



the

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Redistricting: A Primer with Predictions

It's mapping time again. Time for Illinois lawmakers to figure out who votes for whom.

While the process is intended to ensure that each citizen has equal representation in government, the results can dictate the success or failure of each political party and this year, those stakes are especially high. Illinois is losing another congressional seat and with one party, the Democratic Party, controlling the state legislature and the Governor's Mansion, a Democratic map is likely. This could not only ensure the Democrats' majority in the Illinois General Assembly, but also enable them to vie for a majority of the state's Congressional seats.

How it Works

Every ten years the federal government is mandated by the U.S. Constitution to conduct a national census to determine how many representatives each state will have in the U.S. House of Representatives. While the number of U.S. representatives remains constant at 435, a state's share of representatives rises or falls as its population increases or decreases. Unfortunately, as other states' populations have outpaced Illinois', we have lost two Congressional seats since 2000, decreasing our number from 20 before 2000 to 18 after this year.

The census figures are used for more than



On September 5, 2001, Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White drew the name of a tie-breaking ninth person to add to the 2001 Illinois Redistricting Commission. Photo courtesy of the Illinois Secretary of State. Photographer: Russ Nagel, Illinois House of Representatives.

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determining our share of U.S. representatives, however. They're also used to help determine the size and location of districts within the state that elect state legislators and U.S. representatives. That process is called "redistricting" and it occurs the year after every federal census.

While there's an established process for redrawing the districts that elect our state lawmakers, there isn't one for redrawing the U.S. Congressional Districts. In the past, either the Illinois General Assembly or Illinois' Congressional delegation have redrawn those maps, but the Illinois legislature must approve them, as authorized by the U.S. Constitution, according to Steve Sandvoss, general counsel for the Illinois State Board of Elections. "Since at least 1960, the Illinois legislature has passed 'Congressional Reapportionment Acts' specifying the Congressional Districts following each decennial census," he says.

Redrawing the districts that elect our state lawmakers is a very different process and the State Constitution stipulates how that works. First, the Illinois General Assembly draws new Legislative Districts, which elect state senators, and new Representative Districts, which elect state representatives. (Illinois has 59 state senators and 118 state representatives.) Section three of the State Constitution requires that Legislative and Representative Districts be "compact, contiguous and substantially equal in population." If those new maps pass the House and Senate by a simple majority, they are sent to the governor who can approve or veto them.

If the legislature does not approve new maps by June 30, 2011, a Redistricting Commission is formed to create them. The bipartisan commission is comprised of eight people, with the House speaker, House minority leader, Senate president, and Senate minority leader each appointing two people to the commission (one must be a member of the General Assembly and the other a non-member). The commission must then produce new district maps which five of its members approve.

If it cannot do that by August 10, 2011 the process and outcome fall to luck. By September 1, the Illinois Supreme Court would have to send Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White the names of two people of different political parties who could serve as the ninth member of the Redistricting Commission. The secretary of state would have until September 5, 2011 to draw one of those names to serve as the tie-breaking member of the commission. Historically, if

the person chosen was a Republican, the Republican-favored map won and vice versa.

Past Redistrictings

The only time since the Illinois State Constitution was approved in 1970 that redistricting hasn't been left to luck of the draw was in 1971. The Republicans controlled the House and the governor's seat (Richard Ogilvie was governor), while the Democrats had a slight lead in the Senate. (Although the Senate had equal numbers of Republicans and Democrats, the Senate leader -- Cecil Partee, was a Democrat.) The legislature wasn't able to agree on a new map, but the Redistricting Commission was, before the secretary of state had to draw the name of a tie-breaking ninth member.

Former governor Jim Edgar was involved with redistricting that year, as an aide to the Senate Republican leadership. "What the framers of the (State) Constitution thought is, if you put the tie-breaker in as a threat, that neither party would be foolish enough not to compromise," he says, laughing. "It worked the first time.

"Bob Blair, speaker of the House, worked out an agreement with the Democrats on the (Redistricting) Commission (in 1971)," Edgar explains. "Blair didn't want to take a chance on losing everything to the Democrats. He figured he could get a better deal than by taking a chance."

There's never been a "compromise" map since. But there was a time when the legislature passed a new map. That was in 1991, when Edgar was governor; he was the only Republican leader. Democrats held majorities in both chambers of the General Assembly and the Illinois Congressional delegation, and they held both U.S. Senate seats. "It was a Democratic map and I vetoed it," Edgar says. "It wasn't a big deal, everybody knew I was going to veto it and everybody knew that the map wouldn't go any place when they passed it." Then Secretary of State George Ryan had to draw a tie-breaking ninth-member of the Redistricting Commission to get a map approved.

The process was also left to a tie-breaking draw in 1981 and 2001. Out of the three years that a tie-breaker has been drawn, a Republican name was picked once and a Democratic name twice.

New This Year

This year is the first time since the State Constitution was approved in 1970 that one party, in this case the Democratic Party, has controlled the General

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Assembly and governor's seat. That could make the process a slam dunk for them, but not necessarily an easy one.

