

Handout

The Illinois Constitution, Article IV, Sec. 3 requirements:“(a) Legislative Districts shall be compact, contiguous and substantially equal in population. Representative Districts shall be compact, contiguous, and substantially equal in population. (b) In the year following each Federal decennial census year, the General Assembly by law shall redistrict the Legislative Districts and the Representative Districts.” (c) Synopsis: If the General Assembly is not able to agree to a plan by June 30th, then a Legislative Redistricting Commission is appointed. Four persons are appointed by the House and Senate Leaders from both parties. They then take a crack at it until August 10, by which time they are supposed to file a redistricting plan. If not, the “tie breaker” person is chosen by random lot.

Ideal Criteria for Legislative Redistricting:

“Considerations Involving Form:

- (1) Equal numbers- Congressional districts should be as equal in number as possible.
- (2) Natural frontiers- Congressional districts should conform, where possible, to local boundaries, communities of interest, and lines of communication.
- (3) Compactness and contiguity- Congressional districts should be as geographically compact as possible, and no part should be completely unconnected with the rest of the district.

Considerations Involving Outcome

- (4) Party fairness- Congressional districts should be drawn to be as fair as possible between parties
- (5) Ethnic fairness- Congressional districts should be drawn so that ethnic or other minorities have an equitable chance of representation.
- (6) Party competition- Congressional districts should foster party competition and alternation.” (Source: Butler and Crain, 1992, 65-66)

Leading State Plans as Models (1)California- Proposed by Schwarzenegger- A panel of retired judges (2) Iowa- The Legislative Service Bureau- (3) Arizona- A Bi-Partisan Commission Appointed by the Commission on Appellate Court Appointments (5 members)(4) New Jersey- The Redistricting Commission- 10 Members from the State Parties- The 11th member is selected by the Chief Justice of the State Supreme Court

The Simon Institute Plan: (1) Decouple the House and Senate Districts (2) Reflect minority voting strengths and consider political boundaries (3) Tie Breaker a Magistrate appointed by the State Supreme Court Chief Justice and the ranking Justice from the other party (4) Resolutions adopted by 3/5th majority in each body