

Idaho Redistricting Fast Facts

Redistricting 101

- Redistricting is the process to align the state's political boundaries to match population changes to ensure every voice has a vote. Redistricting is done every 10 years, after the state receives the most recent population results from our nation wide federal census.
- Since 2000, Idaho has grown by 250,000 people. That's the equivalent of an additional Boise and Pocatello. Ada and Canyon counties have seen most of the growth in Idaho, with our rural areas actually losing population.
- These newly created districts will ultimately shape the political face of Idaho for the next 10 years and guide decision-making on important issues such as education and public schools, health care and reproductive rights, jobs and the economy, and technology and the environment.
- The Bipartisan Commission on Reapportionment has been charged with the task of redrawing Idaho's district lines. The Commission is made up of 3 republicans and 3 democrats, none of which can be active politicians or current lobbyists. The Commission answers only to the Idaho Supreme Court.

Redistricting Guidelines

- The goals are to make districts with equal population size, keep politics competitive, and create boundaries that make sense and don't split up communities. To that end, the Commission has several guidelines they must follow:
 - Legislative districts should not differ in population by more than ten percent.
 - The creation of oddly-shaped districts to string together voters of a particular race (or gerrymandering), for any reason, is disfavored under Idaho law.
 - Legislative districts should maintain local voting precinct boundaries, should preserve communities of interest and traditional neighborhoods, and should avoid dividing counties. If a county division is necessary, the counties being melded must be contiguous and connected by a highway.
 - District lines should not be made to favor or protect an incumbent or party.

Progress on Redistricting

- After hosting 14 public hearings to glean public input, the commission has unanimously agreed to keep all 35 legislative districts to retain as much voter representation in the legislature as possible.
- Several Legislative and Congressional maps are currently being considered visit http://www.legislature.idaho.gov/redistricting/proposed_maps.htm to see them and evaluate them for yourself.
- In a bi-partisan resolution, the Latah County Board of Commissioners showed their unanimous support for a Latah-Benewah District on August 10, 2011.
- Every Idahoan deserves a voice in determining our state's future!

LTE & Email “How To”

Basics for writing your email of Letter to the Editor (LTE)

1. State why this issue is relevant to our community.
2. State why this issues matters to you—make it personal.
3. State why the reader or community should care about this issue.
4. Fill out your letter with related stats, anecdotes, and stories.

NOTE: Feel free to use the “Fast Facts” about redistricting, but we ask that you put them in your own words and mix up the order, so messages don’t sound canned. The following points are the most important for the commissioners and public to hear:

- Respect communities of interest so that everyone has a voice.
- Keep counties whole, to the extent possible—as called for in the state Constitution.
- Keep cities (as communities of interest) intact, to the extent possible.
- One person, one vote. It’s the American way and it’s the Idaho way.
- Respect and uphold the Idaho Constitution.
- Serve the people, don’t stack the deck.
- Voters should pick their politicians; politicians shouldn’t pick their voters.
- These newly created districts will shape the face of Idaho for the next 10 years.
- Create boundaries that make sense and don’t split up communities!
- Every Idahoan deserves a voice in determining our state's future!

Helpful “Dos” and “Don’ts” for emails to the commission and letters to the editor:

DO:

- State where you live and what type of work you do (teacher, parent, construction worker, etc)
- If you’ve lived in Idaho a long time, say so
- Talk about the fundamental values: fairness, transparency
- Keep it simple, brief and clear—for LTEs, assume your audience is completely uninformed
- Evoke Idaho pride
- Talk about everyone deserving a voice and a vote
- Be positive
- Thank the Commissioners for their work and their service to Idaho
- Thank the Commission for the opportunity to comment (email)

DON’T:

- Fall into jargon or get bogged down in details
- Be partisan or bring Party politics into it—the issues Idahoan’s care about transcends mere politics
- Preach gloom and doom

For Emails:

Email all members of the Commission & their staff at once using:

RedistrictingCommission@redistricting.idaho.gov

For Letters to the Editor:

Moscow-Pullman Daily News

The Daily News welcomes letters to the editor of up to 300 words. Letters should include a suggested title and the writer's name, address and daytime telephone number (only your name and city will be printed). Letters should be on topics of general interest to readers in the Moscow-Pullman area and in good taste. E-mail letters in plain text format are welcome—please do not send letters as attachments. All letters may be edited for style and clarity.

