



WINNING OPEN REDISTRICTING PUBLIC HEARINGS

Redistricting advocacy is about three things:

1. Improving **transparency** in the process;
2. Providing effective **testimony** in support of fair maps (See “Giving Effective Public Testimony”); and
3. Establishing a clear **record** of community demands so that we can challenge any attempts to rig the process.

Recommendations for a Fair, Timely, and Transparent Process*

*Based on demands delivered to the NC General Assembly on August 2 (Learn more at scsj.org/ourmaps); may also apply to local governments with districted elections, which are recommended to provide public hearings before final census data is released on September 30, 2021. Local governments are **required** to conduct hearings after draft maps are drawn and before they are passed.

Recommendation #1: Implement a Redistricting Timeline That Allows Informed and Impactful Public Comment

- ✓ Start the Redistricting Process Immediately After the August 16 Data Release.
- ✓ Disclose Initial Draft Maps **by September 15**.
- ✓ Submit Final Proposed Maps to the General Assembly **by October 6**.

Explanation: North Carolina’s redistricting process must follow a timeline that allows for meaningful public comment, regardless of the delays in the release of census data that have altered the typical redistricting timeline. The Census Bureau currently anticipates releasing block-level census data in the legacy format on August 16, 2021. New maps must be in place before December 17, 2021, when candidates seeking federal or state party primary nominations must file their notice of

candidacy. To ensure a meaningful opportunity for public comment within this window of time, North Carolina’s redistricting process should adhere to the timeline above.

Recommendation #2: Provide Genuine and Meaningful Options for Public Comment

- ✓ Provide a Simple Website For All Redistricting Information.
- ✓ Allow Public Comment Before Initial Draft Maps Are Drawn.
- ✓ Allow Public Access to and Comment on Draft and Revised Maps.
- ✓ Permit Written and Oral Public Comment.
- ✓ Hold Accessible Public Hearings.
- ✓ Provide At Least Two Weeks’ Notice of Public Hearings.

Explanation: Not only should state and local governments receive public input before draft maps are drawn — ensuring community input and concerns can be taken into consideration — they should also provide adequate time to review draft maps and submit public comments before any revisions. These public comment opportunities should be allowed in multiple formats to make the process safer, simpler and more accessible. These options should include an online public comment portal, email, and mail, in addition to live hearings throughout the state provided with adequate notice.

Redistricting advocacy is about improving **transparency, providing effective **testimony**, and establishing a clear **record** of demands.**

Recommendation #3: Ensure Transparency throughout the Redistricting Process

- ✓ Disclose All Criteria, Systems, and Data Used In Drawing Maps.
- ✓ Perform All Map Drawing and Revising in Public View.
- ✓ Ensure Quality Video and Audio Broadcasts of Public Meetings.
- ✓ Disclose All Third Parties Engaged in Redistricting.

Explanation: In 2019, a court required state lawmakers draw remedial maps in “full public view” and barred them from taking “any steps to draw or revise the new districts outside of public view.” Despite these requirements, legislators and participants moved maps in and out of the meeting rooms during the redistricting process, held relevant conversations away from microphones, and failed to respond to public commentary. The public also experienced significant difficulty connecting to online audio and video broadcasts that allowed them to observe the process. The above recommendations provide the transparency that North Carolinians deserve.

Sample Fair Process Request Testimony

Introduce yourself

State your name, where you live, the organization that you are representing (if any), and the topic you will be discussing. “Hello, my name is _____, from _____ and I am testifying on why the 2021 redistricting process needs to be fair and transparent.”

Put into your own words how map manipulation hurts your life & communities

“Purposefully breaking up communities takes away the community’s ability to come together and advocate for important issues. “For example, here in _____ County we are artificially broken up into _____ congressional districts extending in every direction. This means that no congressperson is fully committed to listening to our concerns. I care about issues like _____, _____ and _____.”

Make recommendations to improve the process

Use the recommendations above or modify them based on community needs.

Thank the Decisionmakers

“Thank you for taking the time to listen to me today.”

Inspired by resources created by various partners, including Texas Civil Rights Project and Asian & Pacific Islander American Vote (APIAVote).



Questions? Contact communications@scsj.org
919-323-3380
southerncoalition.org