

A LEADER'S GUIDE TO

Michigan's New Redistricting Process

On November 6, 2018, **more than 2.5 million Michigan voters** passed a redistricting reform amendment to put the power to draw election district maps in the hands of the voters - not politicians.

The redistricting reform amendment created an Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission that will draw Michigan's election district maps for the U.S. House of Representatives, Michigan Senate, and Michigan House of Representatives following a fair, impartial, and transparent process.

The amendment specifies

WHO will draw the maps
and **HOW** and **WHEN**
the process will take place.

WHO draws the maps?

Some voters are disqualified from serving on the Commission to avoid conflicts of interest. Every registered Michigan voter is eligible to apply to serve on the Commission **unless, in the past 6 years, they have been any of the following:**

- (i) A declared candidate for partisan federal, state, or local office;
- (ii) An elected official to partisan federal, state, or local office;
- (iii) An officer or member of the governing body of a national, state, or local political party;
- (iv) A paid consultant or employee of a federal, state, or local elected official or political candidate, of a federal, state, or local political candidate's campaign, or of a political action committee;
- (v) An employee of the legislature;
- (vi) Any person who is registered as a lobbyist agent with the Michigan Bureau of Elections, or any employee of such person; or
- (vii) An unclassified state employee who is exempt from classification in state civil service pursuant to article XI, section 5, except for employees of courts of record, employees of the state institutions of higher education, and persons in the armed forces of the state;
- (c) Not be a parent, stepparent, child, stepchild, or spouse of any individual disqualified under part (1)(b) of this section; or
- (d) Not be otherwise disqualified for appointed or elected office by this constitution.

The **Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission** is comprised of 13 registered Michigan voters (4 who affiliate with the Republican party, 4 who affiliate with the Democratic party, and 5 who align with neither). Any Michigan voter can obtain an application online or at a Secretary of State (SOS) branch ("**open application**"). The SOS is required to mail applications to at least 10,000 randomly selected registered voters ("**mailed application**"). The final commissioners will be randomly selected from a pool that includes "**open**" applicants and "**mailed**" applicants.

Nonpartisan candidates and officials (certain mayors, city council members, school, or library board members) **are eligible** to serve.

Partisan precinct delegates are not eligible.

(Example) Michigan Democratic Party Chair and Oakland County Republican Treasurer are **not eligible**.

(Example) Campaign manager of Gov. Whitmer's 2018 campaign or a paid consultant of the Realtors PAC of Michigan are **not eligible**.

Only applies to **lobbyist agents who are required under state law to register with the Michigan Bureau of Elections** and those agents' employees.

(Example) Employees of a lobbying firm are **not eligible**. Engineers at Ford Motor Co. who are not registered lobbyist agents themselves **are eligible**.

 **VOTERS NOT POLITICIANS**



HOW are the maps drawn?

The Commission must draw election district maps following the criteria and process laid out in the amendment. A foundation of the new process is citizen input and engagement. The Commission is required to hold at least 10 public hearings before and 5 public hearings after the maps are drawn and solicit public input during the redistricting process. Communities are encouraged to submit their own proposed maps to the Commission. Another hallmark of the new process is transparency. The Commissioners must conduct all redistricting business in open meetings and everything discussed or used to draw the maps will be public record.



The maps must meet strict criteria in priority order:

1. Comply with all federal laws, including **equal population** as mandated by the United States Constitution and the **Voting Rights Act**
2. Be a **single, contiguous** shape
3. **Respect Michigan's communities**, such as school districts, agricultural regions, and others
4. Not give a **disproportionate advantage** to any political party (no partisan gerrymandering)
5. Not give a **disproportionate advantage** to any incumbent elected official or candidate
6. Take into account **existing boundaries** such as cities, townships, and counties
7. Be reasonably **compact**

WHEN are the maps drawn?

The required timeline is set forth in the amendment. Below is the timeline for the upcoming 2021 redistricting cycle:

- **Late 2019** (no later than January 1, 2020) - Application period opens (includes at least 10,000 mailed by the SOS to randomly selected voters)
- **June 1, 2020** - Last day to submit an application
- **June - July, 2020** - SOS sorts applications and uses statistical weighting to randomly select a group of 200 "semi-finalists" that are representative of Michigan's geographic and demographic diversity
- **August 1, 2020** - Legislative leaders strike up to 20 applicants total from the semi-finalist pool of 200
- **September 1, 2020** - Final 13 Commission members randomly selected (4 Republicans, 4 Democrats, and 5 neither R nor D)
- **October 15, 2020** - Commission convenes
- **Through November 1, 2021** - Commission holds public meetings
- **Approx. February 1, 2021** - Census data becomes available
- **November 1, 2021** - Commission adopts final set of maps
- **August 2, 2022** - First statewide primary elections using Commission-drawn election district maps
- **November 8, 2022** - First general election using Commission-drawn election district maps

Q: Who is “Voters Not Politicians?”

A: Voters Not Politicians (VNP) is a nonpartisan, grassroots group of more than 6,500 everyday citizens who joined together to end gerrymandering in Michigan. VNP crafted a constitutional amendment with input from the public that put redistricting in the hands of voters - not politicians. VNP volunteers collected 425,000+ signatures to put the amendment (“Proposal 2”) on the 2018 ballot and led a successful campaign to pass the amendment with 61% of the vote on Election Day in 2018.

Q: What are “redistricting” and “gerrymandering?”

A: The US Constitution requires states to redraw legislative and congressional election district boundaries - called “redistricting” or “reapportionment” - every 10 years to ensure districts have equal population despite population changes.

