

# OKLAHOMA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

## REDRAWING THE LINES

### Legislative and Congressional Redistricting In 2021

#### The Reapportionment and Redistricting Process

Federal law requires states to redraw congressional boundaries every 10 years following the federal decennial census. The Oklahoma Constitution requires the Legislature to redraw legislative boundaries every 10 years following the census. It is necessary to reallocate congressional seats and redraw congressional and legislative boundaries to protect the principle of one person, one vote.

While they are separate and distinct parts of the same process, reapportionment and redistricting are terms often mistakenly used interchangeably.

#### Reapportionment

Reapportionment, which occurs at the federal level, is the process of allocating the 435 seats in the U. S. House of Representatives among the 50 states based on the population of each state. At the conclusion of each census, the U.S. Census Bureau reports the state population totals for all states and the apportionment numbers for each state to the President by December 31. Oklahoma currently has five congressional seats and is predicted to retain five seats.

#### Redistricting

Redistricting refers to the process of adjusting, or redrawing, legislative and congressional district boundaries to accommodate the reapportionment as well as the population changes within the state based on the 2020 census. All of Oklahoma's congressional districts, 48 Senate districts, and 101 House of Representatives districts are redrawn, to equalize representation.

#### The Rules That Govern Redistricting

Legislative and congressional redistricting are complex procedures influenced by a variety of factors. The Oklahoma Legislature is strictly bound by legal constraints established by the U. S. Constitution, the Oklahoma Constitution, Federal and Oklahoma statutes and court decisions. Some of the most significant constraints are as follows:

#### Maintain Population Equality

The U. S. Constitution requires that all congressional districts in a state be as nearly equal in population as practicable and that all legislative districts be substantially equal in population.

#### Protection of Minority Voting Rights and Participation

A redistricting plan which has the purpose of, or results in, the denial of the right to participate meaningfully in the political process on account of race, color or because a person is a member of a language minority group is prohibited.

#### Districts Must Be Contiguous

A district is contiguous if one can reach any part of the district from any other part without crossing the district boundary – in other words, if the district is not divided into two or more distinct pieces.

## Other Factors

The Legislature will consider other factors such as compactness, political subdivisions, the core of existing districts and communities of interest to the extent feasible. However, the courts require that equal population and minority rights be given top priority in any redistricting plan.

## A Statewide Plan

What causes legislative and congressional district boundaries to change? *While any given district may satisfy all pertinent legal criteria, the boundaries of that district may nonetheless have to be changed because of the necessary change in a boundary of another district.* This “ripple” or “domino” effect occurs when one or a combination of the legal criteria is out of balance in a congressional or legislative district. In order to adjust for such an imbalance, boundaries of all districts usually must also be redrawn. Therefore, the Legislature is required to create a statewide redistricting plan for Senate, House and Congressional districts and pass each plan as a separate legislative bill.

## Time Frame

Legislative and congressional districts must be redrawn every 10 years following the federal decennial census. Federal law requires the U.S. Census Bureau to provide the population data necessary for redistricting to every state no later than April 1, 2021. Legislative redistricting must be completed by the constitutionally mandated conclusion of the regular legislative session on May 28, 2021. Congressional redistricting has no deadline, but the Legislature aims to complete its work in time for the 2022 elections.

## Public Hearings

The purpose of public hearings is for the redistricting committees to be accessible to the public and to provide citizens an opportunity to address lawmakers regarding the upcoming legislative or congressional redistricting. In addition, public feedback and questions can be submitted to the House at [redistrictoklahoma2020@okhouse.gov](mailto:redistrictoklahoma2020@okhouse.gov) or Senate at [redistricting@oksenate.gov](mailto:redistricting@oksenate.gov).

## House Redistricting Committee

Rep. Ryan Martinez, Chair  
Rep. Daniel Pae, Co Vice-Chair  
Rep. Emily Virgin, Co Vice-Chair

All 101 House members also serve in one of eight regional subcommittees. Each regional subcommittee represent a section of the state and includes one or more counties.

### Northwest

- **Chair:** Representative Carl Newton
- **Vice Chair:** Representative Brian Hill

### Southwest

- **Chair:** Representative Trey Caldwell
- **Vice Chair:** Representative Toni Hasenbeck

### South Central

- **Chair:** Representative Tammy Townley
- **Vice Chair:** Representative Ronny Johns

### North Central

- **Chair:** Representative Ty Burns
- **Vice Chair:** Representative John Talley

### Oklahoma City/Oklahoma County

- **Chair:** Representative Nicole Miller
- **Vice Chair:** Representative Ajay Pittman

### Tulsa/Tulsa County

- **Chair:** Representative Sheila Dills
- **Vice Chair:** Representative Monroe Nichols

### Northeast

- **Chair:** Representative Jim Olsen
- **Vice Chair:** Representative Rusty Cornwell

### Southeast

- **Chair:** Representative Randy Randleman
- **Vice Chair:** Representative Jim Grego