

Public Hearing on Redistricting Panama City (June 22, 2011)

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Hearing Report

Date: June 22, 2011

City: Panama City

Location: Sarzin Lecture Hall at Gulf Coast State College

Time: 10:00am-1:00pm

Number of Speakers: 36

Total Attendance: 110

The public hearing in Panama City was held in Sarzin Lecture Hall on the campus of Gulf Coast State College (5230 West Highway 98 Panama City, 32401). A map with directions to the hearing and parking instructions was posted on the internet prior to the meetings. Legislative staff posted signs outside the building and the room to provide direction to the hearing. Staff provided assistance at the hearing by answering questions and displaying district building software outside the meeting room. The meeting was advertised in the Panama City News Herald June 19-22, and an op-ed jointly authored by the Chairman Gaetz and Chairman Weatherford was published in the Panama City News Herald on June 16. Notice of the meeting was published on each chamber's website, and the public was invited to the meetings via social media websites. The hearing was streamed live on The Florida Channel's website, recorded, and subsequently re-aired. Thirty-six people signed up to speak at the hearing, which was attended by 110 people. One person contacted staff prior to the hearing to accommodate a disability. The hearing-impaired person could not understand sign language, so a Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) provider with a stenotype machine was brought to the hearing. Six senators and twenty-seven representatives were present at this hearing. After hearing testimony and gathering input from the public, legislators at the meeting were given an opportunity to comment.

Written Comments



Please Provide Completed Form To:

Legislative Staff at the Meeting.

or

Email to: mydistrictbuilder@myfloridahouse.gov
and redistrictflorida@flsenate.gov,

or

Fax to (850) 487-6413



Florida Redistricting Suggestion Form

By submitting this form, I acknowledge that my comments and suggestions may be displayed on www.floridaredistriking.org and www.flsenate.gov/redistricting or other public websites maintained by the Florida Legislature. Note: the entirety of this form is public record.

*Field is required.

Prefix Mr. *First Name RODNEY *Last Name DEPAEN Suffix SR.

Organization Name (If applicable) _____

*Your Address 4312 BROOK FOREST DR City P.C. *State FL *Zip 32404

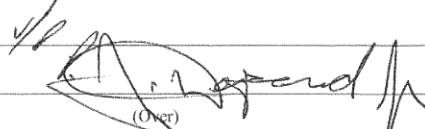
Your County BAY Your Email PANDBDES@HOTMAIL.COM

*What type of map are you commenting on? Congressional State House State Senate

*Would you like to receive email updates regarding Florida Redistricting? Yes No

Please provide detailed comments regarding your redistricting suggestion or request.

CAN WE PLEASE HAVE THESE
MEETINGS AT ONE OF OUR LIBRARIES
VIA A POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTION
(GCC) AND DURING EVENING HOURS
WHEN WORKING BAY COUNTY CITIZENS
COULD PARTICIPATE. WE NEED TO ENSURE
THIS IS DONE IN AN URBAN MANNER.


(Over)

22 JUN 2011

www.floridaredistriking.org

www.flsenate.gov/redistricting

Redistricting Hearings
June 22, 2011, Gulf Coast College, Panama City
Art Kimbrough, President/CEO Jackson County Chamber of Commerce
850-2-482-8060 ofc; 850-209-4866 cell; art@jacksoncounty.com

There are **three messages** I have crafted that are aimed at protecting and/or strengthening the voice of Jackson County and rural Florida in the legislature.

These three positions, or principals, are deliberately broad, but also very specific and measurable in their goals.

My basis for these messages include years of dialogue with chamber members who have watched the influence of rural Florida dwindle, as well as discussions with our legislative delegation and many other civic and business leaders throughout Jackson County and beyond.

First, I believe rural areas constitute a "community of interest" that would benefit if their influence is concentrated rather than dispersed. The "beach economy", the "bigger city markets", and "rural markets" each have unique needs and concerns best served by legislators solely focused on those needs and concerns. Districts aligned according to these "communities of interest" will be better equipped to articulate their common cause and aggregate the power needed to make sure their voice is heard and their needs addressed.

