



**NEW MEXICO FIRST**

*People. Ideas. Progress.*



# LEGISLATIVE REDISTRICTING

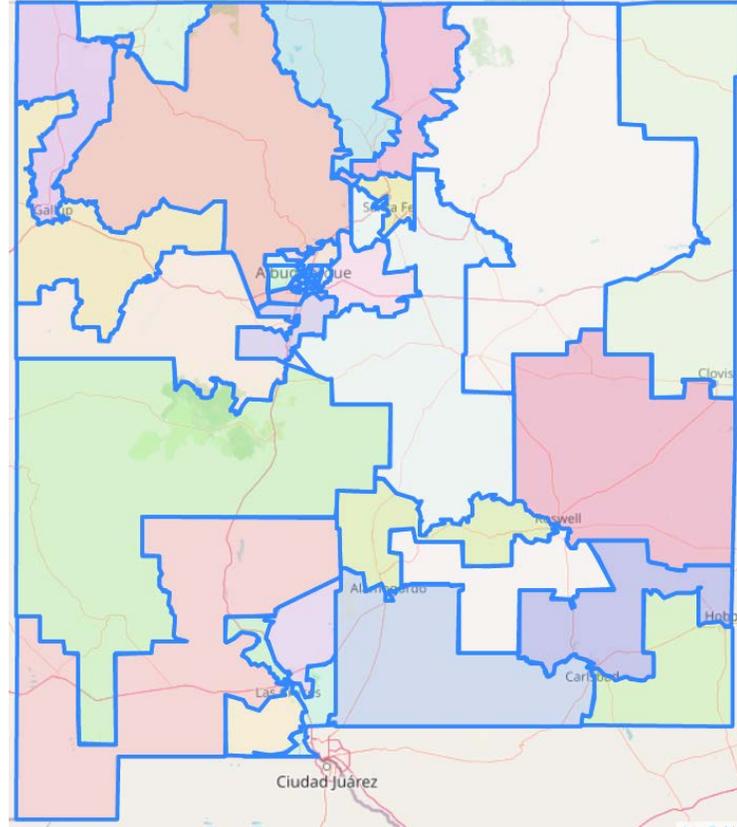
PRESENTED BY LILLY IRVIN-VITELA, MCRP

PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NEW MEXICO FIRST



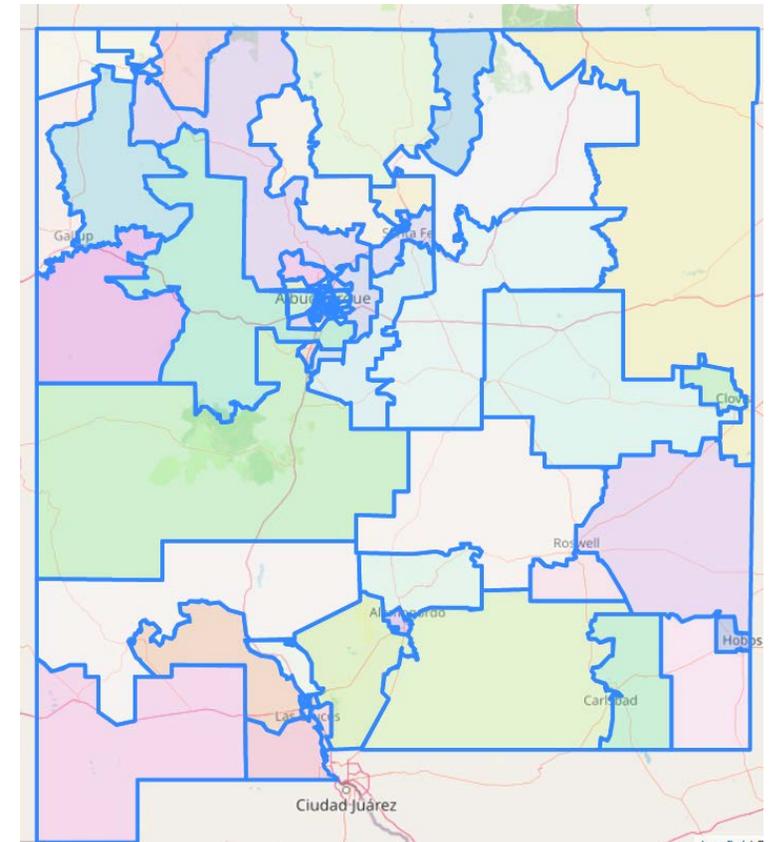
## AIM OF REDISTRICTING

*Redistricting* is the process of redrawing district boundaries to guarantee equal voter representation through equal, or equivalent, population counts.



