

# Ohio Redistricting Reform History

**1967**

Ohio Constitutional amendment adopted authorizing the Apportionment Board to draw boundaries for Ohio House and Senate districts. The amendment did not address congressional districts and they continued to be drawn by the Ohio General Assembly.

**1981**

The Democrats performed the second partisan gerrymander. The League of Women Voters of Ohio supported an Ohio constitutional amendment that provided for competition between redistricting plans and required approval of the plan that provided for the most compact districts. The Ohio Republican Party supported the amendment; the Democrats opposed it. The amendment failed, getting only 42% of the vote.

**1999**

The League of Women Voters of Ohio attempted, but failed, to place a redistricting reform amendment on the ballot. The proposal used a mathematical formula to assure compact districts.

**2005**

Reform Ohio Now (RON) placed a redistricting initiative on the ballot, along with three other election reform initiatives. Under the redistricting initiative, plans could be submitted by the public and the plan that created the most competitive districts would be chosen. Neither state party supported the initiative. The proposal received 30% of the vote.

**2009-2010**

The Republican-controlled Senate and Democrat-controlled House each passed a redistricting initiative, the Senate version mirroring HJR 13 and the House version establishing a public competition. The two resolutions could not be reconciled, and no proposal passed both chambers.

**2012**

Representatives of the League of Women Voters of Ohio, Common Cause Ohio and others filed a petition to place redistricting reform on the ballot. Under the proposal an independent commission would ensure districts were compact, competitive and reflective of the political values of voters. The initiative failed, getting 37% of the vote.

**2014**

The Constitutional Modernization Commission couldn't reach consensus. During the lame duck session, Rep. Vern Sykes (D) and Rep. Matt Huffman (R) negotiated a compromise plan for redistricting the General Assembly that overwhelmingly passed both the Ohio House and Senate. It required bipartisan support to adopt a full 10 year district plan, tightened requirements for keeping political subdivisions together, stated districts could not be drawn for partisan gain, and required more transparency and public input.

**2017**

The Fair Districts campaign launched a petition initiative to apply the rules from Issue 1 in 2015 -- a bipartisan commission protecting communities and limiting partisan gerrymandering -- to congressional redistricting, attempting to place it on the November 2018 ballot. The legislature created a bipartisan working group to study congressional redistricting.

**1971**

The Democrats controlled the Apportionment Board and performed the first partisan gerrymander under the new amendment.

**1991**

The Republicans controlled the Apportionment Board and performed the third partisan gerrymander under the 1967 amendment.

**2001**

The Republicans performed the fourth partisan gerrymander under the 1967 amendment.

**2006**

A Republican legislator introduced a redistricting reform initiative, HJR 13. It emphasized compactness of districts and keeping communities together. The resolution narrowly failed to receive the required 60% vote from both the House and Senate to be placed on the ballot.

**2011**

The Republicans performed the fifth partisan gerrymander. Concurrently, the Ohio Campaign for Accountable Redistricting led by the League of Women Voters of Ohio and Ohio Citizen Action, held a competition in which citizens could draw maps. Those maps were more compact, more competitive, fairer to both political parties and respected county and municipal boundaries. All were better than the ones adopted. OCAR also issued a "Transparency Report" showing that maps were drawn in secret to the specifications of politicians.

**2013**

Although Joint Resolutions were introduced in the legislature, the focus of redistricting reform turned to the Ohio Constitutional Modernization Commission.

**2015**

The legislature's plan was Issue 1 on the November ballot and passed by 71.5%. The League, Common Cause and others began work on adding congressional redistricting to the reform agenda.

**2018**

Grassroots work of petition circulators precipitated negotiations between legislators and the Fair Districts campaign, leading to the passage of SJR 5, placing congressional redistricting reform on the May ballot as Issue 1. It would create a 3-step process to ensure bipartisan support for a 10-year plan or allow a temporary partisan plan that must comply with strict anti-gerrymandering rules.

\*From 1978 through 2001, there was a proposed redistricting reform constitutional amendment introduced in each General Assembly Session — none passed.