal Voting Rights Act, county and city integrity, compactness, communities of interest, and competitiveness. Districts should not be drawn for the purpose of favoring or disadvantaging any political party, candidate or incumbent.
- The commission should be subject to transparency measures, such as citizen participation, open meetings and open records laws, sunshine laws, and adequate notice and timelines for participation.

Gerrymandering is also a Problem in CO

- Colorado's Congressional map contains only one truly competitive district and unnecessarily divides up communities of interest, such as southern Jefferson County.
- Colorado's State House map contains only 4 competitive districts out of 65. Only 3 districts have changed party hands all decade.
- The two major parties have made a mockery of the process in recent decades, ignoring public input, violating straightforward good government criteria for redistricting, and violating common-sense transparency criteria.
- The 1974 initiative that launched the Colorado Reapportionment Commission initially succeeded in taking back the redistricting process from political partisans. But by 2001 and 2011, political partisanship had hijacked the process once again.

Email us FairDistrictsColorado@gmail.com

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League of Women Voters of Colorado www.lwvcolorado.org

Represent Us www.represent.us

The Centrist Project www.centristproject.org

Independent Voter Network www.ivn.us

FDC Solutions

Unaffiliated and Third Party Voters Have No Voice

The Problem

- Whether it's congressional or legislative redistricting, the process is dominated by the state's 2 largest political parties. Unaffiliated and third-party voters have little, if any, formalized representation in the map drawing process. Meanwhile, more than 1/3rd of Colorado voters, who don't affiliate with either party have no formal voice in the process.

FDC's Solution

- Create a politically balanced commission, 1/3rd of which is composed of members not affiliated with either major party.
- Require 8 votes (of 12) to pass a map, including the affirmative vote of at least one member not affiliated with either major party.

Communities of Interest Succumb to Party Interests

The Problem

- Geographic communities of interest are routinely ignored, particularly outside the Denver-metro area.
- Racial and ethnic communities are subject to "cracking" and "packing" by both parties, in an effort to maximize political advantage.

FDC's Solution

- Create a balanced commission that includes members not affiliated with either major party with representation from every congressional district, plus from the West Slope and southern Colorado.
- Encourage that the commission reflect Colorado's geographic and racial and ethnic diversity.

Too Many "Safe" Seats / Lack of Competitiveness

The Problem

- Districts are drawn to protect the interests of partisans and incumbents. In these "safe" seats, candidates effectively "win" once they gain the nomination. They do not have to appeal to a broad cross-section of Colorado's electorate.
- Only 1 of Colorado's 7 congressional districts is arguably competitive.
- Only 4 of Colorado's 65 state house districts are arguably competitive.

FDC's Solution

- Require a truly politically balanced commission that includes members not affiliated with either major party to maximize the number of competitive districts.
- Nonpartisan, professional staff will draw district maps using fair criteria, including the creation of competitive seats.

Lack of Transparency / Public Comment Ignored

The Problem

- In 2001 and 2011, the Colorado Reapportionment Commission, after a many-month process ostensibly designed to gather public input on draft maps, rammed through brand new maps at the 11th hour, just hours after introduction, on a 6-5 vote.
- Congressional mapping has been equally problematic. Because of gridlock, a Denver District Court judge is forced to pick a single, partisan drawn map.

FDC's Solution

- Require the commission to adhere to basic transparency initiatives: open meetings, sunshine laws, open records requirements, and an extensive public hearings process.
- The commission cannot pass a map until at least 72 hours after a map is introduced or amended, whichever is later, unless the commission unanimously waives such requirement.