Second, Jackson County currently benefits from having 2 representatives with a strong understanding of rural needs. Going back to just one representative for one county would further weaken the political influence of rural areas like Jackson County and shift more power to larger markets. Without strong voices from rural representatives, it is very easy for rural concerns to be overrun by large market needs and political power. We need to maintain coverage by two representatives with a mutual focus on rural needs.

Third, "2 mile wide, 200 mile long", winding gerrymandered districts with multiple environments (rural, big city, beach) make it very difficult for a representative or senator to stay closely connected to their constituents and deliver a focused message. Creating more compact geographic districts is extremely beneficial from a travel, logistics, and access perspective, so long as those boundaries take into account the previous two concerns – Concentrations of Communities of Interest, and Dual Member Representation.

If the redistricting committee and the legislature adhere to these three principals, the specifics of where the actual lines are drawn will be a cause for celebration rather than a cause for concern.

On behalf of the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce and myself, I respectfully request that the spirit of these three principals be incorporated into the strategic framework for developing this plan for redistricting. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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.


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.

LEGAL REVIEWS

After enactment, state senatorial and representative districts are reviewed by the Florida Supreme Court.

Congressional districts are set by an act of the Legislature subject to the Governor's approval. All redistricting plans must be submitted to and precleared by a federal court or the United States Department of Justice.

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 and
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>.

