

Comparison of current redistricting method with Democracy Act - SR 20/HR55

Category	Existing situation	SR 20 /HR 55– Amendment to Georgia Constitution
Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completely controlled by GA Assembly Firm legal standard limited to contiguity for state districts and compliance with law May be drawn to favor parties and protect incumbents Limited public input or involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completely controlled by independent citizens’ commission Districts strictly non-partisan, can’t discriminate re race or language Extremely transparent, publicly visible process
Frequency of redistricting	Following decennial census As required by court order At discretion of state legislature between censuses	Following decennial census As required by court order
Who conducts reapportionment	Georgia General Assembly via its Legislative and Congressional Reapportionment Office (LCRO)	(new) Citizens’ Redistricting Commission selected every 10 years, 14 members
Standards for districts	Firm legal standards 1) Comply with US Constitution, Voting Rights Act of 1965, and other applicable federal laws 2) State districts must be contiguous beyond a single point <u>* Guidelines from state legislative committees 2011-12, subject to modification</u> 3) Equal size in population Consider compactness 4) Consider county and precinct boundaries 5) Consider communities of interest 6) Avoid pairing of incumbents 7) No multi-member district 8) Committees may consider other principles or factors	Firm legal standards 1) Comply with US Constitution, Voting Rights Act of 1965, and other applicable federal laws 2) May not deny or abridge right to vote based on race, color, or language minority status. (Must allow equal participation for either nomination or election by members of such class) 3) Geographically contiguous 4) Equal population within each district 5) Boundaries conform to existing county geographic boundaries unless violating other standards 6) Cannot breach precinct boundaries; precinct boundaries may not breach district boundaries 7) May not favor political party, incumbent, or other person or group 8) May not use existing map as a basis 9) May not consider: address of incumbent legislators, perceived or actual political affiliations of voters, past election results, voting history data, demographic info other than head counts
Process for drawing districts and approving plan	General Assembly develops and votes on redistricting plans Subject to veto by Governor	April 15: Commission publishes one or more plans May 31: At least 1 public hearing per congressional district, allowing public comment July 1: Commission responds to all public comments August 1: Commission publishes final plan <u>Final approval:</u> Citizens Redistricting Commission

Comparison of current redistricting method with Democracy Act - SR 20/HR55

Transparency to the public	Legislative committees conduct full public hearings per normal procedure. * 24-hour notice required for meetings.	At least 1 public hearing per congressional district allowing public comment
		Internet portal allows public to draw and submit own maps for consideration, accurate to the residence
	Committee hearing reports publicized as normal. * Redistricting plans presented to committees available for public inspection electronically or on paper	Portal to allow public viewing and comment on any proposed plan
	* Census info databases are available to the public. Other work products (work maps, etc.) provided to GGA only	Portal must provide data and explain detailed process for every plan created by commission. Full public disclosure; nothing secret.
	Minutes of legislative committees, * but not LCRO, available to the public. * LCRO meetings are not public.	All discussions and meetings by commission are public. Meetings posted 14 days in advance.
		Commission may not contact outside groups, parties, etc.
Citizens' commission – selection & qualification	None	<p><u>Selection:</u> 14 members in 3 pools: A) 5 identified with party winning last governor's election, B) 5 identified with 2nd place party, C) 4 independents Panel of retired judges narrows applicants to 20 per pool. Senate and House leaders from both parties may strike 2 from each pool. Chief justice draws at random 3 for pool A, 3 for B, 2 for C. These 8 members fill in panel from remaining applicant pools. Pools must represent diversity in geography and demographics across the state.</p> <p><u>Qualifications:</u> Must be registered voters for at least 5 years and voted in last 3 state-wide elections Commissioner or immediate family member may not, in last 10 years: have served or been candidate for office; held paid position with party or campaign; served as elected or appointed party officer; been appointed by governor; been a registered lobbyist; served on legislative staff; contributed \$2000 or more to a candidate.</p>
Citizens right to appeal redistricting	Voters may file suit under applicable federal and state laws	<p>Voter may file suit in superior court if race, color, or language minority rights violated</p> <p>Citizens may request Supreme Court to certify that plan meets standard. Court refers plans back to commission if standard not met. If commission unable to fix after 2 tries, Supreme Court decides.</p>
Number of districts	Congress: As determined by federal census State Senate - maximum 56 senators State Assembly – minimum 180 representatives	Congress: as determined by federal census State senate: 30 – 56 senators State house: 120 – 180 representatives

* Note: Items marked with * are guidelines, not required by law, and subject to change.