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Stop the lies!

As expected, politicians are mounting a last minute campaign to spread lies about Amendments 5 & 6. Here is the real truth:

Amendments 5 & 6

Amendments 5 & 6 create rules for legislators so they cannot make backroom deals for districts that favor incumbents or political parties. Districts would protect minority representation, be compact, and follow existing local boundaries whenever possible.

Every major Florida newspaper supports Amendments 5 & 6.

AMENDMENT 5

STANDARDS FOR LEGISLATURE TO FOLLOW IN LEGISLATIVE REDISTRICTING

BALLOT SUMMARY: Legislative districts or districting plans may not be drawn to favor or disfavor an incumbent or political party. Districts shall not be drawn to deny racial or language minorities the equal opportunity to participate in the political process and elect representatives of their choice. Districts must be contiguous. Unless otherwise required, districts must be compact, as equal in population as feasible, and where feasible must make use of existing city, county and geographical boundaries.

Full text:

In establishing Legislative district boundaries:

- (1) No apportionment plan or district shall be drawn with the intent to favor or disfavor a political party or an incumbent; and districts shall not be drawn with the intent or result of denying or abridging the equal opportunity of racial or language minorities to participate in the political process or to diminish their ability to elect representatives of their choice; and districts shall consist of contiguous territory.
- (2) Unless compliance with the standards in this subsection conflicts with the standards in subsection (1) or with federal law, districts shall be as nearly equal in population as is practicable; districts shall be compact; and districts shall, where feasible, utilize existing political and geographical boundaries.
- (3) The order in which the standards within sub-sections (1) and (2) of this section are set forth shall not be read to establish any priority of one standard over the other within that subsection.

AMENDMENT 6

STANDARDS FOR LEGISLATURE TO FOLLOW IN CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING

BALLOT SUMMARY: Congressional districts or districting plans may not be drawn to favor or disfavor an incumbent or political party. Districts shall not be drawn to deny racial or language

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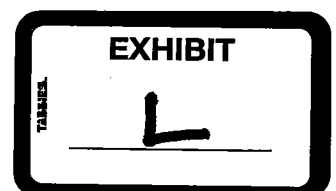
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minorities the equal opportunity to participate in the political process and elect representatives of their choice. Districts must be contiguous. Unless otherwise required, districts must be compact, as equal in population as feasible, and where feasible must make use of existing city, county and geographical boundaries.

Full text:

In establishing Congressional district boundaries:

- (1) No apportionment plan or individual district shall be drawn with the intent to favor or disfavor a political party or an incumbent; and districts shall not be drawn with the intent or result of denying or abridging the equal opportunity of racial or language minorities to participate in the political process or to diminish their ability to elect representatives of their choice; and districts shall consist of contiguous territory.
- (2) Unless compliance with the standards in this subsection conflicts with the standards in subsection (1) or with federal law, districts shall be as nearly equal in population as is practicable; districts shall be compact; and districts shall, where feasible, utilize existing political and geographical boundaries.
- (3) The order in which the standards within sub-sections (1) and (2) of this section are set forth shall not be read to establish any priority of one standard over the other within that subsection.

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Frequently Asked Questions

Who is behind FairDistricts Amendments 5 and 6?

Amendments 5 & 6 were put on the ballot by voters across the state who signed 1.7 million petitions. The signature gathering was coordinated by FairDistrictsFlorida.org, a non-partisan coalition of Florida citizens and organizations. Organizations who support the amendments include the League of Women Voters, the NAACP, Democracia Ahora, The Florida Association of Counties, The Florida League of Cities, the Florida League of Mayors, The Florida Association of School Boards, The Florida Black Legislative Caucus and The Florida Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials.

The Chairman of FairDistricts is former Miami Mayor Manny Diaz (I). Co-chairs are: attorney and former Judge Thom Rumberger (R), Former Assistant Secretary of the Interior Nat Reed (R), former State Comptroller Bob Milligan(R), Former Senator and Governor Bob Graham (D), former State Attorney and Attorney General Janet Reno (D) and former state Senator and Lt. Gov. Candidate Daryl Jones (D). Miami lawyer Ellen Freidin, the Campaign Chair, is supported by a highly professional staff with vast experience in Florida campaigns and ballot initiatives.

Who is against Amendments 5 & 6?

The only opposition to these reforms comes from politicians and lobbyists.

Some say the FairDistricts effort is a Democratic power grab. Is it? NO. The organizations supporting Amendment 5 and 6 are non-partisan and many of the people and groups involved have been trying to bring redistricting reform to Florida for decades. Over the years – both when Democrats controlled Tallahassee and when Republicans did -- there have been many efforts to change our broken system. In 1993, two very prominent Republican state senators (now Congressman Ander Crenshaw and Governor Charlie Crist) sponsored an amendment that contained all the same elements as Amendments 5 and 6. Amendments 5 and 6 are now opposed by Tallahassee politicians of both parties.

Will Amendments 5 and 6 reduce minority representation?

NO. Amendments 5 and 6 will permanently enshrine protections for minority representation in the Florida Constitution that are greater than those contained in state or federal law today. Both amendments say: "districts shall not be drawn with the intent or result of denying or abridging the equal opportunity of racial or language minorities to participate in the political process or to diminish their ability to elect representatives of their choice." This means that the Tallahassee politicians will not be able to use redistricting to reduce minority representation in Tallahassee or Washington. The standards are carefully written to be sure that legislators have the ability to follow the mandates that protect minority voting rights. For example, they need not make districts compact and follow local boundaries if doing so would conflict with the promises that equal opportunity and the ability to elect representatives of choice will not be diminished.

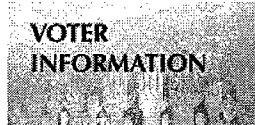
Will the FairDistricts amendments lead to expensive litigation?

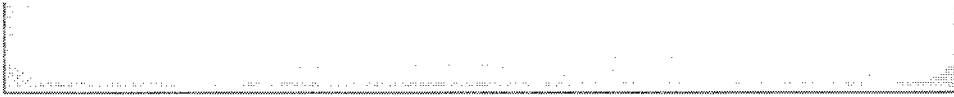
There is always litigation surrounding redistricting. In 1992 the state expenditures for litigation were \$12.5 million and in 2002 the costs were \$10.8 million. The Florida Supreme Court has held that any claim that Amendments 5 & 6 will lead to more litigation is "speculative." Common sense leads to the conclusion that if there are strict rules and the politicians follow them, there should be less litigation. If you play a pickup game of football without any rules, it is inevitable that fights will break out. If you have rules to follow, the game will proceed peacefully. The same principle should apply to redistricting.

Are the standards in Amendments 5 & 6 too complicated to be applied?

NO. The redistricting standards in Amendments 5 & 6 are commonly applied all over the country and the states that apply them manage to get their maps drawn! Standards like those in Amendments 5 & 6 were first suggested by experienced Florida Senators after they had just been through the 1992 redistricting. There are twelve other states that have the same combination of standards as we propose. Dozens of states require that districts be compact and follow existing boundaries. Those states all manage to get their maps drawn!

Take ACTION





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