Information about Redistricting and Reapportionment in New Jersey

After the official results of the U. S. Census which is conducted every ten year are made available, two groups are convened to establish districts based on population from which representatives are elected. The process is different for legislative districts and congressional districts. Each process is delineated in the New Jersey State Constitution.

Legislative Apportionment Committee

1 - Created under Article IV, Section III, Paragraph 1 of NJ State Constitution.

2 - 10 members

3 - Appointed by the state chairman of each of the two major parties

4 - Appointed by November 15 of year census is conducted

5 - Commission must produce the plan by February 1 in the year following the census, or one month after receipt of official census figures, whichever is later.

6 - If Commission does not meet the deadline or says it is deadlocked, the Supreme Court chief justice appoints an 11th member. The 11-member group must produce a plan within a month of new appointment.

Congressional Redistricting Committee

1 - Created under Article II, Section II of the State Constitution.

2 - 13 members. 12 members appointed by June 15 and certified by July 1.

3 - Twelve members appointed as follows:
   2 by Senate President
   2 by Speaker of the General Assembly
   2 by minority leader of the Senate
   2 by minority leader of the General Assembly
   2 by chair of the Democratic State Committee
   2 by chair of the Republican State Committee

4 - One member, the independent member, by vote of at least 7 of previously appointed 12 members, is appointed before July 15. If previously appointed members cannot agree, they certify so to the Supreme Court by July 20 and include the name of two persons who received the greatest number of votes. The members of the Court will select the person who represents the best interests of the State as the independent member by August 15.
5 - The independent member is the chair of the Committee. 
Note: Alan Rosenthal, Professor of Public Policy and Political Science at the Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University and former director of the Institute from 1974-1994, served as the independent member in 1990 and 2000.

6 - Committee must produce a plan by the third Tuesday in 2012 or three months after the number of districts is determined, whichever is later.

7 - Three public hearings in different parts of the State are required.


Resources

“Legislative Reapportionment in New Jersey” by Donald E. Stokes, published by The Fund for New Jersey, 1991

Stokes was dean of Princeton University’s Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs when he was appointed the 11th member of the 1981 Legislative Apportionment Committee. Stokes said about the report:
“This report re-examines New Jersey’s experience with its constitutional procedure for redrawing the state’s legislative districts. It describes New Jersey’s innovative “mixed” model, clarifies the role of the neutral public commissioner, defines the criterion of fairness between the parties, considers how well the legislative elections of the 1980s have conformed to this criterion, explores the protection of minorities and other criteria that should guide the reapportionment process, offers some recommendations for strengthening New Jersey’s model, and considers the possibility of extending the model to the redrawing of New Jersey’s congressional districts.”

Stokes was subsequently appointed the 11th member of the 1991 Legislative Apportionment Committee.

California Voter Foundation (www.CVF.org) has links to a number of sites that provide general information and assistance on redistricting. The State of California is initiating a new method for redistricting as the result of initiative and referendum.

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