



# Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission

## Commissioner Orientation and Resource Materials

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## Appendix 2: Glossary of Terms

The following glossary provides publicly available definitions to some of the terms you may read in the materials contained in this binder or hear and use during the first convening of the Commission.

<p><b>Apportionment</b></p>	<p>Apportionment is the process of dividing the 435 memberships, or seats, in the U.S. House of Representatives among the 50 states based on the apportionment population counts from the decennial census. Following the federal census, which is conducted every 10 years, a formula (determined at the federal level) assigns each state’s number of congressional seats based on the new population count, a process known as apportionment.<sup>1</sup></p>
<p><b>Census</b></p>	<p>Every 10 years, the federal government conducts a population count of everyone in the United States. Data from the census provide the basis for distributing more than federal funds annually to communities across the country. They also are used to redraw the boundaries of congressional and state legislative districts and accurately determine the number of congressional seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives.<sup>2</sup></p>
<p><b>Chairperson(s)</b></p>	<p>The chairperson, or chairpersons, is/are the presiding officer(s) of an organized group.<sup>22</sup></p>
<p><b>Communities of Interest</b></p>	<p>Communities of Interest are one of the seven redistricting criteria that the Commission must consider when drawing district lines, according to the constitution.</p> <p>The guidance provided in the Michigan Constitution is as follows:</p> <p><i>“Districts shall reflect the state’s diverse population and communities of interest. Communities of interest may include, but shall not be limited to, populations that share cultural or historical characteristics or economic interests. Communities of interest do not include relationships with political parties, incumbents, or political candidates.” (§6.13.C)<sup>4</sup></i></p>
<p><b>Compactness</b></p>	<p>Compactness is one of the seven redistricting criteria that the Commission must consider when drawing district lines, according to the constitution.</p> <p>The Michigan Constitution states: <i>“Districts shall be reasonably compact.” (§6.13.G)<sup>4</sup></i></p> <p>One intuitive way to define compactness is in terms of geometric shape, where a square or a circle is considered most compact. Other measures of compactness also take into account where people live, thus defining a district’s compactness in terms of how close its residents live to one another.<sup>4</sup></p>

<b>Competitiveness</b>	A competitive district is one in which the expected electoral outcome is close enough that the party (and therefore incumbent) is likely to change on a regular basis. <sup>4</sup>
<b>Congressional District</b>	Congressional districts in the U.S. are electoral divisions for the purpose of electing members of the U.S. House of Representatives. After the apportionment of congressional seats among the States based on census population counts, each State is responsible for establishing congressional districts for the purpose of electing representatives. <sup>5</sup> For the drawing of congressional districts, the population of congressional districts must equal population "as nearly as is practicable." <sup>4</sup>
<b>Contiguity</b>	<p>Contiguity is one of the seven redistricting criteria that the Commission must abide by when drawing district lines, according to the constitution.</p> <p><i>The Michigan Constitution states: "Districts shall be geographically contiguous. Island areas are considered to be contiguous by land to the county of which they are a part." (§6.13.B)</i><sup>4</sup></p> <p>Contiguity refers to the rule that electoral districts in a state be physically adjacent. A district is considered contiguous if all parts of the district are in physical contact with some other part of the district. Generally, a district is also considered contiguous if the district is split by a body of water, but there is a method of transport over the water, such as a bridge.<sup>6</sup></p>
<b>Efficiency Gap</b>	<p>The efficiency gap is a standard for measuring partisan gerrymandering by counting the number of votes each party "wastes" in an election. It can be used to determine whether either party enjoyed a systematic advantage in turning votes into state legislative or congressional seats. In other words, it is a measure of which party is better able to convert their votes into legislative seats, and if an efficiency gap is too high, it may indicate the presence of partisan gerrymandering<sup>16,7</sup>.</p> <p>A "wasted" vote is a concept used to refer to any vote cast for a losing candidate, as well as all the votes cast for a winning candidate in excess of the number needed to win<sup>16,7</sup>.</p> <p>As an equation, the efficiency gap looks like this:</p> $\text{Efficiency Gap} = (\text{Ttl Dem Wasted Votes} - \text{Ttl Rep Wasted Votes}) \div \text{Ttl Votes}$
<b>Gerrymandering</b>	Gerrymandering is when a political group or party tries to change a voting district to create a result that helps them or hurts the group or party who is against them. <sup>9</sup>