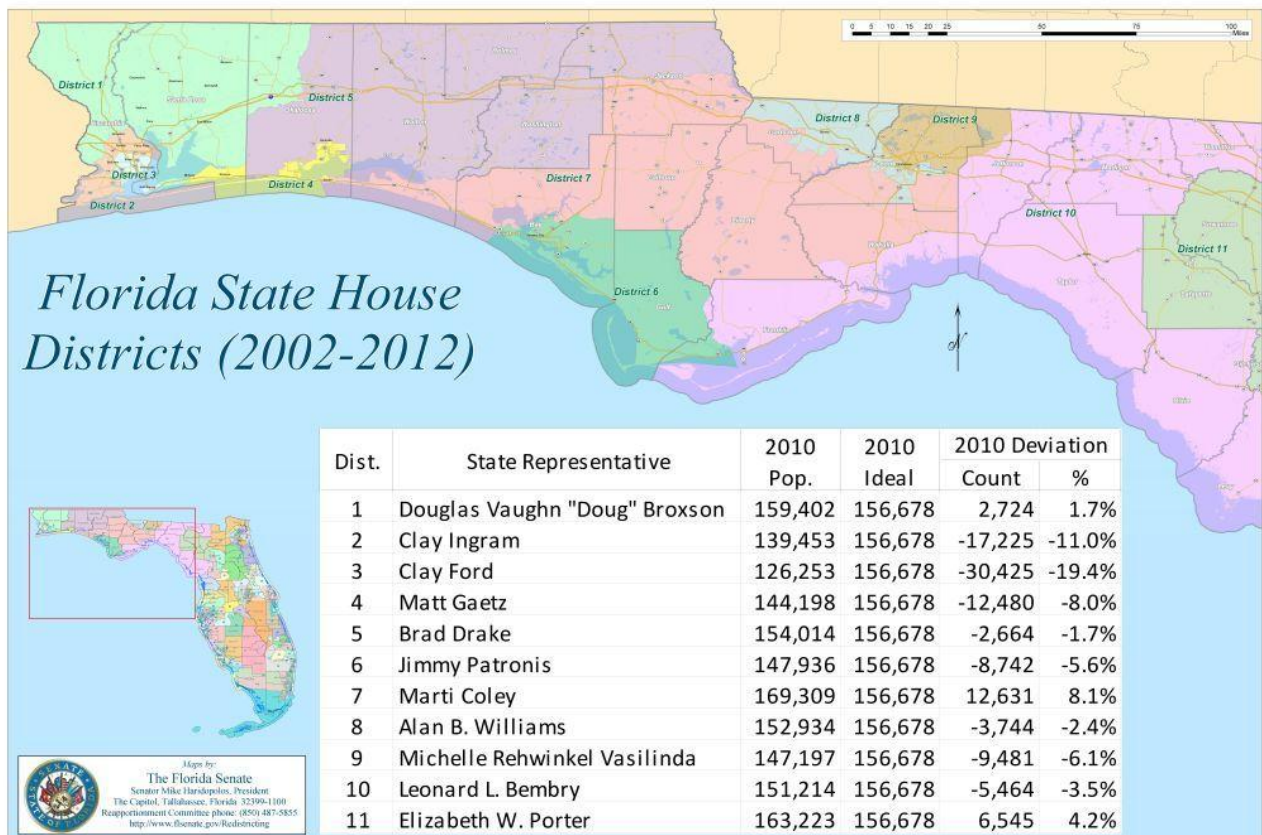
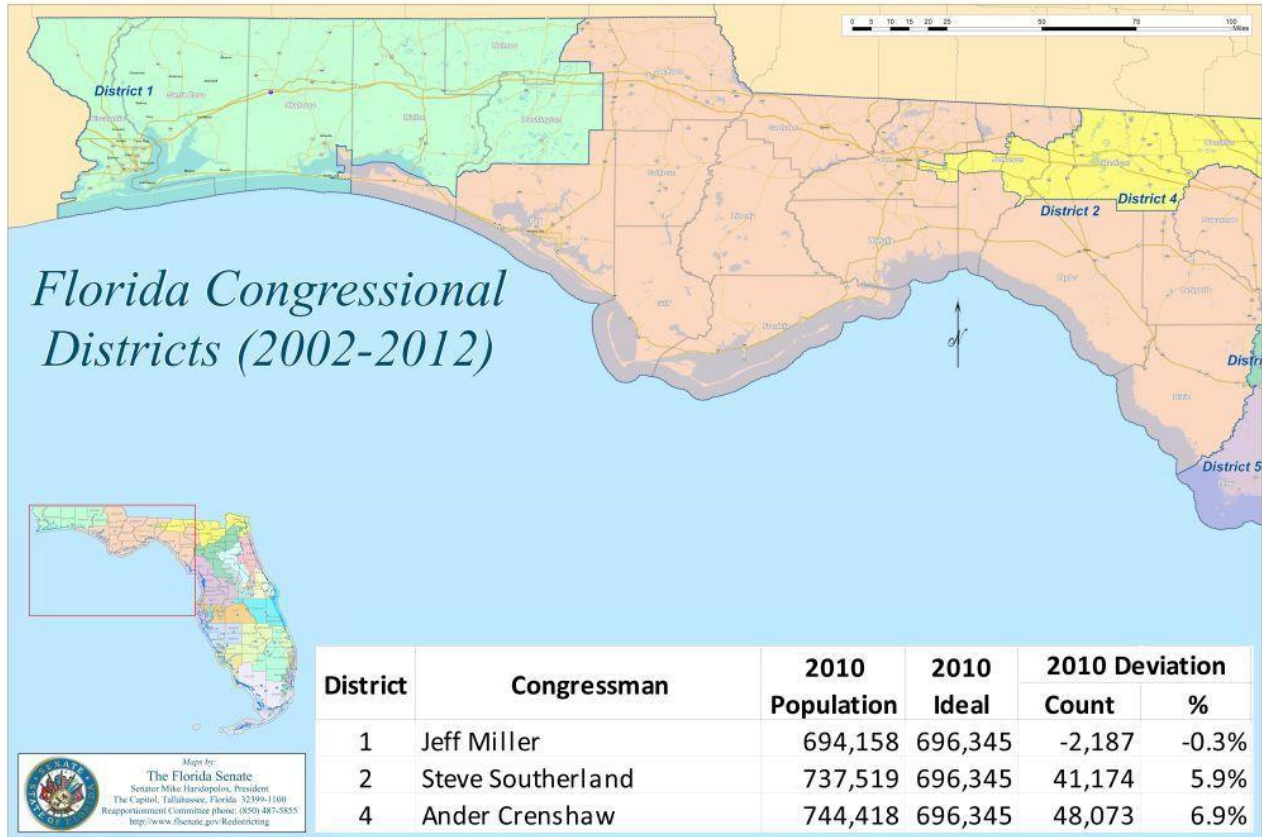
When you decide to submit your plan for public consideration, it will be published at <http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Redistricting/Plans> with a standard set of interactive map links, reports, downloads, and maps. Otherwise, your personal plans are stored on secure servers and exempt from inspection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

