

LOUISIANA REDISTRICTING



What to Know + How to Engage

Your voice is needed to help create districts that allow Black voters to elect their candidates of choice in areas where equitable representation has never been achieved.



Why is redistricting important?

Redistricting will determine political representation for the next 10 years. During this process, the lines and boundaries of governing bodies are redrawn so that each district is roughly equal in population size based on the most recent Census data. Your local, state, and federal elected representatives make decisions that impact your everyday life.

Are you concerned about:

- Public safety?
- Policing in your neighborhood?
- Your kids' education?
- Health issues in your community?

The makeup of districts can significantly influence whether and how elected officials respond to a community's needs.

You and your community have a voice in drawing district lines and a right to be involved in the map-drawing process. This is your chance to demand fair and representative districts.

What's at stake for Louisiana?

Louisiana's population has changed in dramatic ways (highlighted in the map below) in the past 10 years. There are new opportunities to create districts that allow Black voters to elect their candidates of choice in areas where equitable representation has never been achieved. Importantly, this cycle presents the opportunity for Louisiana's U.S. Congressional

districts to be redrawn to provide fair representation. While almost one in three Louisianans are Black, only one of the six Congressional districts has a majority-Black population. This redistricting cycle presents an opportunity to change that.

Who is involved in redistricting?

The **state legislature** is responsible for redrawing maps for:

- U.S. Congress
- State House and Senate
- State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
- Courts
- Public Service Commission

Local government authorities are responsible for redrawing maps for:

- Town council
- City council
- Parish council
- Police jury
- Local school boards

Most importantly, YOU, the public, can participate in the redistricting process. One of the best ways to engage in the process is by participating in the state legislature's "redistricting roadshow."

What is the redistricting roadshow?

From October through January, the Louisiana state legislature will hold a series of public hearings across the state, known as the "redistricting roadshow." Members of the Senate and House Governmental Affairs Committees will travel to different cities to make presentations on the map-drawing processes and hear public testimony about the state-level and federal districts. How to participate in the redistricting roadshow and state-level redistricting:

Written Testimony: You can submit written statements, letters, or maps to the House and Senate Governmental Affairs Committees. Statements emailed to h&ga@legis.la.gov and received 24 hours in advance will be distributed to the committee members prior to the meeting.

Public Statement: You can make a public statement in-person at the roadshow, which also becomes part of the public record.

How to participate in local redistricting in your community: Reach out to your local government authorities to ask when and how they plan to engage the public in the local redistricting process. Then you can submit written testimony and show up to any hearings. Every local government authority is required to hold a public hearing before adopting new maps.

What to include in your testimony:

Consider what values you want legislative leaders to consider when creating the maps. What communities do you think should be included in the same district and electing officials together? What are your communities of interest? Consider some of these guiding questions as you develop your testimony and then share your story:

- Who lives in your community?
- Does your neighborhood have traditions like festivals or parades?
- Are there important places where people gather?
- Has your community come together to advocate for important services?
- How is your community different or alike from the communities around you?
- Have you worked for more recognition or support of your community?

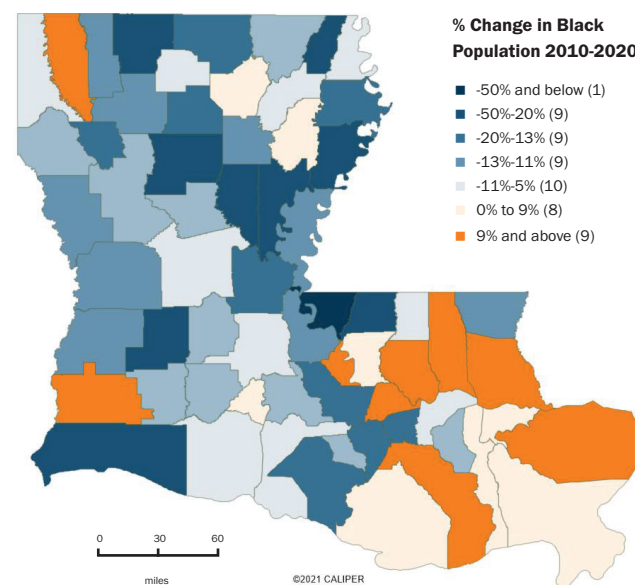
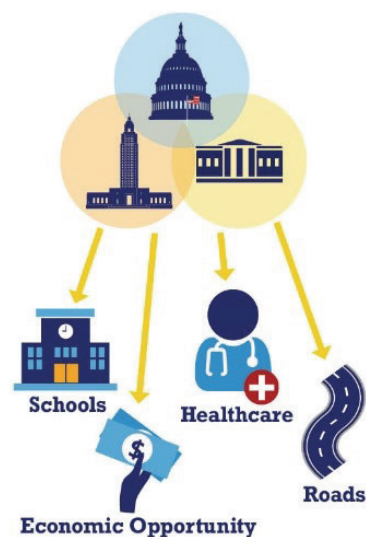
- Have your elected officials been responsive to the needs and concerns of your community?
- Are there communities of color that are not being fairly represented?
- Have the voters of color in your community suffered from a history of discrimination that has made it more difficult for members of the community to participate in the political process?

Remember that testimony to the state legislature during the redistricting roadshow should only address statewide redistricting (like the maps for U.S. Congress and state legislature), not local maps handled by your local government authorities.

How to present your testimony:

"Testifying" can feel overwhelming, but it's really just talking about why an issue is important to you. You are the expert on your own community. Have your testimony outlined and prepared ahead of time and when it comes time to testify, be sure to:

- Address members formally (e.g., Chairman Stefanski, Chairwoman Hewitt, members of the committee, etc.) and thank the committee members for the opportunity to testify.
- State your name, city or parish, and any other affiliation for the record, even if you have already been introduced or called upon by name.
- Keep in mind that you may be asked to summarize your testimony in two to three minutes. Members realize that the process may be intimidating; they do not expect perfect presentations.
- Tell your own story in your own words with conviction and passion. You are not expected to be a policy expert, just an expert on your experience.
- Remember that verbal testimony and written materials will be part of the public record and will be available to the public on the internet. Use discretion on what personal information you share.



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