

Public Hearing on Redistricting Lakeland (July 25, 2011)

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Hearing Report

Date: July 25, 2011

City: Lakeland

Location: Polk State College

Time: 2:00pm-5:00pm

Number of Speakers: 46

Total Attendance: 143

The public hearing in Lakeland took place at on the campus of Polk State College (3425 Winter Lake Road, Lakeland, FL 33803). Prior to the meeting, a map with directions to the hearing and parking instructions was posted on the internet. Legislative staff posted signs outside the building and the room to provide directions to the hearing, and was on hand to answer questions and display district building software outside the meeting room.

The hearing was advertised in the Lakeland Ledger July 22-25. Each chamber's website published public notices, and social media websites invited the public to the hearing as well. Senate staff sent invitations to more than 60 school board officials, over 70 county commissioners and administrators, more than 25 personnel under local supervisors of elections, and over 410 city elected officials in Central Florida. More than 230 public interest group leaders received invitations as well, encouraging the leaders and the groups they represent to attend the hearing.

The hearing was streamed live on The Florida Channel's website, recorded, and subsequently re-aired. There were 5 senators and 35 representatives present, and Senator Gaetz chaired the hearing. Of the 143 people filling out attendance cards, 46 indicated they wanted to speak at the hearing.

After hearing testimony and gathering input from the public, legislators at the meeting were given an opportunity to comment.

Submission from Jerry Weeks

My name is JERRY WEEKS - I am a proud member of the League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan organization fighting for FairDistricts for 70 yrs.

- I commend you for what you have done so far (1) the website - easy & informative & (2) the hearings - open & transparent. I have followed most of the hearings on the Internet and think you are getting pretty good input on local issues.
- You DO have a public perception problem however - much of the testimony so far has reflected deep distrust & a lack of faith that the process will follow the intent of the new standards.
- Part of that distrust is because the Legislature has fought these standards in the past and continues to fight them now.

QUESTION: Why is the Legislature continuing to spend money to oppose the will of their constituents as expressed when 63% voted for the FairDistricts standards?

- In 2008 - Legislature fought approval of the amendments for the ballot. The Supreme Court ruled for FairDistricts.
- In 2009 - It held hearings to find fault with the amendments.
- In 2010 - Legislature tried again in court. The Supreme Court rejected that argument.
- Legislature tried to confuse voters by placing Amendment 7 on the ballot. The Supreme Court rejected that as misleading.
- In 2011 - The Florida House joined a Lawsuit (filed by Reps. Brown and Diaz Balart) asking the court to strike Amendment 6 from the Florida Constitution. Secretary of State, Kurt Browning, is the defendant in that case.

So Florida taxpayers are now paying to sue and to defend the same lawsuit.

Members Deny they are spending money to avoid having to follow the FairDistricts reforms.

- They say they didn't bring the Lawsuit; they only joined in it to "seek clarification."
- They say there is no \$30 million pot of money for lawsuits.

Reality Is - I did some fact-checking - [We are entitled to our own opinions, but not to our own facts].

- PolitiFact rates these denials as FALSE.
- The Orlando Sentinel rates them as "Major Malarkey" -- see handout

SUMMARY: I am Asking you and the Legislature -

1. To work to uphold the constitutional provisions placed there by 63% of the voters & to not spend our tax money to protect their own seats, &
2. To stop trying to get out of following the new FairDistricts standards and apply them as the voters intended.

Please Withdraw from the Lawsuit.

Thank you for your efforts in these hearings and **Good Luck.**

Jerry Weeks, League of Women Voters Polk County
webmaster@lwvpolk.org

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Florida Redistricting Handout – Fact Checking

"There is no \$30 million pot of money" for redistricting issues, including defending redistricting lawsuits. "Your tax dollars are not being spent on anything like that."

Will Weatherford on Wednesday, June 22nd, 2011 in a redistricting meeting in Panama City

Weatherford denies \$30 million pot exists for redistricting



There is, in fact, no \$30 million pot of money for redistricting in the House. There are two pots of money available for lots of things, but the House speaker said the money predominantly is available to fight potential redistricting lawsuits. That admission, which is not in dispute, defies Weatherford's other point, that "your tax dollars are not being spent on anything like that" -- referring to redistricting lawsuits. The Legislature is planning on doing exactly that. There's too much about this claim that is missing. We rate it False.

