



GEORGIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Office of Legislative & Congressional Reapportionment

407 Coverdell Legislative Office Building
18 Capitol Square
Atlanta, GA 30334 | Phone: 404-656-5063

Gina H. Wright
Executive Director

Reapportionment of U.S. House Districts

As defined, the term apportionment is the act of dividing and allocating proportionally. The United States Constitution in Article 2, Section 3 states that all 435 House districts shall be apportioned among the 50 states based on population from each decennial census. There is a guarantee of at least one seat per state in the U.S. House and a method of equal proportions determines how the other 385 are distributed. Every 10 years, states may gain or lose Congressional districts based on how they gained or lost population in comparison to other states based on data from the decennial census. The State of Georgia presently has 14 seats in the U.S. House. The 2010 Census resulted in a gain of one new seat for the state following an increase of two new districts in 2000.

It is common to interchange the term reapportionment with the term redistricting, but the two terms do not mean the same thing. Redistricting is the adjusting of district boundary lines and it occurs at all levels of election districts from the U.S. House down to local city councils. Reapportionment only occurs at the federal level when the U.S. House districts are distributed amongst the states.

Redistricting

The redistricting process in Georgia begins following the delivery of new census data to the state. As the official census date is April 1 of each year ending in zero, the data typically arrives to the states by April 1 of the following year. The process of redrawing district boundary lines may begin in the year ending in one using new population numbers applied to current districts. There are many factors to consider in this process, such as population equality, and all changes to districts must comply with federal and state law, including the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Traditionally, the Governor of Georgia issues a call for a special legislative session in late summer or early fall following the arrival of the new census data. The sole purpose of this session is to adopt newly redrawn maps for all statewide district plans and may also include new maps for local county commission or school board districts. The session occurs so that all county election officials have sufficient time to update voter district assignments once the process is complete prior to elections the next year. After the Georgia General Assembly adopts new maps and the Governor signs the bills into law, they become the new election districts for use in the next election cycle or on the date specified in the legislation.