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INC



**City of Albuquerque
City Council Redistricting**

August 3, 2011

Objective

This report was requested to present possible redistricting plans for the Albuquerque City Council districts. This process is accomplished by running an analysis between the current district boundaries and the 2010 Census data and then adjusting the boundaries in accordance with the redistricting guidelines listed in the following section. The results of this analysis are displayed in both map and data table format.

Redistricting Overview

General Issues

Redistricting refers to the process of revising the boundaries of territories from which government officials are elected; when done for the first time, as in a transition from at-large elections, the process is "districting." The idea of having districts derives from our principle of "representative democracy" whereby the people elect others to represent them in government decision-making. However, the procedures which have guided translating this general principle into action have changed markedly over the years.

Beginning in 1790 the United States conducted its first decennial census count as required by Article I, Section 2, of the Constitution in order that

". . . Representatives shall be apportioned among the several states according to their respective numbers . . ."

The use of census data as a basis for operating a representative democracy has been expanded over the years to include districting at many levels of government from Congressional to school, water or hospital board districting systems. The general rule is to try to have equal numbers of persons in each elected representative's district. Federal Courts have been active in determining how equal in population districts must be in order to meet the ideal of "one person, one vote."

In 1965 Congress passed the Voting Rights Act, and later amended the Act so as to attempt to protect certain minority groups from electoral "schemes" which might act to discriminate against these groups. In the area of districting, plans or systems which dilute minority voting strength can be subject to challenge and should be avoided.

Guidelines

1. Each district shall contain as nearly as possible substantially the same population based upon the most recent Federal Census. To be equal in population in the context of state or local districting would require that the total population of any one district not be more than five percent off from a mathematically perfectly equal population across all districts.
2. Plans must avoid dilution of minority voting strength. With respect to racial or ethnic communities, courts often refer to a "totality of circumstances" in judging whether or not a plan harms minority group voting strength.
3. Communities of interest shall be preserved whenever reasonable within a single district. Maintaining and preserving communities of interest has no precise mathematical solution.
4. Each district shall be contiguous. All parts must be together with no separated "islands" of territory.
5. Each district shall be compact. The total length of all district boundary lines shall be as short as possible.

Interpreting the Guidelines

The concerns expressed in numbers "1" and "2" above, are of high priority in the process of districting. Equal population and non-dilution of minority voting strength are principles whose transgressions invite litigation. However, while equality of population is a fairly straightforward issue, the definition of a vote dilution is complex in the context of districting. It must be remembered that, while minority voting strength is an important consideration, it cannot subordinate the other traditional redistricting guidelines, such as compactness and contiguity.

- In general, no other guidelines may justify a violation of these first two paramount principles. -

If districts are non-diluting and equal in population, they may also be expected to respect a host of other guidelines, the most common of which are listed above as items "3", "4" and "5". In addition, it should be noted that no law prevents concern for incumbency of office holders so long as no essential principle is violated.

Redistricting Data

The United States decennial census is the basis for all population figures for redistricting governmental areas. The census bureau has released a special tabulation especially for redistricting. This tabulation is known as the "Public Law (PL) 94-171 dataset" which for New Mexico was released on March 15, 2011. All tabulations are for the census date of April 1, 2010.

The PL 94-171 dataset contains information which redistricting experts and the courts have identified as important indicators of compliance with the one-person, one-vote principle and application of the Voting Rights Act to the redistricting endeavor.

Who Is Included In Population Tabulations?

As census data are the basis for figuring populations in redistricting, census enumeration procedures and residence rules determine who is or is not included in the basic population counts for redistricting.

The census attempts to count all persons in the country at their "usual place of residence." Foreign travelers who had not established a U.S. residence were excluded from the census count. American travelers were counted at their usual "home" residence. U.S. military personnel, their dependents and civilian employees overseas are excluded from census tabulations.

Within the United States, persons in the Armed Forces were counted as residents of the area in which their installation was located. Military family members were counted where they were living on April 1.

College students are counted as residents of the area in which they live while attending college as has been the case since the 1950 census.

Persons in institutions are counted in those places. This includes jails, prisons, nursing homes, hospitals or other centers for handicapped or mentally ill persons, as examples.

PL 94-171 Subject Tabulations Of Importance

In addition to total population counts, the redistricting dataset from PL 94-171 includes some data on subject characteristics. Limited age, race and Hispanic status tabulations are included in the redistricting data. Other data are available from other census datasets.

Age tabulations are restricted to counts of persons ages 18 and over and thus correspond to counts of the voting age population (VAP). The census bureau has noted a tendency for respondents to have declared their age as of when they filled out their census questionnaires and not as of exactly April 1 of the census year.

As of 1980, data reported on Spanish or Hispanic origin is based upon a question asked of all census households. Persons of Hispanic origin include all persons responding "Mexican," "Puerto Rican," "Cuban," or "Other Spanish/Hispanic" origin. Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any racial grouping.

In addition to persons of Hispanic origin, Research & Polling, Inc. uses the census tabulations of non-Hispanic White population as equivalent to the New Mexico concept of the "Anglo" population. In order to avoid possible overlap, we also report other relevant racial data based upon those who did not indicate that they were of Hispanic origin. Thus, we report, depending on the specific area involved, e.g., non-Hispanic Black, non-Hispanic American Indian, and other non-white, non-Hispanic figures. Our tabulations avoid double-counting minority group figures.

Other Data Adjustments

Generally, Research & Polling, Inc. makes use of the best officially accepted data available for redistricting which includes, especially in the early years of a decade, a strong desire to use census data as reported. However, some adjustments to the data are made in certain circumstances. For city redistricting work, we may analyze data in order to count population for the city as it exists at the time of redistricting including annexation which may have taken place since the official census map city limits were established. In this instance, we try to determine the 2010 population of the current city limits in order to assure comparability of data.

Some districted governmental entities, notably school districts and hospital districts, have outer boundaries which cross census areas. We perform estimation in these situations in order to calculate population figures for the total governmental area. The estimates are usually very minor in proportion to the total population of the governmental area.