"Your tax dollars are not being used to sue you, the people."

Alan Hays on Wednesday, July 13th, 2011 in a public hearing about redistricting

Sen. Alan Hays claims tax dollars not being used to sue voters on redistricting amendment



But tax dollars are being used by the House to try to strike down Amendment 6, as well as by the Secretary of State to defend the amendment in court. We rate this claim False.

"The Florida Legislature has not filed a lawsuit to fight Amendments 5 and 6."

Alan Hays on Wednesday, July 13th, 2011 in a public hearing about redistricting

Sen. Alan Hays says 'Legislature' didn't file lawsuit to fight redistricting amendment



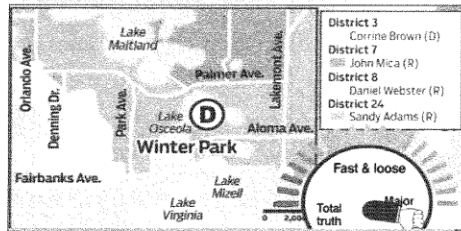
While that's true on a technical level -- the two members of Congress filed the lawsuit -- the House did join as a plaintiff. Hays later explained that the House joined as an intervenor "seeking clarification" but the House is seeking more than clarification -- the House has filed a motion asking that Amendment 6 be declared unconstitutional. We rate this claim Barely True.

The Malarkey Meter takes on the spending of your money to try to overturn your Fair Districts vote

Political Insider -- posted by 9501michael on June 28 2011 @ 02:15Z
 Discuss This: [Comments\(3\)](#) | [Add to del.icio.us](#) | [Digg It](#)

The amount of your money being spent to try to overturn your vote keeps piling up.

Video >



= Major Malarkey

Malarkey Meter: Fair districts 11/11/10
 100% True = 100% Truth. The more the needle moves to the right, the more the Malarkey Meter.

Submission from Mary Jo Jarrett

League of Women Voters of Florida P.O. Box 934, Lakeland, FL 33813 lwvpolk.org
2012 Redistricting Listening Hearings: JULY 25, 2011 LAKELAND, FL

I am Mary Jo Jarrett, Co President of the League of Women Voters of Polk County,

The League is a non-partisan, political organization that encourages informed and active participation in Government. We work to increase understanding of public policy issues, through education and advocacy

WE ARE PUZZLED AND QUESTION: WHY WON'T THE LEGISLATURE PREPARE THE MAPS EARLIER, DEBATE THEM IN THE FALL AND PASS THEM DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF SESSION?

The problem with the present legislature's timeline is that it is unfair to Florida Voters. Florida's maps will end up being approved later than most every state in the nation as Districts may not be finalized until August! The Legislature's own lawyer says this will cause "massive voter confusion". We do not want to see Florida's election process become the target of late night comedy--again.

The Problem that needs to be Solved has been defined by the legislators. THE LEGISLATORS PLAN TO WAIT TO FINALIZE DISTRICT MAPS UNTIL AT LEAST THE END OF SESSION IN MARCH 2012. BY LAW THE COURTS AND THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE HAVE MORE THAN 90 DAYS AFTER PASSAGE TO REVIEW THE MAPS.

The legislators' are saying they can do nothing on redistricting until January as the Constitution requires them to draw the districts during the 2012 regular session.

If the Legislature waits to finalize the maps until the end of the session in March 2012, it is highly unlikely that districts will be finalized and approved before the June 8, 2012 deadline for candidates to file their paperwork.

The Redistricting process will includes not only the drawing of new districts maps based on the 2010 ten year census but implementation of section 20 and section 21 of the Florida Constitution which contain standards to be followed in process.

The League believe that without violating the Florida Constitution the Legislature can do the preparatory work to speed up the process...

.In fact bills were filed last session requiring that maps be drawn earlier that didn't even get hearings.

The League proposes an open, transparent, work flow using another timeline....

We propose that the Legislature hold interim committee meetings from September through December and use that time to present maps, allow for public comment, and prepare final plans to submit to the full House and Senate before the Legislature convenes in January.

We further propose that the Legislature could bring the maps to the floor as a first order of business - voting on them by the end of Session's first week in early January. This would create a real possibility that the maps could be finalized and approved before candidate qualifying and allow election officials ample time to prepare by allowing double the time for review by the courts, and the Department of Justice.

