



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Martin Malavé Dilan

Redistricting Goals And Criteria

MARTIN MALAVÉ DILAN January 3, 2011

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Various state and local jurisdictions, in an effort to reform redistricting and to make it more accountable, have been considering new goals, methods and criteria that would result in a more transparent redistricting process and one that uses honest and objective criteria. While several states have pursued redistricting reform via the legislative process, others have considered independent commissions. California's new commission is one major example of a recent reform.

Goals and criteria being considered include:

1. Population Equality: What maximum population deviation window should be used for state senate districts? While the current senate plan has an overall deviation reaching the legally permissible 10 percent, would a smaller deviation between the size of the smallest to largest districts be an improvement?
2. Contiguous Territory: Should districts consist of contiguous territory? Should districts be drawn with territory easily travelled from one end of the district to another? Should bodies of water be used to connect parts of districts?

3. Fair Representation of Minority Groups: How should legislative districts be drawn providing members of racial and linguistic minority groups with an equal opportunity with other citizens to participate in the political process and to elect the representatives of their choice in compliance with the Voting Rights Act and caselaw?
4. State Constitutional Border Requirements: How should legislative districts be drawn to comply with state constitutional requirements that limit the dividing of counties and other local subdivisions (cities, towns, and villages)?
5. Compactness: What standards should be used to draw "compact" legislative districts? Should social science methodologies be employed to gauge compactness?
6. Communities of Interest: How should legislative districts unite communities defined by actual shared interests, taking into account geographic, social, economic, and other factors that indicate commonality of interests? And shall districts be formed so as to promote the orderly and efficient administration of elections?
7. Existing districts: What factors should be considered relating to incumbency and current district configurations?
8. Size of the State Senate: Should the Senate membership remain at 62 districts or change to a different number (pursuant a State Constitutional formula)?
9. Public Access, Transparency, Outreach and Hearings: When and how should public hearings be convened to provide information to the senate both before and after plans are proposed? What kind of data should be made available to the public? What type of data should be made available?

10. **Prisoner Census** Count Law: How should the new law requiring state prisoners to be reallocated to “homes of record” be implemented? What methodologies should be employed? What impact would this law have on the three New York counties (Kings, Bronx, and New York) covered by Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act?

11. Redistricting Reform: What reforms should the legislature consider before developing a new redistricting plan? What ideas and concepts from existing proposals should be incorporated into new criteria? Examples of reform efforts include: S.7881A (Dilan), S.7882 (Dilan), S.1614 (Valesky), S.2892 (Bonacic), S.6240 (Robach).

12. **Demographic Trends** in New York: How should New York’s **changing population** demographics impact the redistricting process?

Development of fair and objective criteria will help ensure that legislative districts fairly represent New York's residents for the next decade. The Task Force members will consider how the last Senate redistricting resulted in the current under-population of upstate Senate districts and over-population of downstate districts, districts lacking practical contiguity by land and the change in the number of senate districts without public consideration. This series of public hearings starts the process of a fair, transparent and objective redistricting process for New York.