You can have your voice heard in Florida's redistricting process

12:00 AM, Jun. 19, 2011

This month, lawmakers from across the state will begin the critical process of redrawning Florida's boundary lines for equal representation. This historic event happens just once every 10 years, as directed by the United States Constitution.

As a part of the Sunshine State's commitment to transparency in government, the Florida Legislature has been working hard to ensure that you will have unprecedented access to all of the information, tools and resources that you need to participate in and impact the redistricting process.

Senate President Mike Haridopolos and House Speaker Dean Cannon have charged us with the responsibility of engaging every Floridian in this fundamental exercise of your political rights. With that duty in mind, we are proud to announce Florida's legislators will host a series of 26 community meetings throughout the state.

The first round of public meetings will take place in the Panhandle, starting in Tallahassee on Monday, from 1 p.m. until 4 p.m. and from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m. in the Knott Building next to the Capitol. On Tuesday, meetings will be at the WSRE-TV studios in Pensacola from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. and at Fort Walton Beach High School from 6 p.m. until 9 p.m. On Wednesday, we'll travel to Panama City to Gulf Coast Community College for a meeting from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m.

The purpose of these public hearings is to listen to you. Legislators will not be offering comments or making speeches because we want to dedicate the time we spend in your community to hearing from you. We want to know what you believe are the important facts and unique characteristics of your community. We want to draw districts that truly represent you and your community.

Those who cannot attend but would like to listen to the meeting can access a live web stream via the Florida Channel at: www.thefloridachannel.org. If you cannot attend or tune-in to the web stream, there are still many ways to actively participate in the redistricting process.
We invite you to visit the web pages launched by both the Florida House of Representatives (www.floridaredistricting.org) and the Florida Senate (www.flsenate.gov/Redistricting) which are filled with information. Both sites include options to create and submit your own redistricting maps using the same data and tools that legislators will use.

We created online computer programs that we will use to build districts with you in mind. There are training resources that can help you get started drawing your own plan, and we will have demonstrations of the web applications at each meeting. Everyone who attends will have the chance to ask House and Senate staff about using the applications to build districts and how the redistricting process works.

In addition, Floridians can go online now to submit comments, access committee and public hearing schedules, or simply keep up to date with the latest information. Legislators will use your feedback, comments and submitted plans to help inform their redistricting proposals.

Redistricting happens only once a decade. It is your opportunity to help shape the districts that are the basis of your representation in Tallahassee and Washington, D.C.

Stay informed about the process through the tools and information online, and join us at one or more redistricting hearings so that your voice can be heard.

Sen. Don Gaetz, R-Niceville is chairman of the Senate Redistricting Committee.


New Policy in Florida
Drivers with no DUIs may be eligible for $9 per week car insurance.
www.lifestylejournal.com

Unemployed or Laid Off?
Go Back to School. Take College Classes Online, On Your Own Time.
www.YourDegree.com

Free Credit Score From All 3 Bureaus
View your latest Credit Scores from All 3 Bureaus in 60 seconds for $0
FreeScoreOnline.com
Listen, comment and even draw your own maps

This summer, lawmakers from across the state will begin the process of redrawing Florida's boundary lines for equal representation. This historic event happens just once every 10 years, as directed by the U.S. Constitution.

In keeping with our state's strong commitment to transparency, the Florida Legislature has been working hard to ensure that Floridians will have unprecedented access to all of the information, tools and resources that they need to impact the redistricting process. Senate President Mike Haridopolos and House Speaker Dean Cannon have charged us with the responsibility of engaging every Floridian in this fundamental exercise of their political rights.

With that duty in mind, we are proud to announce that Florida's legislators will host a series of 26 community meetings throughout the state. The first round of public meetings will take place in Florida's Panhandle and Big Bend, starting in Tallahassee on Monday from 1 until 4 p.m., and from 6 until 8 p.m. in the Knott Building next to the Capitol. Tuesday, the meetings will move to Pensacola and then around the state, ending in Clewiston on Sept. 1.

The purpose of these public hearings is to listen to the public. Legislators will not be offering comments or giving their opinions at these meetings, because we want to dedicate the time spent in these communities to gathering thoughts about what Floridians believe are the important facts and the unique characteristics of their communities.

