



JULY 20, 2021

MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK IN SC: SC SENATE REDISTRICTING PLANNING

It's time to get involved in the 2021 redistricting of South Carolina!

The first meeting of the South Carolina Senate 2021 Redistricting Subcommittee was held this morning, July 20, 2021, in Room 105 of the Gressette Building. The meeting was live-streamed and can be accessed in the video archive at <https://www.scstatehouse.gov/video/archives.php>.

We need to act **quickly** to get our members and the public engaged. As we expected, the late delivery of census data has led to a compressed schedule for producing new legislative district maps. That means a tight schedule for public comment on a complex process. The Senate will address both South Carolina Senate and U. S. House of Representatives districts.

Today the staff and senators outlined a comprehensive – but rapid – process for hearing from the state's citizens. The schedule for the first round of public meetings was not announced this morning because concerns were raised about insufficient time to develop public awareness. However, we were told that the 2011 model is being employed for meetings around the state, so we probably can expect Senate meetings in the next several weeks in Columbia, Orangeburg, Sumter, Rock Hill, Greenville, Florence, Beaufort, Charleston, Georgetown, and Aiken. Please encourage your members to participate!

Those testifying in person, by zoom, or by written submission in this first round of meetings should be prepared to comment on the criteria that matter most to them, on the communities of interest that they believe are of special importance in their areas, and on any other factors that they believe should be considered by those drawing the lines. A website has been created to assist the public at <https://redistricting.scsenate.gov>. This website will include meeting plans, contact information, and guidance for those who wish to participate in the process. The League of Women Voters website also provides information that the public may find helpful in constructing testimony at <https://my.lwv.org/south-carolina/redistricting-people-powered-fair-maps-south-carolina>.

This will not be the last opportunity for public input. Following these hearings, the Senate Subcommittee intends to hold a meeting to adopt official criteria and to announce plans for further input. They expect to work from raw data that will be made available by the U.S. Census on August 16, so they will move forward then to develop their own draft maps for public review and comment. The data needed to construct maps will be made available to the public through the website, so anyone who wishes to do so can submit maps for consideration by the Subcommittee.

Above all, we should let our members and the general public know that their participation will be welcome. Too often citizens find the prospect of public testimony daunting. It should not be. Everyone in South Carolina has a lot at stake in this process. The Subcommittee members and staff clearly recognized that in their comments this morning. Although the process is rushed, efforts are being made to encourage and support citizens who wish to become involved.

Everyone should bear in mind that the House has not yet announced any meetings. If the Senate schedule is very tightly compressed, the House schedule is likely to be even more challenging. Rep. Murphy, Chair of House Judiciary, has told reporters that they plan their first subcommittee meeting on August 3, but this has not yet been listed at www.scstatehouse.gov. August 3 is only a week and a half before the census data are available and map drawing begins.

For those who would like an incentive to become involved, a map showing Senate district outcomes in the 2020 General Election is posted on the LWVSC Facebook

page at <https://www.facebook.com/League-of-Women-Voters-of-South-Carolina-251544131543145>. Districts where the November election was decided by margins in excess of 10% were probably never competitive. We surely can do better than this.

We want a choice when we vote in November. We want legislators who are not chosen by a small number of party loyalists in primary elections, but who are chosen by all of us, to faithfully represent all of us, to reflect our concerns and interests. That can only happen in November. What happens in the next several months will determine whether these hopes are realistic.

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