<b>Incumbency</b>	<p>Incumbency is one of the seven redistricting criteria that the Commission must consider when drawing district lines, according to the constitution.</p> <p>The Michigan Constitution state: <i>"Districts shall not favor or disfavor an incumbent elected official or a candidate."</i> (§6.13.E)<sup>4</sup></p> <p>An incumbent is an elected political official or representative currently holding office.</p>
<b>Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission</b>	<p>The Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (or "the Commission") is a randomly selected commission of citizens in Michigan responsible for drawing U.S. Congressional and Michigan State House and Senate district lines. Voters amended the state constitution in the November 2018 general election to make citizens — not legislators or special interests — responsible for drawing district lines (called "redistricting"). The Commission is composed of 13 randomly selected Michigan registered voters: four who affiliate with the Democratic Party, four who affiliate with the Republican Party, and five who do not affiliate with either major political party.<sup>12</sup></p>
<b>Legislator</b>	<p>A person who makes laws; a member of a legislative body.<sup>17</sup></p>
<b>Majority Minority District</b>	<p>A district in which a minority group constitutes at least 50 percent plus one person of the voting-age population. A majority minority district is designed to fulfill Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act.<sup>10</sup></p>
<b>Open Meetings Act</b>	<p>The Michigan Open Meetings Act provides the public with a right of access to the meetings of a large number of government bodies at the state and local level in Michigan. The law entitles residents to notice of these meetings and provides the opportunity to inspect and copy meeting minutes.<sup>11</sup></p>
<b>Opportunity-to-Elect District</b>	<p>A district in which a minority group is large enough to play a dominant role in the primary election of a party that is likely to win at least 50 percent of the vote in the general election.<sup>4</sup></p>
<b>Packing and Cracking</b>	<p>Techniques used in gerrymandering, or the drawing district lines in a manner so as to benefit one group or political party, are called "Packing" and "Cracking".</p> <p>"Cracking" involves spreading voters of a particular group or type among many electoral districts in order to deny the group a sufficiently large voting bloc in any particular district. "Packing" concentrates as many voters of one group or type into a single electoral district to reduce their influence in other districts.<sup>9</sup></p>

<b>Partisan Fairness</b>	<p>Partisan fairness is one of the seven redistricting criteria that the Commission must consider when drawing district lines, according to the constitution.</p> <p>The Michigan Constitution states: <i>"Districts shall not provide a disproportionate advantage to any political party. A disproportionate advantage to a political party shall be determined using accepted measures of partisan fairness."</i> (§6.13.D)<sup>4</sup></p>
<b>Political Boundaries</b>	<p>Political boundaries are one of the seven redistricting criteria that the Commission must consider when drawing district lines, according to the constitution.</p> <p>The Michigan Constitution states: <i>"Districts shall reflect consideration of county, city, and township boundaries."</i> (§6.13.F)</p>
<b>Polsby-Popper Score</b>	<p>The Polsby-Popper Score is used to measure and evaluate the compactness of electoral districts. This score measures the smoothness of district lines. It compares the area of a district to the area of a circle of equal perimeter. Districts with smooth borders and regular shapes score higher, and districts with squiggly borders will score lower. Scores range from 0.00 to 1.00, with 1.00 being the most compact.<sup>4</sup></p>
<b>Proposal 18-2</b>	<p>A ballot initiative (commonly referred to as "Proposal 2") passed on November 6, 2018 by Michigan voters to amend the state constitution to restructure the state's legislative redistricting process and give the power of redistricting to the people of Michigan. The Amendment creates an Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission that will draw Michigan's legislative and congressional boundaries, as is required by federal law after each decade's Census. Previously, the redistricting process was a responsibility of the Michigan House and Senate.<sup>12</sup></p>
<b>Redistricting</b>	<p>Every 10 years following the U.S. Census, district lines for political offices must be redrawn in states across the country to accurately reflect their population. This process of drawing district lines is known as "redistricting."<sup>12</sup></p>
<b>Redistricting Commissioner</b>	<p>A member of the Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission. Commissioners are expected to work with their 12 colleagues to craft new state legislative and U.S. congressional districts for the entire state of Michigan.</p>
<b>Reock Score</b>	<p>The Reock (REE-ock) score is used to measure and evaluate the compactness of electoral districts. This score compares the area of a district to the area of the smallest possible circle that can be drawn around it. This compares the district to a perfectly compact shape, a circle. Scores range from 0.00 to 1.00, with 1.00 being most compact.<sup>4</sup></p>

<b>Responsiveness</b>	The degree to which electoral outcomes change with shifting voter preferences. <sup>4</sup>
<b>Secretary of State</b>	In Michigan, the Secretary of State is the third-highest office in the state. The Secretary of State is the chief elections officer and also oversees vehicle registration and the licensing of automobile drivers. The Secretary of State is the “secretary without a vote” of the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission once formed, and the administrator of the application and selection process for Commissioners. Once the Commission is seated, the Secretary of State must keep the public record and provide assistance the Commission as requested. [MI Constitution, Article IV, Section 6 (4), (17)]. <sup>12</sup>
<b>State Legislative Districts</b>	State legislative districts are areas from which representatives and senators are elected to state legislatures. In drawing state legislative districts, the largest district can have up to 10 percent more people than the smallest district without provoking constitutional scrutiny. Variation is allowed in order to maintain the unity of cities, counties, and other communities. <sup>4</sup>
<b>Transparency</b>	In the context of government, transparency refers to openness to the public. Transparency promotes accountability and provides information for citizens about what their government and public officials are doing. <sup>13</sup>
<b>Voting Rights Act</b>	<p>The Voting Rights Act (VRA) of 1965 aimed to overcome legal barriers at the state and local levels that prevented African Americans and other historically marginalized groups from exercising their right to vote as guaranteed under the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The Voting Rights Act is considered one of the most far-reaching pieces of civil rights legislation in U.S. history.<sup>14,8</sup></p> <p>The Voting Rights Act applies to redistricting to prevent states and localities from drawing districts that deny underrepresented minority groups a chance to elect a candidate of their choice. There are two important provisions. Section 2 applies nationally, and Section 5 applies only to certain "covered jurisdictions", although its coverage formula is not currently in effect. All district maps must comply with the Voting Rights Act.<sup>15,8</sup></p>