Those who cannot attend but would like to listen to the meetings can watch a live web stream via the Florida Channel at www.thefloridachannel.org. And there are still many ways to actively participate in the redistricting process.

Web pages launched by both the Florida House of Representatives (www.floridaredistricting.org) and the Florida Senate (www.flsenate.gov/Redistricting) are filled with information about redistricting.

Both sites even include options for people to create and submit their own redistricting maps, using the same data and tools that legislators will use to draw legislative and congressional boundaries. Demonstrations of the web applications will be set up outside each community meeting, and everyone who attends will have the chance to ask House and Senate staff about using the applications to build districts and how the redistricting process works.

In addition to drawing districts, Floridians can go online now to submit comments, access committee and public hearing schedules, or simply keep up with the latest information on the process.

Legislators will use the feedback, comments and submitted plans to help inform their redistricting proposals.

Redistricting is the opportunity for Floridians to help shape the districts that are the basis of their representation in Tallahassee and Washington, D.C. We hope that you will join us at one or more redistricting public hearings so that your voice can be heard.

— State Sen. Don Gaetz, a Republican, represents District 4, which includes parts of Bay, Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Walton counties. He is chair of the Senate Reapportionment Committee. Contact him at gaetz.don.web@flsenate.gov.

State Rep. Will Weatherford, a Republican, represents District 61, which includes parts of Hillsborough and Pasco counties. He is chair of the House Redistricting Committee.

Everyone lives in a specific electoral district. For instance, constituents who reside within parts of Leon and Gadsden counties are a part of House of Representatives District 8, which I am proud to represent. There are state districts and congressional districts, both of which are drawn by the Florida Legislature.

Districts are redrawn every 10 years, shortly after the U.S. Census data have been compiled and recorded. The Census is very important, as the distribution of federal funds at the local level depends on it. The Census also reveals the areas in states that have increased or decreased in population. Florida gained two additional congressional districts due to its continued growth in population.

The boundary lines are redrawn during redistricting so that each district is equal in population, based on the Census data.

I recently was appointed to the Redistricting Committee, and I look forward to playing a vital role in this process. How can you take part in the redistricting process? Beginning Monday in Tallahassee, more than two dozen public hearings will be held around the state. Legislators will be seeking public comment and advice on how to establish the boundaries of voting districts and will take recommendations on redrawing district boundaries.

If you want to be heard, contact your representative and participate in the process to ensure that your voice is heard.

As citizens, being knowledgeable about the redistricting process increases your influence as well as your impact on the political process. I encourage you to stay abreast of and participate in the process to ensure that your voice is heard.

A knowledgeable citizen is an empowered citizen. It's your government; take action!

— Alan Williams represents District 8, which includes parts of Leon and Gadsden counties, in the Florida House of Representatives. Contact him at Alan.Williams@myfloridahouse.gov.
Hearings take redistricting questions to communities
By Sen. Don Gaetz and Rep. Will Weatherford, FLORIDA VOICES

This summer, lawmakers from across the state will begin the process of redrawing Florida's boundary lines for equal representation. This historic event happens just once every 10 years, as directed by the United States Constitution. In keeping with our state's strong commitment to transparency, the Florida Legislature has been working hard to ensure that you will have unprecedented access to all of the information, tools, and resources that you need to impact the redistricting process.

With that responsibility in mind, we are making your community aware that Florida's legislators are hosting a series of 26 public input meetings on redistricting throughout the state.

The next set of public redistricting meetings is coming to the Northeast Florida area:

- July 11: At Florida State College in Jacksonville, from 2 p.m.-4 p.m. and 6 p.m.-8 p.m.
- July 12: At Flagler College in St. Augustine from 8 a.m.-1 p.m.
- July 12: At the News-Journal Center in Daytona Beach from 6 p.m.-9 p.m.

The purpose of these public hearings is to listen to you. Legislators will dedicate the time spent in your community to hearing from you. We want to get your thoughts about what you believe are the important facts and unique characteristics of your community. We will provide Floridians with opportunities to ask questions throughout the process; however, this series of meetings will be completely dedicated to hearing from you.

