

# What is the Fair Maps Act?

## Questions and Answers On a New Approach to Kentucky Redistricting

After the 2020 Census, Kentucky will draw new maps to show which parts of the state elect each member of the Kentucky House, Kentucky Senate, and U.S. House of Representatives. If the Fair Maps Act becomes law, a fifteen-member Advisory Redistricting Commission will use statewide input to develop those district lines. While the General Assembly will still make the final decision, legislators will consider Commission's recommendations first and ask the Commission for revisions second, with an option of developing its own plan after completing those steps. The goal is to develop fair maps based on wide public input.

### Why will Kentucky need to do redistricting?

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From the very beginning, the U.S. Constitution has required a Census every 10 years to decide how many Representatives each state gets in Congress. The Kentucky Constitution contains a matching requirement: we use the federal Census to adjust seats in our House and Senate. Using Census data lets us move toward districts that represent equal numbers of people.

### What will an Advisory Redistricting Commission do?

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If the Fair Maps Act becomes Kentucky law, the Commission's assignment will be to create compact districts of equal size that reflect Kentucky's diversity and meet other legal requirements, including Kentucky's constitutional requirement to divide the smallest possible number of counties. The Commission rules will not allow efforts to design maps to give an advantage to any party, political opinion, or current office-holder. Instead, the Commission will develop its recommendations based on local concerns heard during hearings held all over the commonwealth.

### Who will serve on the Commission?

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The first eight members will be chosen by leaders of General Assembly: two each by the Speaker of the

House, the Senate President, and the Minority Leaders for both chambers.

Seven more members will be people who have applied for the positions. The Secretary of State will randomly select twenty applicants who are not registered with either major political party, and three of those twenty will be chosen by the eight people already on the Commission.

The Secretary will also randomly draw 10 applicants who are registered with each major party, and the original eight will choose two further people from each of those lists.

Members will include people of different races and linguistic groups, from rural and urban areas, and from all of Kentucky's six Congressional districts. Members will not include anyone who has recently run for partisan office or served in party leadership.

### How will the Commission gather information?

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The Fair Maps Act requires hearings in locations across the commonwealth. A first set of hearings will gather input and advice on how the maps should be drawn, and then a second set will collect responses to maps proposed by Commission members. All meetings will be open to the public and all input will be kept as public records. The Commission will not decide on its recommendations until after it has heard public thought on all the proposals.

## What kind of maps will the Commission propose?

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After the first set of input hearings, Commission members will propose new district maps. Their proposals will be checked for features like equal population, attention to communities of interest, compactness, and other features. The proposals will be published and then discussed at the Commission's second set of hearings.

## How will the Commission decide on final recommendations?

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After the second hearings, Commission members will vote on which maps to recommend. If no set of maps gets nine votes, members will move to ranked choice voting. Ranked choice means each Commission member will identify a first choice, a second choice, and so on, and those choices will be summed to adopt the maps with the greatest total support.

## What will the General Assembly do with the recommendations?

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An interim committee of legislators will study the recommended maps first. Then, when the General Assembly convenes (probably in January 2022), the recommendations will be put up for a vote. If the General Assembly does not accept the maps, it will ask the Commission for a new version and give advice on changes to be made. If the General Assembly does not accept the Commission's second set of recommendations, it will draw maps of its own.

## If the General Assembly still has final say, why does the Commission matter?

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The Commission's work will involve many different citizens thinking about the issue and contributing to maps that are fair to people in all parts of the commonwealth. Because the recommended maps will be people-powered, the General Assembly will have good reason to take them seriously. Even if legislators end up developing their own approach, the Commission's open process will build public awareness, alert legislators to citizens' concerns, and show legislators the broad public desire for fair maps for Kentucky districts.

## What timetable will the Commission follow?

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If the bill becomes law, these will be the main deadlines for implementing the Commission's work:

- September 1, 2020, to name all members
- July 1, 2021, to complete the first set of hearings and create proposed plans.
- September 15, 2021, to complete second set of hearings and vote on official recommended plans
- October 1, 2021, to publish the recommended plans and a report that explains the decisions.

In early 2022, the Commission may also be asked to submit a second set of plans during the General Assembly session.

In future decades, a matching timetable will be used for new Commissions to design fair maps after each Census.

## Where can I see the entire proposed Fair Maps Act?

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As of November 2019, the bill has not been formally filed yet, but you can e-mail [kentuckylwv@gmail.com](mailto:kentuckylwv@gmail.com) to request a copy. We hope you'll urge your legislators to support its passage.



*The League of Women Voters of Kentucky developed this overview of the Fair Maps Act in collaboration with the Kentucky Fair Maps Coalition.*

*Learn more about the League's redistricting work by visiting [lwvky.org](http://lwvky.org) and about the Coalition's efforts by going to [kentuckyfairmaps.org](http://kentuckyfairmaps.org). You can also follow each organization on Facebook and track our tweets by following @LWVKY and @KyFairMaps.*

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