On May 11, the Illinois Republican Party and its Chairman Pat Brady filed a lawsuit in Springfield challenging the constitutionality of leaving the redistricting process to a tie-breaking draw by the secretary of state. The lawsuit could stall the redistricting process because it asks that the legislature quit working on new maps until the lawsuit is settled.

Another consideration for lawmakers is a new law signed by Governor Pat Quinn in March that was a response to voter grievances. During the last redistricting, in 2001, Chinese-Americans in Chicago were split into four different districts, which diminished their voting bloc power. The state's increasing Latino and Asian populations, and gay community, have also spoken out this year for the right to preserve their voting blocs, and there have been complaints that the general public has been kept out of the redistricting process as well. The new law requires that voting districts maintain blocs of minority voters and that public hearings be held to get input on new districts.

However, James Nowlan, a senior fellow at the University of Illinois Institute of Government and Public Affairs and a former legislator, thinks the public hearings don't mean much. "Maybe I'm cynical, but I think that (the hearings) will be primarily for show and will not have any substantive impact on the maps," he says.

Nonetheless, based on input from the public hearings, in mid-April lawmakers made available to the public technology and data they could use to create new voting districts and submit them to the General Assembly for consideration. These so-called "workstations" are located at the Bilandic Building in Chicago and the Stratton Office Building in Springfield.

Despite the workstations and hearings, public interest in this year's redistricting is "very low, like ten years ago," says Kent Redfield, professor of political science and interim director for the Institute for Legislative Studies at the University of Illinois at Springfield. "When asked, the public cares about the general principles of redistricting -- fair representation and an open, unbiased process. But they are largely unaware of how it affects them personally, are unaware of the process and therefore, are unconcerned."

Predictions

Since the Democrats control both legislative chambers and the governor's seat, political observers say they'll draw districts favoring their party, pass the map in the legislature, and Governor Quinn will likely approve it, "before the (state) budget is passed," adds Redfield.

There could be road bumps along the way, besides the lawsuit filed by Republicans. "It's conceivable that there would be Democratic groupings, such as the Black Caucus, that might resist a map coming out of the Senate or House and do so on the floor, but I'm guessing the leaders will have everything wrapped up before they present (new maps) to the public," Nowlan says. Redfield points out another potential road bump: if the legislature doesn't pass new voting maps before its scheduled adjournment date of May 31, it will need a three-fifths majority to pass them, which will require some Republican support.

After that, "I will be shocked if Quinn would veto what the Democrats send him," Edgar says.

Redfield predicts that the biggest winners of this year's redistricting will likely be "Hispanic groups seeking more representation and incumbent African-American legislators. The next biggest winners will be Chicago and suburban Democrats and downstate urban Democrats. The biggest losers will be the Republicans, with the next biggest losers being downstate Democrats." In terms of the Congressional districts, Redfield says "it will be a partisan map where the Democrats will try to regain seats upstate, in the suburbs, while eliminating the (17th) district that went Republican last November, with the election of Bobby Schilling."



For More Information

<http://ilsenateredistricting.com/> -- The Illinois Senate Redistricting Committee web site

<http://www.ilhousedems.com/redistricting/>
-- The Illinois House Redistricting Committee web site

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Redistricting Timeline

June 30, 2011 - If the Illinois General Assembly does not have a redistricting plan effective by this date, a Legislative Redistricting Commission has to be formed. Half of the eight-member commission will be Republicans and half will be Democrats. The Illinois Senate president, Senate minority leader, Illinois House speaker, and House minority leader each appoint two members to the commission.

July 10, 2011 - If needed, the Legislative Redistricting Commission must be formed by this date.

August 10, 2011 - The Redistricting Commission must submit a redistricting plan approved by at least five of its members to the Illinois Secretary of State by this date. If it does not, the Illinois Supreme Court gives the Secretary of State the names of two people, of different political parties, by September 1.

September 5, 2011 - If the Redistricting Commission still hasn't approved a redistricting plan, the Secretary of State has until this date to draw, randomly, the name of one of the two people the Illinois Supreme Court recommended to serve as the ninth member of the Commission.

October 5, 2011 - Final deadline for the Redistricting Commission to submit to the Secretary of State a redistricting plan approved by at least five of its members.

March 20, 2012 - Primary election

November 6, 2012 - General election



Transitions

Tom Schwartz, Illinois State Historian with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, is leaving that post on June 30 to become the head of the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum.

On April 25, **Governor Pat Quinn** appointed **Salvador "Tony" Godinez** to head the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC). Previously Godinez headed the Cook County Sheriff's Department of Corrections. Former IDOC Acting Director **Gladys Taylor** has returned to her former position as the department's assistant director.

Also on April 25, Governor Quinn re-appointed **Warren Ribley** as director of the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) and **Major General William Enyart** as Illinois' Adjutant General, directing the state's Department of Military Affairs.

Mary R. Kenney became the new executive director of the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) on April 15 through appointment by the IHDA board. She had been the Authority's general counsel before she became its acting executive director. Kenney's predecessor, **Gloria L. Materre**, became head of the Illinois Liquor Control Commission in March.