Those who cannot attend but would like to listen to the meeting can access a live web stream via the Florida Channel at: thefloridachannel.org. If you cannot attend or tune-in to the Web stream there are still many ways to actively participate in the redistricting process.

We invite you to visit the Web pages launched by both the Florida House of Representatives (floridaredistricting.org) and the Florida Senate (flsenate.gov/Redistricting), which are filled with information about redistricting. Both sites even include options to create and submit your own redistricting maps using the same data and tools that legislators will use to draw legislative and congressional boundaries.

The online computer programs that we will use to build districts were created with you in mind. There are training resources that can help you get started drawing your own plan. Demonstrations of the web applications will be set up outside of each community meeting and everyone who attends a community meeting will have the chance to ask House and Senate staff about using the applications to build districts and how the redistricting process works.

In addition to drawing districts, Floridians can go online now to submit comments, access committee and public hearing schedules, or simply keep up with the latest information on the process. Legislators will use your feedback, comments and submitted plans to help inform their redistricting proposals.

Redistricting happens only once a decade. It is your opportunity to help shape the districts that are the basis of your representation in Tallahassee and Washington, D.C. We invite you to stay informed about the process through the tools and information online, and we hope that you will join us at one or more redistricting public hearings so that your voice can be heard.

Gaetz, R-Niceville, is chairman of Senate Reapportionment Committee. Weatherford, R-Wesley Chapel, is chairman of the House Redistricting Committee.

© 2010 The Daytona Beach News-Journal.

Do not republish or distribute without permission.
Guest column: Lawmakers: Floridians will make a difference in redistricting

By Sen. DON GAETZ and Rep. Will Weatherford

R-Fort Walton Beach and R-Wesley Chapel

This summer, lawmakers from across the state will begin the process of redrawing Florida's boundary lines for equal representation. This historic event happens just once every ten years, as directed by the United States Constitution. In keeping with our state's strong commitment to transparency, the Florida Legislature has been working hard to ensure that you will have unprecedented access to all of the information, tools, and resources that you need to impact the redistricting process.

With that responsibility in mind, Florida's legislators are hosting a series of 26 public input meetings on redistricting throughout the state.

The meetings in Northeast Florida begin Monday in Jacksonville. They are: 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Florida State College at Jacksonville. Tuesday, meetings will be at Flagler College in St. Augustine, 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. and at the News Journal Center at Daytona State College in Daytona Beach, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

The purpose of these public hearings is to listen to you. Legislators will dedicate the time spent in your community to hearing from you. We want to get your thoughts about what you believe are the important facts and unique characteristics of your community. We will provide Floridians with opportunities to ask questions throughout the process; however, this series of meetings will be completely dedicated to hearing from you.

Those who cannot attend but would like to listen to the meeting can access a live web stream via the Florida Channel at www.thefloridachannel.org. If you cannot attend or tune-in to the web stream there are still many ways to actively participate in the redistricting process.

We invite you to visit the web pages launched by both the Florida House of Representatives (www.floridaredistricting.org) and the Florida Senate (www.flsenate.gov/Redistricting) which are filled with information about redistricting. Both sites even include options to create and submit your own redistricting maps using the same data and tools that legislators will use to draw legislative and congressional boundaries.

The online computer programs that we will use to build districts were created with you in mind. There are training resources that will help you get started drawing your own plan. Demonstrations of the web applications will be set up outside of each community meeting. House and Senate will be available to talk to those in attendance about using the applications to build districts and how the redistricting process works.

In addition to drawing districts, you may go online now to submit comments, access committee and public hearing schedules, or simply keep up with the latest information on the process. Legislators will use your feedback, comments and submitted plans to help inform their redistricting proposals.

Redistricting happens only once a decade. It is your opportunity to help shape the districts that are the basis of your representation in Tallahassee and Washington, D.C. We invite you to stay informed about the process through the tools and information online, and we hope that you will join us at one or more redistricting public hearings so that your voice can be heard.

* * *

Sen. Don Gaetz is chair of the state Senate Reapportionment Committee; and

Rep. Will Weatherford is chair of the state House Redistricting Committee.
Climate change

Get practical about issue

Man-made global warming is a reality, and it's a serious problem.
That conclusion has already been made by the nation's premier science group, the National Academies of Science, as well as the nation's premier meteorologists, NOAA.

