

# Redistricting Changes Headed to the Ballot in Several States

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Associated Press

**A** U.S. Supreme Court ruling Monday on redistricting lawsuits in Wisconsin and Maryland comes as several states already are considering changes to the criteria and processes that will be used to draw legislative districts after the 2020 Census.

In most places, the state legislature and governor are responsible for redistricting U.S. House and state legislative seats. More than a dozen states primarily use boards or commissions to redraw state legislative districts, and about a half-dozen do so for congressional districts.

Here's a look at proposed redistricting measures that already have been — or are likely to be — placed on ballots this year:

## **COLORADO**

**Issues:** Two proposed constitutional amendments placed on the Nov. 6 ballot by the state Legislature affecting congressional and state legislative redistricting.

**Status quo:** Congress: four Republicans, three Democrats. State Senate: 18 Republicans, 16 Democrats, one independent. State House: 36 Democrats, 29 Republicans.

**Current process:** For Congress, the state Legislature passes a redistricting plan by a majority vote, subject to a gubernatorial veto. For the Legislature, House and Senate districts are drawn by an 11-member commission consisting of four bipartisan legislative appointees, three gubernatorial appointees and four members chosen by the chief justice. Maps are automatically submitted to the state Supreme Court for review and, if rejected, the commission is given another chance to draw maps.

**Proposed process:** For both Congress and state legislative chambers, a 12-person commission — consisting of four Republicans, four Democrats and four independents — would be selected from a pool of applicants. Half would be chosen randomly and the rest by a judicial panel. Nonpartisan legislative staff would draft proposed maps for the commission's approval, which would require at least eight votes including two from independents. The state Supreme Court then would review

the maps to determine whether legal criteria were followed. If not, legislative staff would draft a new plan for the commission to submit to the court.

**Proposed criteria:** Districts would have to be nearly equal in population, compact and as much as possible preserve communities of interest such as racial and ethnic groups and whole cities and counties. The commission also would have to "maximize the number of politically competitive districts."

## **OHIO**

**Issue:** Constitutional amendment affecting congressional redistricting, approved by 75 percent of voters on May 8.

**Status quo:** Congress: 11 Republicans, four Democrats, one vacancy.

**Old process:** State Legislature passes a redistricting plan by a majority vote, subject to a gubernatorial veto.

**New process:** State Legislature passes a redistricting plan by a three-fifths majority with support of at least half the members of the majority and minority parties, subject to a gubernatorial veto. If that fails, districts are drawn by a seven-member commission composed of two majority and two minority party lawmakers, the governor, auditor and secretary of state; approval requires four votes, including two each from majority and minority party commissioners. If that fails, the Legislature may pass a plan by a three-fifths vote with the support of at least one-third of the majority and minority party members, subject to a gubernatorial veto. If that fails, the Legislature may pass a plan by a majority subject to a gubernatorial veto, but it would remain in effect for only four years instead of 10.

**New Criteria:** Districts must protect racial minority voting rights, be compact and contiguous, and limit the number of counties and cities that are split among multiple districts.

## **MICHIGAN**

**Issue:** Petition signatures submitted for a proposed constitutional amendment on the Nov. 6 ballot affecting congressional and state legislative redistricting. The state appeals court has ordered that it be certified for the ballot, but an appeal is pending with the Michigan Supreme Court.

**Status quo:** Congress: nine Republicans, four Democrats, one vacancy. State Senate: 27 Republicans, 10 Democrats, one vacancy. State House: 63 Republicans, 46 Democrats, one vacancy.

**Current process:** State Legislature passes redistricting plans by a majority vote, subject to a gubernatorial veto.

**Proposed process:** Districts would be drawn by a 13-member citizens'

commission, composed of four Democrats, four Republicans and five independents randomly selected by the secretary of state from among applicants. Approval of districts would require a majority vote with support of at least two Democrats, two Republicans and two independents. If that fails, each commissioner would submit

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This photo portrays the Colorado state capitol in Denver. Colorado is one of a handful of states that will vote on changes to its congressional districts this fall.

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