New Mexico  
Senate District Map

NM  
House of Reps. District Map



REDISTRICTING  
ALSO  
DETERMINES

- US House Districts
- PRC
- PEC

# 2020 CENSUS UNDERWAY & LEGISLATIVE REDISTRICTING COMING SOON

- Participation in the Census important because it helps determine allocation of resources AND political representation
- According to the NM Human Services Department, a 1% undercount in NM would mean the loss of \$780 million dollars over the next 10 years.
- Census numbers also impact political representation.
- Most state and federal officials represent districts that are designed to reflect equalized populations.
- The shape and size of political districts changes every 10 years to reflect the growth or decline of populations.
- Reapportionment happens at the federal level and is driven by the Census. Reapportionment is a process to allot seats in a legislative body based on population changes.
- In New Mexico, where there is a history of significant undercounting of communities of color, rural, and frontier communities, undercounting contributes to underrepresentation in the drawing of political districts.



Q: WHO IS  
RESPONSIBLE FOR  
REDISTRICTING  
IN NEW MEXICO?

NEW MEXICO STATE  
LEGISLATURE IS  
RESPONSIBLE FOR  
REDISTRICTING

COMMUNITY IS  
RESPONSIBLE FOR  
ENSURING  
ACCOUNTABILITY TO A  
REPRESENTATIVE  
DEMOCRACY

# WHAT GUIDES REDISTRICTING

## ■ US Constitution

- Silent on state redistricting
- Article I Section 4

## ■ Historical Case Law

- The Voting Rights Act of 1965, signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson, aimed to overcome legal barriers at the state and local levels that prevented African Americans from exercising their right to vote as guaranteed under the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The Voting Rights Act is considered one of the most far-reaching pieces of civil rights legislation in U.S. history.
- Reynolds vs Sims 1964- equal protection

## ■ Recent Cases

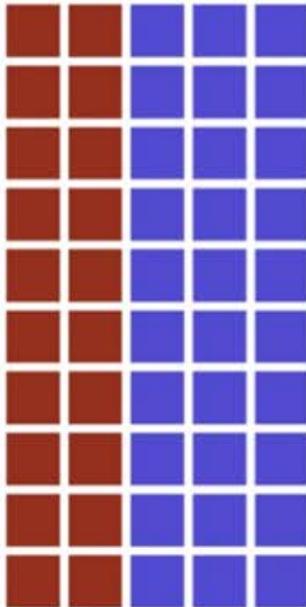
- Rucho v COMMON CAUSE 2019
- Gill v Whitford 2018
- Cooper v Harris 2017
- Evenwel v Abbott 2016
- Harris v Arizona 2016

## ■ Best Practices

- Contiguity
- Compactness
- Communities of Interest
- Avoid packing and cracking/gerrymandering (political or racial)