This would solve the problems created by the proposed legislative timeline of a cold start in January 2012.

This would allow due process procedurally to insure all who have the vote can participate substantially in the elections of the redrawn districts .

This will improve greatly the timeline for those the Legislature depends on to implement and carry out the Election Process--the Supervisors of Elections and their Staff; and those expected to participate in the Process--The Registered Voters and The Candidates.

The League strongly believes this is a viable plan for implementing Redistricting in the Sunshine State.

Respectfully Submitted,
Mary Jo Jarrett Co-President
League of Women Voters of Polk County

REDISTRICTING · 2012

ABOUT REDISTRICTING

After each decennial Census, the Legislature redraws the districts from which voters elect their public officials. In general, districts are redrawn to accommodate population changes and ensure that district populations are as nearly equal in number as practicable.

There will be opportunities for citizen participation during public hearings, interim committee meetings, and the 2012 Session.

REDISTRICTING LAW

The United States Constitution, the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Florida Constitution each regulate redistricting. Under the United States Constitution, district populations must be as nearly equal as practicable. In addition, race may not be the predominant factor in drawing lines, unless the use of race is narrowly tailored to achieve a compelling interest.

The Voting Rights Act requires the creation of a district that performs for racial minorities where (1) a minority population is geographically compact and sufficiently numerous to be a majority in a single district; (2) the minority population is politically cohesive; (3) the majority votes sufficiently as a bloc to enable it usually to defeat the minority-preferred candidate; and (4) under all of the circumstances, the minority population has less opportunity than others to participate in the political process and elect representatives of its choice.


The Voting Rights Act applies additional requirements to districts that include any part of Collier, Hardee, Hendry, Hillsborough, or Monroe County. In these districts, the Voting Rights Act prohibits purposeful discrimination and protects against retrogression—or backsliding—in the ability of racial minorities to elect representatives of their choice. To ensure compliance with these requirements, the redistricting plan must be submitted to and precleared by a federal court or the United States Department of Justice before it may be enforced.

The Florida Constitution requires that districts be contiguous. A district is contiguous if all of its territory is in actual contact, uninterrupted by the territory of another district. Contact at a corner or right angle is insufficient, but territory may cross bodies of water. The Constitution allows state legislative districts to overlap, either partially or entirely.

In November 2010, the voters added Amendments 5 and 6 to the Florida Constitution. These Amendments prohibit line-drawing that intentionally favors or disfavors a political party or an incumbent. The Amendments also afford protection to racial and language minorities. Districts may not be drawn (1) with the intent or result of denying or abridging the equal opportunity of racial or language minorities to participate in the political process; or (2) to diminish their ability to elect representatives of their choice. Finally, unless it would conflict with federal law or the standards described above, the Amendments require that district populations be as nearly equal as practicable, and that districts be compact and, where feasible, follow existing political and geographical boundaries.

THE NUMBERS

In 2012, the Legislature will redraw the state's congressional districts as well as districts for Florida House and Florida Senate seats. The number of congressional districts in Florida will increase from 25 to 27. The number of Florida House seats must be between 80 and 120, while the number of Florida Senate seats must be between 30 and 40. Currently, the Florida House and Florida Senate contain 120 members and 40 members, respectively. If these numbers are maintained, the average population of a Florida House district will be 156,678, while the average population of a Florida Senate district will be 470,033. Each congressional district will contain approximately 696,345 people.



PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Legislature will draw lines in accordance with the standards in federal and state law and traditional redistricting principles not inconsistent with those standards. To this end, the Legislature encourages public testimony directed to the following points:

- The full implementation of the protections afforded by the Amendments to racial and language minorities, including continuance of the Legislature's long-established policy to preserve or enhance the number of performing minority districts.
- The various measures of compactness, from geometric calculations to a broad consideration of how communities relate to one another, for example through commerce, transportation, and communication—in order to promote the creation of effective representational units.

REDISTRICTING 2012

- The feasibility of using political and geographical boundaries in the formation of districts, in light of other standards such as the equality of district populations, the protection of racial and language minorities, and compactness.
- To the extent not inconsistent with the Amendments, the desire to preserve the cores of existing districts or the proper placement of communities of interest in districts, as determined by local circumstances and voter preferences.

