



North Carolina General Assembly Senate

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Recommended Criteria for Construction of NC Legislative Districts

- 1. Equal Population:** The 2010 federal decennial census data shall be used as the basis of population for the establishment of districts in the plan. Within the limits of the law, efforts shall be made to account for population growth.
- 2. Contiguity:** Legislative districts shall be comprised of contiguous territory which may consist of both landmass and bodies of water. To the extent practicable, areas within a legislative district shall be easily accessible for commerce, from other areas of the same district, without requiring members to transit through an adjacent legislative district to gain such access.
- 3. Total Black Voting Age Population:** None of the nine Senate districts and 19 House districts deemed as unconstitutional by the US Supreme Court in the Covington case shall have a total black voting age population higher than that which existed in those enacted NC legislative districts that were in effect in 2010, except for when a district is naturally occurring because it is drawn compactly or drawn in respect of the Whole County Provision.
- 4. Voting Districts:** Voting districts ("VTDs") should be split only when necessary to comply with the zero deviation population requirements set forth above in order to ensure the integrity of political data.
- 5. Partisan Symmetry:** Partisan symmetry posits that a district plan should treat the major parties symmetrically in terms of the conversion of votes to seats. The Committee shall make reasonable efforts to achieve this ideal by constructing plans that provide for the equally efficient conversion of partisan proxy votes from selected statewide elections, in such a way, as to prospectively achieve a distribution of seats commensurate with the partisan makeup of the state.
- 6. Efficiency Gap:** The efficiency gap of plans considered for enactment shall not exceed five percent. The efficiency gap shall be determined by using the simplified efficiency gap calculation. Such calculations shall use the 2016 US President and US Senate election results as proxy votes for

assessing prospectively, the likely partisan performance of districts as constructed within the maps being considered for enactment.

7. **Compactness:** The Committee shall make reasonable efforts to construct districts in the Senate and House district plan that improve the compactness of the current districts and keep more counties and VTDs whole as compared with the current enacted plan.

8. **Whole-County Provision:** Pursuant to complying with the whole-county provision as mandated by the North Carolina Constitution, to the greatest extent practical, the Committee shall not divide counties in creating legislative districts except wherein compliance with the whole-county provision has been preempted or otherwise superseded by federal law or court rulings. When division of counties is required, reasonable efforts shall be made not to divide a county into more than two districts.

9. **Partisan Advantage:** Maintaining or establishing a partisan advantage for any party shall NOT be a criterion for the construction or approval of House and Senate district plans.

10. **Plan Completion Date:** The North Carolina General Assembly shall complete and submit new House and Senate district plans to the United States District Court for the Middle District of North Carolina no later than August 21, 2017.