“Gerrymandering” happens when politicians use redistricting to manipulate district maps. Politicians and their highly paid consultants use sophisticated computer algorithms to predict voting patterns so they can manipulate districts that give their party an unfair advantage in the next decade of elections.

Q: What is a Redistricting Commission?

A: The amendment took redistricting power from politicians and put it in the hands of the voters. The **Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission** is comprised of 13 Michigan voters (4 who affiliate with the Republican party, 4 with the Democratic party, and 5 who align with neither).

Q: How can Michigan voters apply for the Commission?

A: Any registered Michigan voter can apply to serve on the Commission by applying online once the Secretary of State’s office opens the application process in late 2019. The Secretary of State will also mail applications to at least 10,000 randomly selected registered voters. The application form will ask for information like name, address where registered to vote, basic demographic information, and political party affiliation.

Q: How will Commissioners be selected?

A: The Secretary of State’s office administers the random selection of 200 semifinalists from a pool of eligible applicants: 60 Republicans, 60 Democrats, and 80 who are not affiliated with those parties. The random selection process uses demographic and geographic categories so that the pool of 200 reflects the makeup of Michigan. The majority and minority leaders in the Michigan House and Senate will each be able to strike up to 5 applicants from the pool. The Secretary of State will then oversee the random selection of the final 13 Commission members from the remaining pool of applicants.

Q: Are ordinary citizens qualified to draw maps?

A: Yes! The #1 job of Commissioners is to listen to the public about where the boundaries of their communities are. The Commission has the power and a budget to hire experts and consultants to use public feedback and data to draw the maps.

Q: How long will Commissioners serve?

A: Commissioners must convene by October 15, 2020, and will serve until the new voting maps have been adopted and any judicial review of the maps has concluded (likely 2-3 years total). A new Commission will form every 10 years.

Q: How can Michigan citizens participate if they aren’t selected to serve on the Commission?

A: Before the Commission draws maps, it must hold 10 public hearings across the state to hear from citizens how they want their communities to be represented. After the Commission drafts final maps, it is required to hold another 5 public hearings to gather feedback from citizens before the maps are adopted. Any citizens can submit comments, concerns, feedback, and proposed maps for the Commission in person, online, or by mail at any time during the process.

Q: What are communities of interest?

A: A “community of interest” is a geographically connected group of people with shared social or economic interests they want represented in government. Communities of interest can be based on local economies, school districts, cultural ties, or other characteristics. At least 24 other states incorporate communities of interest when they draw election maps.

Q: How will the Commission approve the final maps?

A: The final maps must be approved by a simple majority of Commissioners (7 total) that includes at least 2 Republicans, 2 Democrats, and 2 Commissioners who align with neither major party. If this required majority cannot be met, the Commission will use a ranked choice voting system to select the final set of maps. In the unlikely event that this backup method does not produce a final map, a final map will be randomly selected by the Michigan Supreme Court from the maps (that meet the criteria) submitted by the Commissioners.

Q: What is the role of the Secretary of State’s office?

A: The Secretary of State’s role is purely administrative. Tasks include: providing registered voters with applications, mailing invitations to 10,000 randomly selected voters, eliminating applicants who are disqualified based only on the objective criteria in the amendment, and overseeing a random selection process to determine the final set of Commissioners.

Q: What is the role of the state legislative, executive, and judicial branches in this process?

A: There are multiple safeguards in the amendment to prevent interference from the legislative and executive branches of the Michigan state government. For example, state officials cannot withhold funds or transfer powers from the Commission to another department. The Governor cannot veto the final maps approved by the Commission. The judiciary plays a role only if the Commission cannot agree on a final set of maps or if there is a challenge to the final maps. Even if a map is voided by a Court, only the Commission has the power to redraw a new one.

Q: How much will the new redistricting process cost?

A: The Commission’s budget is at least 25% of the Secretary of State’s General Fund budget. Based on the 2018 budget, that’s about \$4.6 million each year the Commission is active.

Q: How will Commissioners handle travel reimbursement, health insurance, and other benefits?

A: The Commission has the power and budget to decide its own policies. A Commissioner’s salary will be considered as income if they apply for public assistance programs such as Medicaid.

Want to learn more about Michigan's Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission?

All of the information you need about the redistricting reform amendment is available at www.votersnotpoliticians.com/redistricting. You'll find:

- ▶ The full amendment language, just as it appears in Michigan's constitution
- ▶ A timeline for Michigan's 2021 redistricting cycle
- ▶ A way to sign up to get more information on applying



How can you engage your community in the new redistricting process?

It's critical that as many Michiganders are engaged in the new redistricting process as possible to have maps that reflect and respect our communities. Engage your community and ensure you have a say in Michigan's next election district maps!

Visit www.votersnotpoliticians.com/toolkit to find helpful resources and tools you can use to share information about Michigan's redistricting reform amendment with your community.

You can also **request a Voters Not Politicians presentation** at your next town hall or meeting at the link above.



Are you - or a room full of people at your next meeting - interested in receiving more information about applying to serve on Michigan's first Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission?

Visit: vnp.vote/DRAWTHELINE OR

Text*: [DRAWTHELINE to 555-888](tel:555-888)

*Reply STOP to stop.
Msg&Data rates may apply.

You will receive important updates about applying including upcoming deadlines and invitations to application workshops.

Have a question?

If you have a question about Michigan's new redistricting process or the Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission, please email info@votersnotpoliticians.com.



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