This approach, together with public testimony, research, and facts developed throughout the redistricting process, will result in the adoption of redistricting plans that have the intent and result of full compliance with all legal mandates, including Amendments 5 and 6, and of effective and meaningful representation for all voters in the State of Florida.

Citizens from all parts of the state can visit the House website (www.floridaredistricting.org) and the Senate website (www.flsenate.gov/Redistricting), to learn about creating and submitting their own House, Senate, and congressional maps, and to participate actively in the most open, transparent, and interactive redistricting ever.

REDISTRICTING MILESTONES

- JUNE 20 - SEPTEMBER 1, 2011: STATEWIDE PUBLIC HEARINGS
- SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER 2011: INTERIM COMMITTEE MEETINGS
- JANUARY 10 - MARCH 9, 2012: REGULAR SESSION
- FEBRUARY - JUNE 2012: LEGAL REVIEWS
- JUNE 4 - 8, 2012: QUALIFYING FOR STATE AND FEDERAL OFFICES
- AUGUST 14, 2012: PRIMARY ELECTION
- NOVEMBER 6, 2012: GENERAL ELECTION

SENATE COMMITTEE ON REAPPORTIONMENT

Senator Don Gaetz, Chair
www.flsenate.gov/redistricting
 103 Senate Office Building
 404 South Monroe Street
 Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100
 (850) 487-5855
RedistrictFlorida@flsenate.gov

HOUSE REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE

Rep. Will W. Weatherford, Chair
www.floridaredistricting.org
 400 House Office Building
 402 South Monroe Street
 Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300
 (850) 488-3928
mydistrictbuilder@myfloridahouse.gov

Visit

www.floridaredistricting.org
www.flsenate.gov/Redistricting
 to learn more about creating and submitting your own house, senate, and congressional maps.

Draw and Submit Your Own Districts

District Builder is a full-featured web application with 2010 Census data for drawing Florida Senate, Florida House, and Congressional districts and submitting them to the Legislature. Submitting your plan is one of the best ways to show what works for your community. Citizens have full and easy access to the same web application and information that Senators and professional staff use.

To start using District Builder you need:

- A personal account. Choose “**District Builder**” at www.flsenate.gov/Redistricting to register.
- Display resolution of 1024 x 768 or higher.
- A broadband Internet computer and mouse. Firefox (3.6 and 4.0) and Internet Explorer (7 and 8) are supported (Internet Explorer 9 and Opera are not). Your browser must be set to allow JavaScript and pop-ups from “flsenate.gov.”

For full details, see <https://db10.flsenate.gov/db1/help>.

