# GLOSSARY OF REDISTRICTING TERMS

#### Census block

The smallest level of census geography used by the Census Bureau to collect and report census data.

## Census block group

A collection of blocks used by the Census Bureau to collect and report census data.

#### Census data

Information and statistics on the population of the United States gathered by the Census Bureau and released to the states.

#### Census tract

A collection of census block groups used by the Census Bureau to collect and report census data.

# **Community of interest**

A region or group which is defined by actual shared interests or by some common thread of social, economic or political interests.

# Compactness

A term used to describe a district's geographic shape. Compactness in redistricting cases often focuses on the regularity or jaggedness of a district boundary and on the extent to which the district's geographic territory is dispersed from its center.

# **Contiguity**

A term used to describe a district in which all geographic parts of the district are connected to each other.

## **Dilution or vote dilution**

Occurs when the voting strength of a politically cohesive minority group is weakened or watered down by an election system or redistricting plan.

# Gerrymander

The drawing of political boundaries to give one group or party an advantage over another.

### **Ideal** population

The number of persons to be placed in each district to obtain equal population. The ideal population for each district is obtained by taking the total population of the state or jurisdiction and dividing it by the number of districts to be redistricted in that state or jurisdiction.

# **Majority-minority district**

A district that contains a majority (50% plus 1 or more) of minority population. Note: A majority-minority district can contain more than one minority group. Thus, a district that is 40%

Hispanic and 11% African American is a majority-minority district, but it is not a majority Hispanic district.

### One-person, one-vote

A constitutional requirement that requires each district to be substantially equal in total population.

### PL 94-171

The federal law that requires the United States Census Bureau to provide states with data for use in redistricting and mandates that states define the census blocks to be used for collecting data.

### **Plurality**

A winning total where the winner receives the most votes and is not required to receive a majority of the votes cast.

#### **Political subdivision**

A division of a state, such as a county, city or town.

#### **Precinct**

An area created by election officials to group voters for assignment to a designated polling place so that an election can be conducted. (Note: Precinct boundaries may change several times over the course of a decade).

# Redistricting

The process of drawing new political boundaries (district lines) within a state or local jurisdiction after the census

# **Sampling**

A statistical technique that has been devised at the direction of Congress under the auspices of the National Academy of Sciences to correct the undercount and overcount of population in prior censuses. Sampling is a statistical method widely endorsed by the statistical community that will produce an accurate population count. Sampling will not be used to correct the 2010 Census.

### **Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act**

A section of the Voting Rights Act that applies nationwide and prohibits any voting procedure (including a redistricting plan) that dilutes minority voting strength.

### **Traditional redistricting principles**

Factors traditionally used by a state or local jurisdiction to perform redistricting. (Note: Examples of traditional redistricting principles include: compactness, contiguity, respect for political subdivisions, respect for communities of interest, and protection of incumbents).