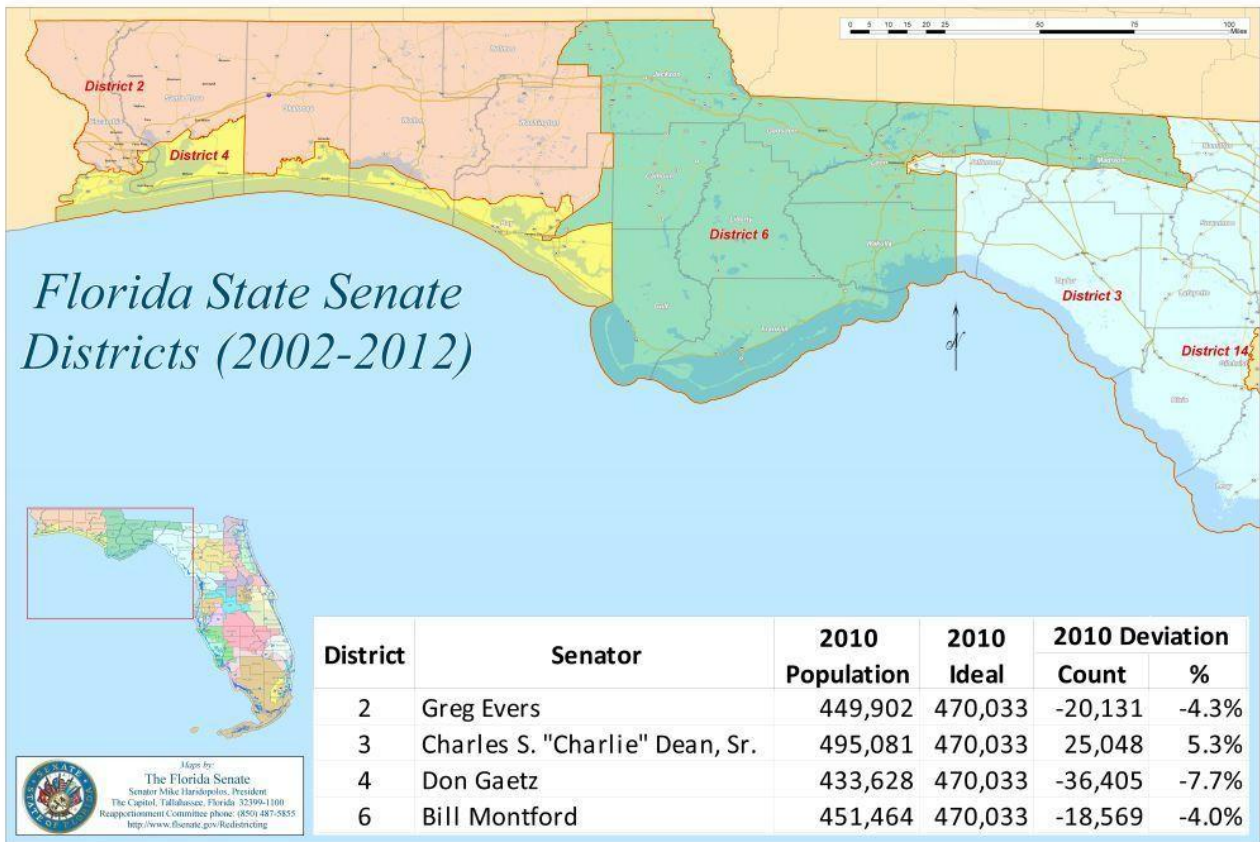
The Florida House of Representatives is building its own web application. To learn about “MyDistrictBuilder,” see www.floridaredistricting.org. The fact that the Senate and House systems are different is a plus. Each has unique features, and citizens can choose which better meets their needs.

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 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)