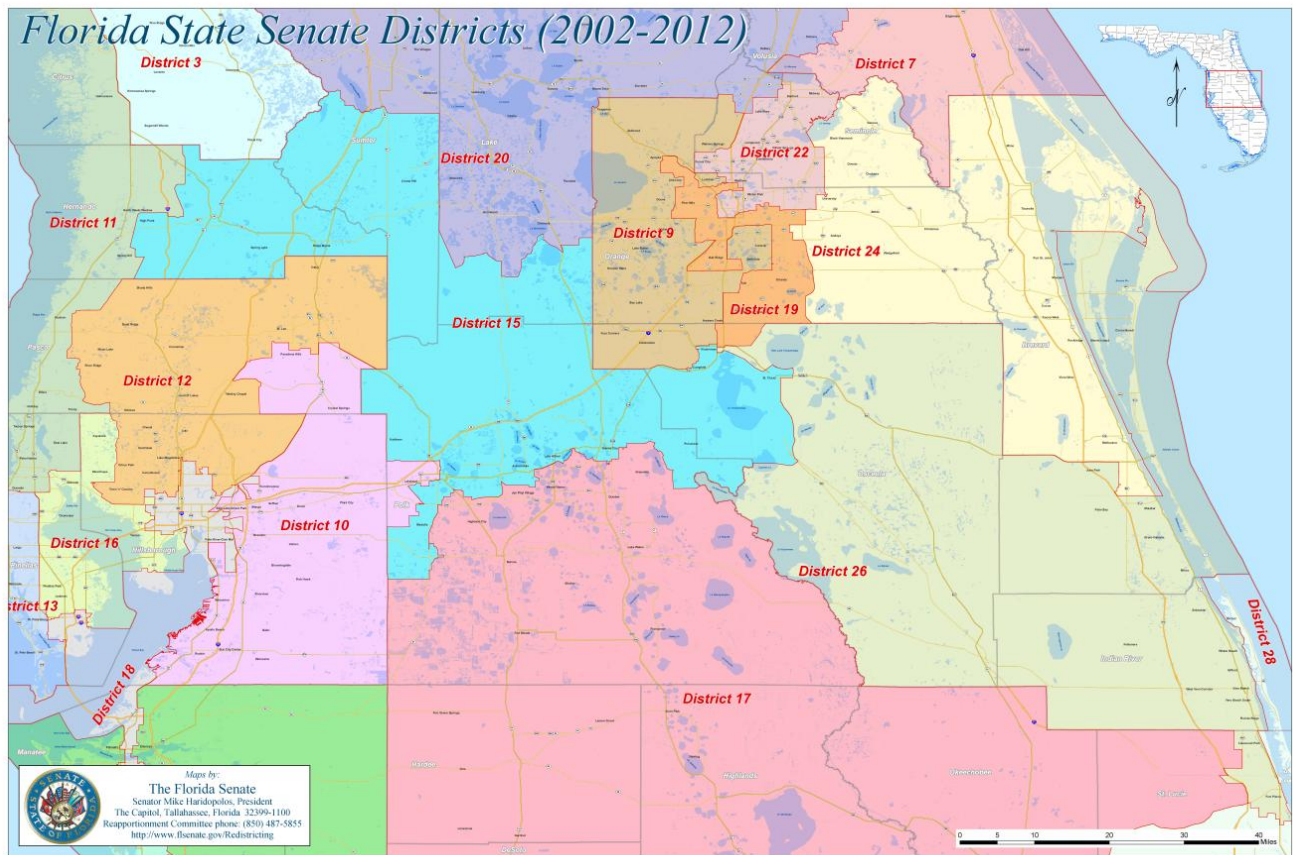
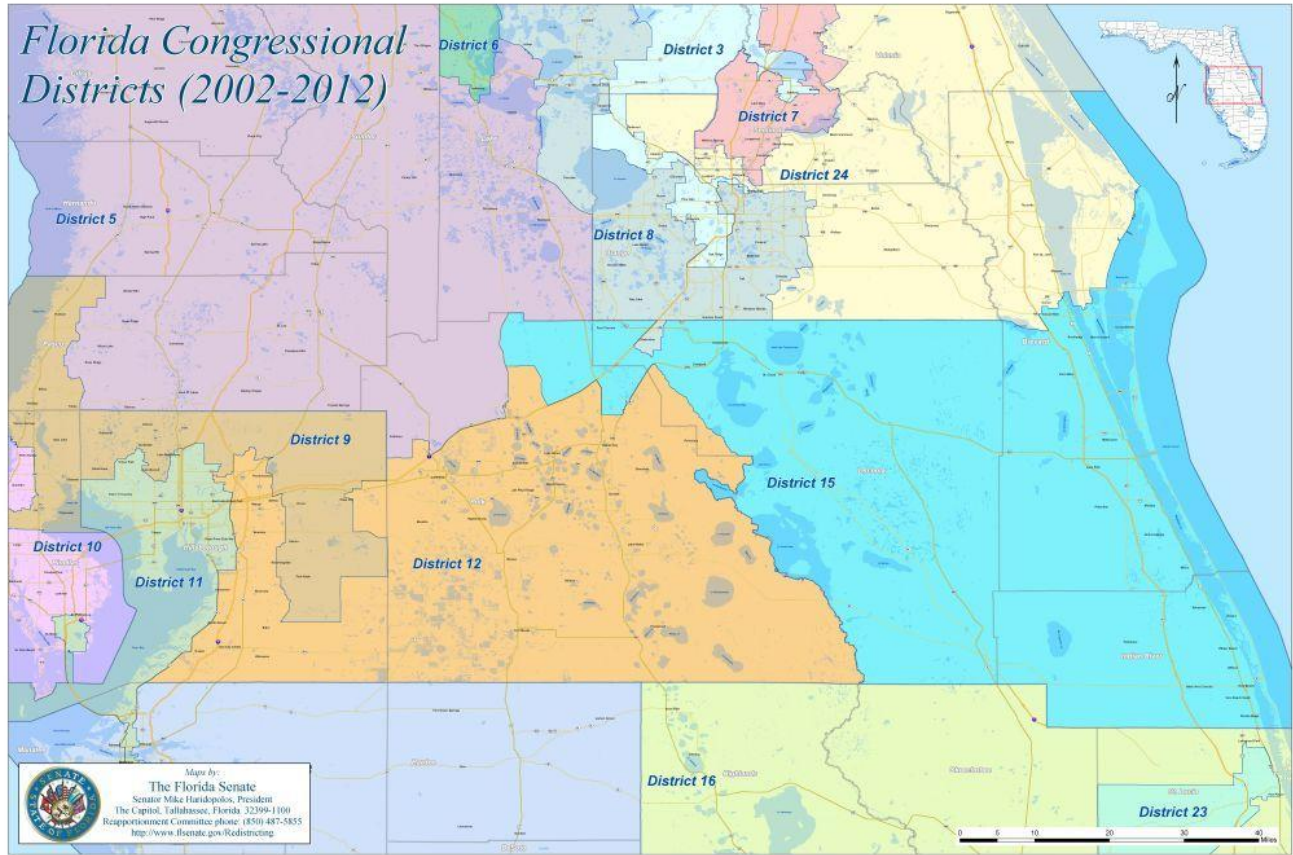
When you decide to submit your plan for public consideration, it will be published at <http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Redistricting/Plans> with a standard set of interactive map links, reports, downloads, and maps. Otherwise, your personal plans are stored on secure servers and exempt from inspection and copying. See § 11.0431(2)(e), Fla. Stat.

