

Discussion of Redistricting Principles
Special Committee Regarding Reapportionment Meeting
08/24/2021

The Committee has previously reviewed and discussed the redistricting process and guidelines. As noted in Wisconsin Counties Association's handbook, the primary focus of the drafters will be on establishing a redistricting plan that focuses on substantially equal, contiguous, and compact districts. WCA further noted, the redistricting committee should determine the extent to which other traditional concepts of redistricting will be reflected in the plan, including preservation of political subdivisions, communities of interest and cores of prior districts, protection of incumbent interests, and consideration of minority interests, when appropriate. At times, the principles may come into conflict with each other.

1. Redistricting Principles are discussed on page 15 of the WCA Handbook and on pages 5-17 of the Legislative Reference Bureau Guidebook and generally throughout both documents.

Legislative Reference Bureau Guidebook:

https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/misc/lrb/wisconsin_elections_project/redistricting_wisconsin_2020_1_2.pdf

WCA County Decennial Redistricting Handbook:

<https://files.constantcontact.com/77ea05ac001/9ce2c80f-31da-4424-b016-2f61bcc0c7f4.pdf>

2. Federal Requirements

- a. Equal Population (LRB Guide, page 5)
 - i. One Person, One Vote
 - ii. Equal Protection Clause – the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution as well as Wisconsin Constitution and state statutes (Wis. Stat. § 59.10(3)(b))
 - iii. Principles that supervisory districts should be redrawn with current data to preserve the one person one vote principle
 - iv. Racine County population divided by the total number of supervisory districts is the ideal district size
 - v. Thus, the goal is substantially equal population per district
 1. Some deviation may occur due to the application of other redistricting principles
 - vi. Also relevant: absolute deviation, relative deviation and overall range (see definitions in LRB Guide)
 - vii. The acceptable deviation is measured as a range (% over + % under) the ideal district size
 1. Greater than 10% total deviation is presumably unconstitutional

- b. Minority Protection (LRB Guide, page 9)
 - i. LRB discusses racial gerrymandering – governments are prohibited from improperly using race as a basis for redrawing districts
 - ii. Voting Rights Act of 1965
 - 1. Section 2 of the voting rights act prohibits any practice or procedure that impairs the ability of a protected class to elect its candidate of choice on an equal basis with other voters
 - 2. Redistricting should provide effective representation of minorities under the Voting Rights Act

- 3. Traditional Redistricting Principles (LRB Guide, pages 14-17)
 - a. Compactness (LRB Guide, page 14)
 - i. Principle that districts should be geographically compact – distance between all party minimized
 - ii. Avoid unusually shaped districts
 - iii. Judged by the eyeball test
 - iv. Assists with observing communities of interest principle – existing neighborhoods and possible the unity of political subdivisions principle
 - v. Physical/geographic features as boundaries

 - b. Contiguity (LRB Guide, page 16)
 - i. Physically adjacent
 - ii. Can you drive around the district without crossing into another

 - c. Preserving Communities of Interest (LRB Guide, page 17)
 - i. Principle of preserving communities with common interest
 - ii. Neighborhoods with common interests
 - iii. Population centers with shared interest
 - iv. Be mindful of constitutional requirements re: minority representation

 - d. Preserving Unity of Political Subdivisions (LRB Guide, page 17)
 - i. Draw districts to encompass an entire political subdivision
 - ii. County supervisory districts must generally consist of whole wards or municipalities
 - iii. Consider school district boundaries, sanitary districts, lake districts