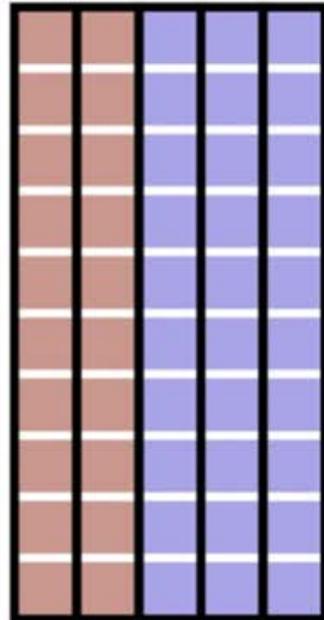
# POLITICAL GERRYMANDERING

50  
people



**60% blue,  
40% red**

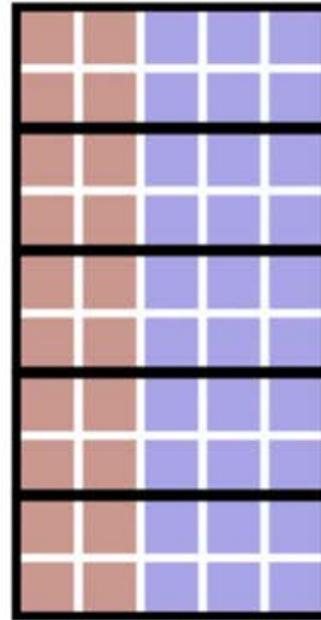
1. Perfect  
representation



**3 blue districts,  
2 red districts**

**BLUE WINS**

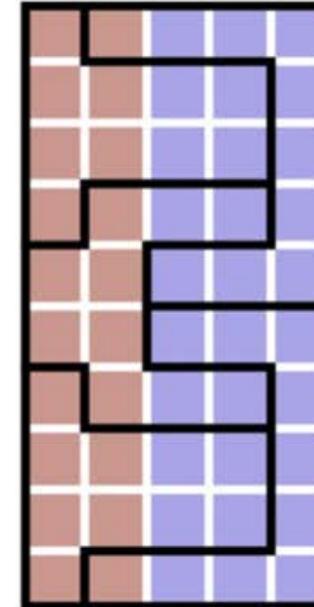
2. Compact,  
but unfair



**5 blue districts,  
0 red districts**

**BLUE WINS**

3. Neither compact  
nor fair



**2 blue districts,  
3 red districts**

**RED WINS**

## WHY BAD REDISTRICTING IS BAD FOR DEMOCRACY

- Elected officials have more power to pick their voters than voters have to pick their elected officials
- Less participation in elections. (Why vote if you are already pretty sure who is going to get elected?)
- Less complete representation. (Fewer people turning out means party stalwarts who vote in primaries are more influential than the public at large.)
- Less accountability. (If representatives are assured of election, why bother listening to their constituents?)
- More partisanship. (There is no reason to moderate a vote if the only people you are trying to please are more likely on the extremes of your own party.)

## RECENT EFFORTS TO IMPROVE REDISTRICTING

- Fair Districts NM Stakeholder Group Convening and Collaborating Since Fall 2019
- Fall 2019, NMF Study of state legislators about civic engagement in public policy
- Jan 2020, HM8 during the 2020 Regular Session, Representative Damon Ely

## LESSONS LEARNED FROM 2010



- Partisanship is expensive- \$6.5M spent in lawsuits and the decision about redistricting maps was ultimately made by a judge.
- Polarization hurts civic engagement.
- Without meaningful civic engagement our representative democracy is in trouble.

# BE A PART OF THE SOLUTION

1

Help with voter education

2

Join with Fair Districts  
New Mexico

3

Support the cross-partisan,  
independent, redistricting  
taskforce to develop  
recommendations and  
rules for consideration

# NEW MEXICO FIRST REDISTRICTING TASKFORCE

Our goal is to bring together 21-25 people from across New Mexico in a cross-partisan group to develop recommendations to the NM State Legislature on redistricting rules and processes.

- We are committed to a task force that is inclusive, transparent, and representative.
- The task force will include an equal number of legislators from the majority and minority party; an equal number of Representatives and Senators;
- Geographically, racially/ethnically, gender, and politically diverse members of the public who are knowledgeable about redistricting including members from the sovereign Pueblos and Tribes across NM.

# NEW MEXICO FIRST REDISTRICTING TASKFORCE

A task force has the ability to:

- increase cross-partisan buy-in to redistricting,
- reduce the contentiousness that has historically resulted in timely and costly lawsuits,
- educate voters and the general public; and
- increase public confidence in the electoral process and civic institutions.

“The public needs confidence that democracy works and that voters are choosing their elected officials rather than the perception that elected officials are choosing their voters.”

New Mexico First has received a grant from the Thornburg Foundation to convene a cross-partisan task force to strengthen public education and awareness about redistricting; increase transparency; and provide recommendations for consideration by the New Mexico State Legislature.

## TIMELINE

Taskforce Selection: Cross-partisan members from New Mexico First's Board, The League of Women Voters, Common Cause, ACI, and Thornburg. Nominations are due September 5, 2020.

The Redistricting Taskforce will meet remotely every two weeks beginning September 21<sup>st</sup> 3-5pm and aiming to complete discussion, deliberation, and drafting of recommendations by November 30<sup>th</sup> 3-5pm.

9/21/20 3-5pm

10/5/20 3-5pm

10/19/20 3-5pm

11/2/20 3-5pm

11/16/20 3-5pm

11/30/20 3-5pm

**Go to <https://tinyurl.com/nm-redistricting>  
to self-nominate or to nominate someone.**

# NEW MEXICO REDISTRICTING RESEARCH

- Dr. Gwyneth Doland, University of New Mexico, Communication and Journalism- Redistricting NM 2021: A troubled history and opportunities for change.
- Dr. Gabe Sanchez, University of New Mexico, Political Science- Redistricting Survey
- Lilly Irvin-Vitela, New Mexico First- Public Participation in Redistricting Policy Brief 2020
- NCSL- Districting Principles, 2019

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