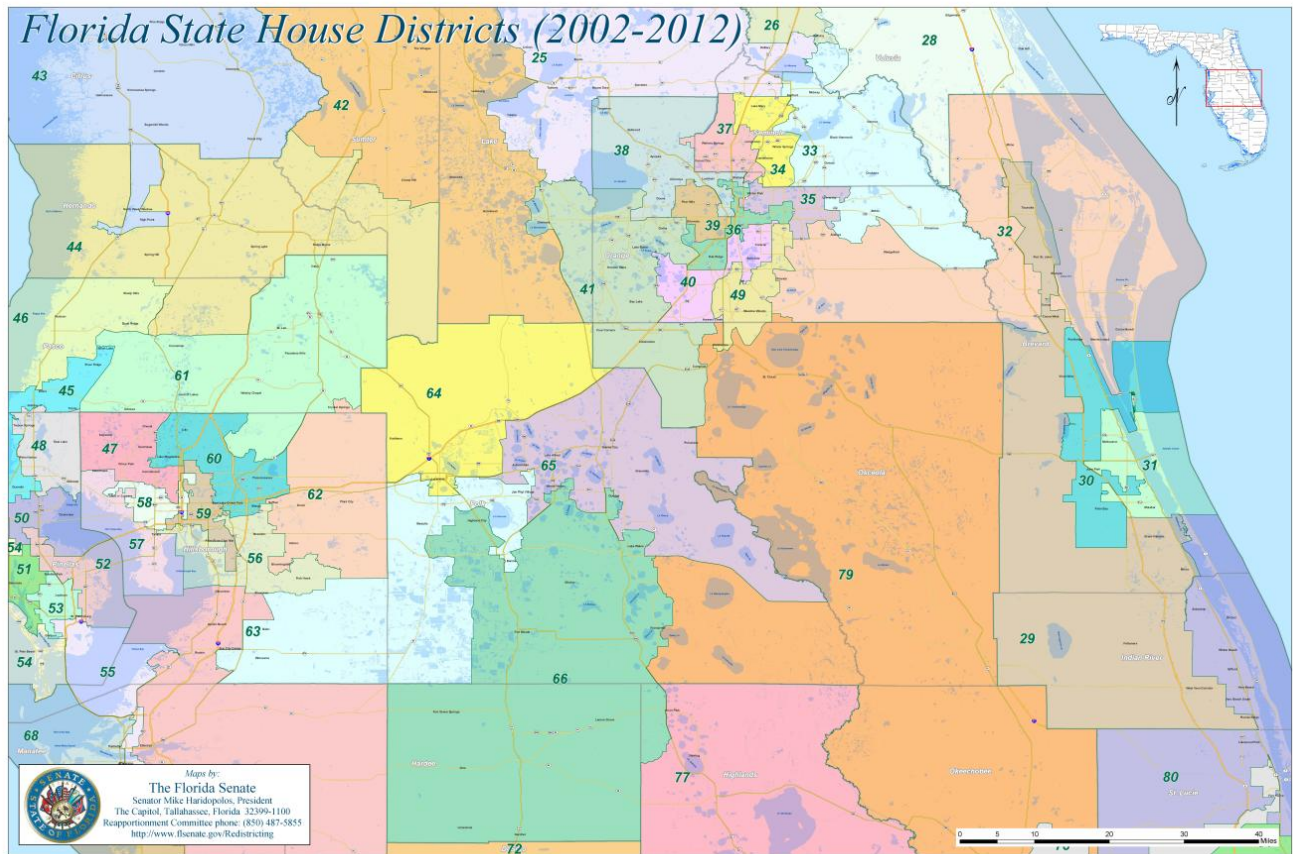
The Florida House of Representatives is building its own web application. To learn about “MyDistrictBuilder,” see www.floridaredistricting.org. The fact that the Senate and House systems are different is a plus. Each has unique features, and citizens can choose which better meets their needs.

