

WHY IS INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING IMPORTANT?

Overview

Common Cause has led the fight to implement an important reform that has ended gerrymandering in several states. Democracy activists have successfully pushed for the creation of independent citizen redistricting commissions through ballot initiatives and legislation. This reform takes the power to draw districts from legislators and gives it to ordinary Americans.

The key component of these commissions is that **political insiders are prohibited from participation**, eliminating the clear conflict of interest that exists when elected officials or those close to them draw districts

In November 2018, Colorado Common Cause worked to end gerrymandering once and for all by helping to lead a coalition that passed Amendments Y and Z. Voters approved both measures by over 70 percent of the vote! These initiatives created independent redistricting commissions, which will be made up of everyday Coloradans – not politicians – and will create political districts that fairly and equitably represent the communities in our state.

We drafted ballot language that served as a model for Amendments Y and Z. In 2014, we drafted and collected signatures on the Colorado Fair Redistricting Act – which would have created an independent commission to oversee the mapping of Congressional and legislative districts.

The people of the state of Colorado hereby find and declare that fair political representation requires that the practice of gerrymandering, whereby Congressional and Legislative districts are purposefully drawn to favor one political party over another, MUST END.
-Statement of Purpose, 2014 Colorado Fair Redistricting Act

How Do I Apply?

The nonpartisan staff of the General Assembly is charged with creating and receiving applications for the independent redistricting commissions. The applications are available at redistricting.colorado.gov from August 10, 2020 to November 10, 2020. Applications include information such as professional background, party affiliation, a description of past political activity, involvement with political and civic organizations, and whether the applicant meets the eligibility criteria (listed on the page below). You must explain why you want to serve on the commission and may provide a statement about how you will promote consensus among commissioners if appointed. You may also choose to include up to four letters of recommendation with an application.

Applications are due by November 10, 2020
redistricting.colorado.gov



SERVING ON THE INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING COMMISSION

Amendments Y and Z created new independent redistricting commissions for Colorado's congressional and legislative districts respectively. These commissions will be made up of Colorado electors tasked with redrawing the state's districts following the 2020 Census.

Do I Qualify?





There are specific criteria that determine your eligibility to serve on the independent redistricting commissions:

You MUST:


-  Be a registered elector who voted in both of the previous two general elections in Colorado
-  Have been either unaffiliated with any political, or affiliated with the same political party for a consecutive period of no less than five years at the time of application

You MUST NOT:

Presently, or in the last 3 years

-  Have been compensated by a member of, or a campaign committee for a candidate to Congress (congressional redistricting) or the General Assembly (legislative redistricting)
-  Have been an elected public official at the federal, state, county, or municipal level in Colorado
-  Have been an elected political party official above the precinct level in Colorado or an employee of a political party
-  Have been a professional lobbyist registered as a lobbyist at the federal, state, or municipal level

Presently, or in the last 5 years

-  Have been a candidate for office at the federal (congressional redistricting) or General Assembly (legislative redistricting) level



Although you can apply to both commissions, if accepted you can only serve on either the congressional or legislative redistricting commissions

THE SELECTION PROCESS

To ensure that the independent redistricting commissions are comprised of qualified commissioners that reflect the diversity of Colorado, the selection process has several steps.

The total pool of eligible applicants will be selected by January 29th. Each commission will have a total of 12 commissioners: 4 registered Democratic voters (**D**), 4 registered Republican voters (**R**), and 4 registered unaffiliated voters (**U**),

Round 1:

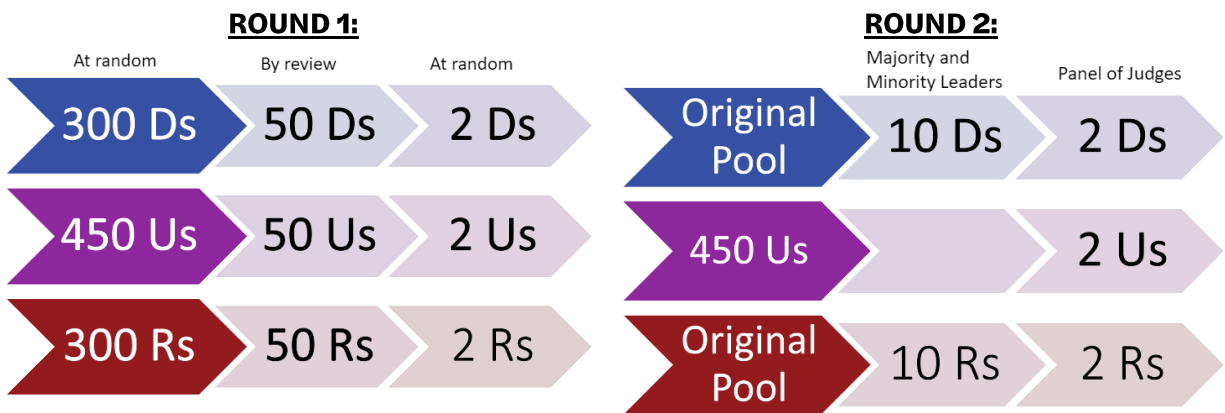
At a public meeting held on or before December 9th, 2020, a panel of three judges will select, at random, 300 **D**'s, 300 **R**'s, and 450 **U**'s.

On or before January 8, 2021, the panel will review the applicants and narrow them down to a smaller pool of 50 **D**'s, 50 **R**'s, and 50 **U**'s. From this pool, 2 applicants will then be chosen at random of each political affiliation, with consideration to not overrepresent any one congressional district.

Round 2:

By January 26th, the Majority and Minority leaders of the state House and Senate will each submit 10 applicants to the panel from the original pool of eligible applicants. One out of the 10 applicants in each of the four groups selected by each leader must be registered to vote in a congressional district not already represented by Round 1's six commissioners.

By January 29th, the panel of judges will conduct a public meeting to select one applicant from each group of 10, totaling 4 commissioners (2 **D**'s and 2 **R**'s). The panel will then select 2 **U**'s from the random pool of 450 generated in Round 1.



In selecting applicants, the panel shall, in addition to considering applicants' other qualifications:

- To the extent possible, ensure that the commission reflects Colorado's racial, ethnic, gender, and geographic diversity;
- Ensure that at least one commissioner is registered to vote in each congressional district and no more than two commissioners are registered to vote in any single congressional district;
- Ensure that at least one commissioner resides west of the continental divide; and
- Ensure that all commissioners meet the qualifications (listed on the prior page)