



From citizenship to public service.

Principles Guiding Redistricting of Political Subdivisions and Independent Redistricting Commissions

Adopted by the Boards of Directors of the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) and the NALEO Educational Fund

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The process by which federal, state and local political jurisdictions draw their district lines has a significant impact on the ability of Latinos to have a meaningful opportunity to participate in our electoral process and to elect the candidates of their choice. The Boards of NALEO and the NALEO Educational Fund believe that in order to strengthen our democracy, the process and criteria used in redistricting must maximize the opportunity to achieve full Latino empowerment and representation. The Boards have adopted a set of principles which should apply to all redistrictings conducted by political jurisdictions, and a set of criteria to specifically assess independent redistricting commissions.

Principles for Redistrictings

1. All districts must comply with the requirements of the U.S. Constitution and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. This principle must be the highest priority for any redistricting.

The remaining principles are important, equally ranked in priority.

2. To the extent practicable, district boundaries should respect existing political subdivisions and communities of interest. To achieve this objective, district lines should use the boundaries of political subdivisions and undivided census tracts; natural geographic features; and shared racial, ethnic, social and economic interests.

3. Redistricting plans should maximize Latino electoral opportunities. This includes maximizing districts where Latinos have the opportunity to elect the candidates of their choice, as well as districts where Latinos can influence the outcome of elections.

4. The process for developing redistricting plans must be transparent and provide interested parties and the public a meaningful opportunity to participate and be heard.

5. Redistricting should be limited to once following each decennial Census. This will ensure that redistricting is conducted with the most recent and reliable data on population growth and composition. It will also prevent opportunistic redistrictings between Censuses that are motivated by partisan considerations.

Criteria for Independent Redistricting Commissions

1. The membership of the independent redistricting commission must reflect the geographic, racial, ethnic, gender, and age diversity of the political jurisdiction. Thus, the size, composition, and criteria and process for selection of commissioners must further the achievement of this diversity.
2. A majority of the commissioners must be appointed by individuals or entities that are accountable to the public.
3. There should be reasonable requirements for the qualifications and conduct of commissioners to ensure that they avoid conflicts of interest and the appearance of impropriety.
4. The independent commission's appointment process should be subject to judicial review before the commission is officially sworn in. Jurisdictions should also establish a system that allows for judicial review of the plans developed by the independent commission, and for a clear process for timely review in the event of legal challenges.
5. An independent redistricting commission should have sufficient funding which enables it to carry out its responsibilities in an effective manner, including dedicated funding for commissioners, staff and consultants.