



Why do local Jurisdictions adopt redistricting commissions?

To create a less political and more citizen-and neighborhood-centric redistricting process.

Minnesota

Greater Citizen Participation: One of the core advantages of a redistricting commission is that it provides greater opportunities for citizen participation not afforded under the traditional process. Most local redistricting commissions are composed of civically-engaged residents, often with a requirement that the commission reflect the geographic, gender, and ethnic diversity of the jurisdiction.

As a body dedicated to a single purpose, commissions have better capacity to engage the public in the redistricting process and closely consider all the draft maps and boundary changes each neighborhood, community group, and individual may suggest. For example, state law only requires one public hearing prior to adopting a district map, commissions typically hold five to ten hearings, often in different areas of the jurisdiction. Commissions also adds greater transparency to redistricting by considering maps and redistricting in full view of the public. MN Legislative body is not subject to open meeting laws. The current process lends itself to backroom deals and secret communication on redistricting; much like what we've seen the last few sessions ending with seconds on the clock and dozens of legislators voting on bills they've not even read.

Less Politicized Process: Commissions can help depoliticize redistricting and increase public trust in the process. Under political control, redistricting has been a source of political infighting. Political redistricting can also be used to accomplish political ends, for example where a majority of the legislative committee draws another member out of their district or places two members of the same party into the same district.

Political redistricting can also lead to conflict between the legislative committee and community groups. Elected officials often know that they will run for re-election in the new districts they adopt. This be seen as a conflict of interest and may prompt accusations that they drew districts to favor their own reelection as opposed to best representing the different communities in that jurisdiction.

More Representative Districts: Compared with legislative bodies, independent commissions generally draw more representative districts. In comparing the district maps adopted by the Minnesota state legislature with those drafted by the Model Independent Redistricting Commission consisting of community groups and everyday Minnesotans, lead by Common Cause MN, it is evident that the Model Commission drew districts that were more compact, less gerrymandered, and more representative of communities of interest and minority populations. The MN Supreme Court actually referenced the district maps they produced.