Full-featured redistricting systems typically cost thousands of dollars per user. The overarching goal shared by the Florida Senate and Florida House is giving everyone free and easy access to all the same tools and data the Legislature is using.

With innovative technologies and joint [public hearings](#), the Florida Legislature is promoting the most open, accessible, and interactive redistricting ever.

Displays Prepared by Florida Senate



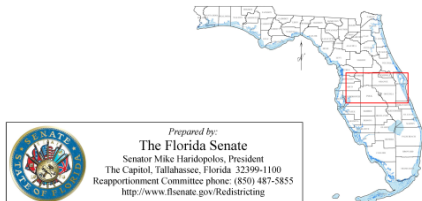


Population deviations of current districts (2010 Census)—Central Florida

Congressional District		2010 Pop.	2010 Ideal	2010 Deviation	
				Count	%
3	Corrine Brown	659,055	696,345	-37,290	-5.4%
5	Richard Nugent	929,533	696,345	233,188	33.5%
7	John Mica	812,442	696,345	116,097	16.7%
8	Daniel Webster	805,608	696,345	109,263	15.7%
9	Gus M. Bilirakis	753,549	696,345	57,204	8.2%
12	Dennis Ross	842,199	696,345	145,854	20.9%
15	Bill Posey	813,570	696,345	117,225	16.8%
24	Sandy Adams	799,233	696,345	102,888	14.8%

State Senate District		2010 Pop.	2010 Ideal	2010 Deviation	
				Count	%
9	Andy Gardiner	527,435	470,033	57,402	12.2%
10	Ronda Storms	565,921	470,033	95,888	20.4%
11	Mike Fasano	433,661	470,033	-36,372	-7.7%
12	Jim Norman	531,959	470,033	61,926	13.2%
15	Paula Dockery	560,770	470,033	90,737	19.3%
17	JD Alexander	456,960	470,033	-13,073	-2.8%
19	Gary Siplin	477,068	470,033	7,035	1.5%
22	David Simmons	419,763	470,033	-50,270	-10.7%
24	Thad Altman	524,254	470,033	54,221	11.5%
26	Mike Haridopolos	481,892	470,033	11,859	2.5%
28	Joe Negron	545,085	470,033	75,052	16.0%