Submit online at <http://www.dnews.com/letters-form/>

or

Send to letters@dnews.com or

“Letters”

The Daily News

P.O. Box 8187

Moscow, Idaho 83843

Lewiston Morning Tribune

The Tribune welcomes letters to the editor of up to 250 words. Letters should include a suggested title and the writer's name, address and daytime telephone number (only your name and city will be printed). Letters should be on topics of general interest to readers in the Quad-city area and in good taste. All letters are subject to condensation, and any the Tribune considers libelous or in bad taste will be rejected. Please use plain text format when submitting electronically.

Submit online at <http://www.lmtribune.com/letters-form/>

or

Fax or send to letters@lmtribune.com

The Argonaut

The **Argonaut** welcomes letters to the editor about current issues and should be less than 300 words. Letters should focus on issues, not on personalities. The Argonaut reserves the right to edit letters for grammar, length, libel and clarity. Letters must be signed, include major and provide a current phone number. If your letter is in response to a particular article, please list the title and date of the article.

Send to arg-opinion@uidaho.edu or

Argonaut

301 Student Union

Moscow, ID, 83844-4271

Sample email to Redistricting Commission:

Members of the Idaho Commission on Reapportionment, (or Members of the Commission, or Members of the Redistricting Commission),

As a long-time Idaho resident, I am very interested in the redistricting process that is now taking place. I am a librarian at Hillside Junior High School in Boise and a parent to three wonderful children. Since decisions made in the coming weeks will determine the face of politics for the coming decade, I respectfully ask the Commission to honor the Idaho Constitution when making decisions about new boundaries.

Everyone deserves a voice in our state's future and it's important to preserve the "one person one vote" principle that Idahoans deeply cherish. To ensure fairness, please keep communities of interest intact as you draw new boundaries—including keeping counties and cities together to the extent possible.

I realize there are many maps under consideration and I am not able to comment on each. However, sticking to the guidelines as set by our state constitution will lead to creation of new political boundaries that are fair and serve all Idahoans well.

Thank-you for your service to Idaho, I appreciate it very much.
Sincerely,

Joe Sample
123 Hill Drive
Boise, Idaho 83704
jsample@cableone.net

Sample Letter to the Editor submitted to the Idaho Statesman:

(Borrow from this, but don't copy this example. This letter was submitted on 8/17/11)

Before the end of this month 3 Republicans and 3 Democrats on the Redistricting Commission will create new political districts that will change the face of politics in Idaho for the coming decade. If you care about Idaho, now is the time to speak up!

Redistricting happens once every 10 years. It's the process that aligns political districts to match population changes to ensure "one person, one vote".

The people elected in new districts will make decisions that affect all Idaho families. They will decide the direction of our state, including: the economy and jobs, Medicare and Social Security, education and public schools funding, and the future of Idaho's air, water and natural places.

Contact the Commission today and urge them to follow the guidelines set forth by the Idaho Constitution. Encourage them to respect communities of interest and to keep counties and cities intact to the extent possible by creating boundaries that make sense.

Contact the Commission on Redistricting today and let them know you care about Idaho. Every Idahoan deserves a voice in Idaho's future. Make yours heard before it's too late. Email the commission by August 29th: RedistrictingCommission@redistricting.idaho.gov

Lee Flinn, Boise

Further Research

1. Redistricting website: www.legislature.idaho.gov/redistricting/redistricting.htm
2. Redistricting guidelines: www.legislature.idaho.gov/redistricting/guidelines.htm
3. City of Moscow's Resolution on Redistricting:
www.moscowcares.com/080111_08_LegRedist_ComRep.pdf
4. Latah County's Board of County Commissioner's Letter on Redistricting:
www.moscowcares.com/Latah_County_Redistricting_Letter.htm
5. Article about various maps (Lewiston Tribune):
www.spokesman.com/stories/2011/jul/31/redistricting-puzzle-still-on-table/?print-friendly
6. Betsy Russell's (Lewiston Tribune) "Eye on Boise" blog with multiple posts on redistricting: www.spokesman.com/blogs/boise/
7. Article about incumbents (Idaho Statesman):
www.thenewstribune.com/2011/08/01/1767864/gop-redistricting-plan-affects.html
8. Dan Popkey's blog (Idaho Statesman) with multiple posts on redistricting:
voices.idahostatesman.com/idahopolitics
9. Dem Commissioner's share their plan: idahodems.org/readers-opinion-submitted-by-the-democratic-members-of-the-idaho-redistricting-commission/
10. If anyone finds a letter from the GOP Commissioners about their plan, I'd love to have it!
Email Jennifer.whitney@ppgwni.org if you find one.