



CONNECTICUT'S REDISTRICTING PROCEDURES AND DEADLINES

By: Kristin Sullivan, Chief Analyst,
Kristen Miller, Senior Legislative Attorney

STATE LEGAL AUTHORITY

Connecticut Constitution

- Art. III., § 3: Senate
- Art. III., § 4: House of Representatives
- Art. III., § 5: Districts to be consistent with federal standards
- Art. III., § 6: Decennial reapportionment

Connecticut General Statutes

- [§ 9-9](#): Representatives in Congress
- [§ 9-10a](#): State senators, senatorial districts
- [§ 9-169g](#): Town clerks submit voting district maps to secretary of the state; use of maps by General Assembly in redistricting

ISSUE

This report answers several questions about Connecticut's redistricting procedures and deadlines.

See OLR Report [2016-R-0250](#) for information on the 2020 Census Redistricting Data Program timeline.

Why does the General Assembly redraw Congressional and legislative district lines every 10 years?

The U.S. and Connecticut constitutions require it. In a 1964 case, the U.S. Supreme Court held that the U.S. Constitution's Equal Protection Clause requires that districts have about equal populations so that everyone's vote has equal

importance (i.e., the "one person, one vote" doctrine) (*Reynolds v. Sims*, 377 U.S. 533 (1964)). The state constitution requires that Congressional and legislative district lines be redrawn every 10 years (Conn. Const. Art. III., § 6). The districts must be based on the federal census and consistent with federal constitutional standards (Conn. Const. Art. III., § 5).

Who draws the lines?

The state constitution requires that an eight-member, bipartisan committee (i.e., the Reapportionment Committee) prepare a districting plan and the General Assembly approve it with a two-thirds vote in each chamber. The committee is composed of legislators.



In general, by February 15 of the year following the decennial census, the top four legislative leaders must each designate two committee members. Historically, each leader has designated two legislators from his or her own party's caucus in the Senate or House of Representatives.

If the General Assembly does not approve a plan by September 15 of that year, a nine-member commission (i.e., the Reapportionment Commission) is formed. The top four legislative leaders must each designate two commission members, whom the governor appoints. As with the committee, in the past each leader has designated two legislators from his or her own party's caucus in the Senate or House of Representatives. The eight appointees select a state elector as a ninth member.

(For both the committee and the commission, the constitution establishes a different procedure if there are members of more than two political parties in either chamber.)

When does it have to be done?

As indicated above, the Reapportionment Committee must complete its task by September 15 of the year following the census. If the General Assembly fails to adopt a plan by that deadline, the Reapportionment Commission must prepare a plan by November 30 of that year that is certified by at least five members; the commission's plan is not subject to General Assembly approval.

What happens if the Reapportionment Commission does not agree on a plan?

If the commission does not agree on a plan, the constitution empowers the state Supreme Court to compel the commission to complete its task. Alternatively, the court can draw the district boundaries itself, which it must do by February 15 of the second year following the decennial census.

What are the current ideal populations for Connecticut's Congressional and state districts?

Based on the 2010 census, Connecticut has 3,574,097 people and five Congressional districts. The average population (also known as the "ideal" population) for each Congressional district is one-fifth of the state's population, or 714,819.

Under the state constitution, the membership of the House of Representatives can range from 125 to 225; the Senate can range from 30 to 50. After the 2010 redistricting cycle, the Reapportionment Commission, which approved the state

legislative plans, opted to leave the number of House and Senate districts unchanged at 151 and 36, respectively. Thus, the current ideal populations are 23,670 for a House district and 99,280 for a Senate district.

What are the 2020 redistricting cycle deadlines under the Connecticut Constitution?

Table 1 summarizes the state constitution’s redistricting deadlines (Conn. Const. Art. III., § 6). It does not include any deadlines related to the 2020 Census Redistricting Data Program.

Table 1: 2020 Redistricting Deadlines under the State Constitution

<i>Deadline</i>	<i>Requirement</i>
February 15, 2021	Legislative leaders appoint an eight-member Reapportionment Committee
September 15, 2021	General Assembly adopts a plan of districting
Forthwith after September 15, 2021	Governor appoints a Reapportionment Commission based on legislative leaders’ designations (if General Assembly fails to adopt a districting plan by September 15)
Within 30 days after appointment of Reapportionment Commission	Members select a state elector as the ninth member
November 30, 2021*	Reapportionment Commission submits a certified plan of districting to the secretary of the state
Forthwith after November 30, 2021	Secretary of the state notifies the Chief Justice of the state Supreme Court (if Reapportionment Commission fails to submit a plan by November 30)
February 15, 2022*	State Supreme Court files its plan of districting with the secretary of the state

*The secretary of the state must forthwith publish the plan at which point it has the full force of law.

BACKGROUND

Related Federal Law: Public Law (P.L.) 94-171

Passed by Congress in 1975, P.L. 94-171 requires the U.S. Census Bureau to administer a decennial redistricting program and provide the states with the population tabulations necessary for legislative redistricting. It allows states that participate in the program to help define the geographic areas for which they would like the tabulations (e.g., census blocks or voting districts). The Census Bureau must provide the tabulations to the states by April 1 of the year after the census.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCE

[Connecticut General Assembly Redistricting Website](#)

KS/KM:bs