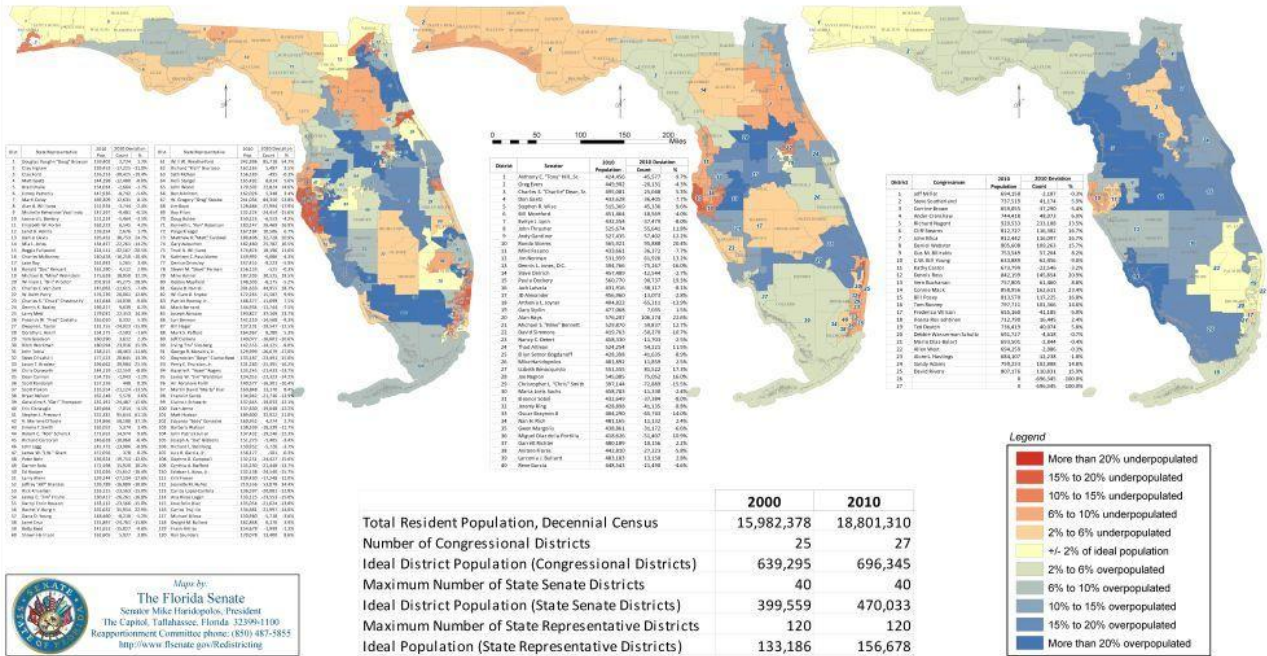
State House District		2010 Pop.	2010 Ideal	2010 Deviation	
				Count	%
25	Larry Metz	179,031	156,678	22,353	14.3%
29	Tom Goodson	160,290	156,678	3,612	2.3%
30	Ritch Workman	180,594	156,678	23,916	15.3%
31	John Tobia	138,215	156,678	-18,463	-11.8%
32	Steve Crisafulli	177,523	156,678	20,845	13.3%
33	Jason T. Brodeur	196,662	156,678	39,984	25.5%
34	Chris Dorworth	144,119	156,678	-12,559	-8.0%
35	Dean Cannon	154,735	156,678	-1,943	-1.2%
36	Scott Randolph	157,126	156,678	448	0.3%
37	Scott Plakon	135,554	156,678	-21,124	-13.5%
38	Bryan Nelson	162,248	156,678	5,570	3.6%
39	Geraldine F. "Geri" Thompson	132,191	156,678	-24,487	-15.6%
40	Eric Eisnaugle	149,664	156,678	-7,014	-4.5%
41	Stephen L. Precourt	252,332	156,678	95,654	61.1%
42	H. Marlene O'Toole	214,866	156,678	58,188	37.1%
44	Robert C. "Rob" Schenck	171,652	156,678	14,974	9.6%
45	Richard Corcoran	146,618	156,678	-10,060	-6.4%
46	John Legg	142,772	156,678	-13,906	-8.9%
61	Will W. Weatherford	242,396	156,678	85,718	54.7%
62	Richard "Rich" Glorioso	162,165	156,678	5,487	3.5%
63	Seth McKeel	156,183	156,678	-495	-0.3%
64	Kelli Stargel	165,492	156,678	8,814	5.6%
65	John Wood	179,502	156,678	22,824	14.6%
66	Ben Albritton	162,026	156,678	5,348	3.4%
77	Denise Grimsley	147,455	156,678	-9,223	-5.9%
79	Mike Horner	187,203	156,678	30,525	19.5%
80	Debbie Mayfield	148,503	156,678	-8,175	-5.2%



**Population Deviations of
Current Florida House Districts
Relative to 2010 Census
Ideal district population (156,678)**

**Population Deviations of
Current Florida Senate Districts
Relative to 2010 Census
Ideal district population (470,033)**

**Population Deviations of
Current Congressional Districts
Relative to 2010 Census
Ideal district population (696,345)**



Map by:
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