

What the League of Women Voters is Doing About Redistricting in Oakland

What is Redistricting?

Redistricting is the process by which we draw lines around electoral districts, determining who votes in each district for city council and school board representatives. In 2014, Oakland voters approved a ballot measure placing future redistricting processes in the hands of a citizen commission rather than elected officials. 2021-22 was the first time the law was implemented allowing a citizens' commission to redraw the district lines.

Why do we redistrict?

Redistricting occurs every 10 years to account for changes revealed by census data. District lines are redrawn to ensure equal numbers of residents in each district.

Oakland's population grew by 50,000 over the past decade, with increases to the city's Hispanic, white, and Asian populations, while the Black population shrank, according to Census Bureau data released last week.

Oakland now has a total population of 440,646, up 12.8% from the 2010 total of 390,724. The city is 28% Hispanic (up from 25% a decade ago), 27% white (up from 25%), 20% Black (down from 27%), and 15% Asian (down from 16%), the census data shows. (The number of Asian people living in Oakland grew by 7.3%, even though their percentage of the total population fell slightly.)

The city's overall gains are due largely to growth in the Hispanic and white populations, which increased by 28% and 18.6% respectively. Between 2010 and 2020, the number of Hispanic people living in Oakland jumped by 27,775, from 99,068 to 126,843.

Source: [Oaklandside](#)

How Has the local League been involved?

The League supports independent redistricting commissions at national, state and local levels. Oakland's League joined these efforts and participated in the writing of Oakland's 2014 ballot measure. In the run up to the recent redistricting effort, the League spoke up for adequate funding to support the first citizens commission.

Since late 2020 when the commission was formed, the League has attended meetings and advocated on how to best manage the process when it seemed the legislation's original intent was not being honored or when problems emerged.



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We will continue to follow the process through analysis of the commissioners' own report on how this first citizen-led effort transpired. We will write our own report informed by our observations in Oakland but also by League wide reflections at the state level. The goal is to keep fine tuning the process so that it improves by the next round following the 2030 census. In particular, we will seek clearer guidelines for commissioners regarding how Oakland assets such as Lake Merritt, the Coliseum, the airport, and the Port of Oakland should be addressed in redistricting.

Redistricting efforts in 2021-22 offer an example of how the League promotes citizen engagement to improve the transparency, effectiveness and responsiveness of local government while providing a trusted source of information for the public. This League work continues under the guidance of the LWVO Action Committee. Contact action@lwvoakland.org to get involved.

Read more here:

See our latest [blog](#) for updates.

See the Oakland Redistricting Commission's [website](#) for additional background and for the ratified [city council and school district borders](#).

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