And it also came from two leaders of the Arlington, Va.-based Pew Center on Global Climate Change, an independent, nonpartisan clearinghouse for objective research today that analysis on the subject, who were in Jackson-

nation's energy independence and lowering long-term energy costs.

This newspaper has endorsed proposals that would be revenue neutral — taxing carbon, for instance, but reducing payroll taxes by the same amount. That would provide incentives for what's needed — jobs and disincentives for what we don't need — carbon.

PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS
Better design: As a result of continued global warming, sea levels inevitably will rise. This is a fact.
Let's talk about it.

Letters from Readers

REPLY: RICK SCOTT
In praise of governor

A letter writer claims Gov. Rick Scott would rather get us our state to the highest bidder, and we can like it or lump it.

Well, I like it.

The Wall Street Journal reported that it's no coincidence that Florida's unemployment rate has dropped every month since he's been in office.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Florida added 28,000 jobs from April to May. It was the largest increase of any state.

He privatized Medicaid. That's an improvement. Maybe now our taxes will be better spent on U.S. citizens rather than illegal im-
migrants.

The governor turned down high-speed rail and public health care, but it's just a matter of time. The truth will prevail.

Justice for Caylee will eventually come.

Casey might have gotten away with murder, but it's just a matter of time. The truth will prevail.

Marjie Rogozinski, Jacksonville

GLOBAL WARMING

Skepticism and deniers

Maine-made global warming is real and it's inconvenient, as Al Gore labeled it, especially now when our economy is in the tank.
If you don't believe it's real, you're either a skeptic or a denier.

The skeptics refuse to face the peer-reviewed results reported by over 99 percent of our climate scientists proving man-made global warming is real and that our policies at the federal and state levels are not doing enough to guard us from harm.

In our case, harm will undoubtedly come.

Danny W. Sather, Jacksonville

Angry cities

Jacksonville needs to cool down a bit

Do you want to relax, chill out or calm down?

Marjie Ever, Ponte Vedra Beach

David FitzSimmons

The Arizona Star

IN THE CASE OF THE STATE

CASEY ANTHONY...

David FitzSimmons

The Arizona Star

WE THE JURY

FIND THE DEFENDANT

NOT GUILTY.

This summer, lawmakers from across the state will begin the process of revising Florida's bound-
aries for equal representation. In this historic, once in a lifetime every 10 years, as directed by the United States Constitution.

In keeping with our state's strong commitment to transpar-

In Florida, our legislators are hosting a series of 26 public input meet-

We want to get your thoughts about what you believe are the important facts and unique char-
acteristics of your community.

Those who cannot attend would like to listen to the meeting can access a live webcast via the Florida Channel at this site:

www.thefloridachannel.org

If you cannot attend or tune-in to the web stream, there are still many ways to actively participate in the redistricting process.

We invite citizens to visit the web pages launched by the Florida House of Representatives (www.floredistricting.org) and the Florida Senate (www.flsenate.gov/Rdistricting).

Both sites even include options to create and submit your own redistricting maps using the same data and tools that legislators will use to draw legislative and con-

To help inform their redistricting proposals.

FOR GOD'S SAKE, SOMETIMES IT'S OKAY TO ASK FOR HELP.

I Thessalonians 4:7

Redistricting

A once-in-a-decade chance to speak out

If you cannot attend or tune-in to the web stream, there are still many ways to actively participate in the redistricting process.

We invite citizens to visit the web pages launched by the Florida House of Representatives (www.floredistricting.org) and the Florida Senate (www.flsenate.gov/Rdistricting).

Both sites even include options to create and submit your own redistricting maps using the same data and tools that legislators will use to draw legislative and con-

To help inform their redistricting proposals.

For God's sake, sometimes it's okay to ask for help.
I Thessalonians 4:7

Casey Anthony trial

The verdict of a jury that went through a very long trial was very impressive.

Casey Anthony was found not guilty.

Casey Anthony Trial

Defense dream team

The verdict of a jury that went through a very long trial was very impressive.

Casey Anthony was found not guilty.

Casey Anthony Trial

Like the D.J. verdict

Once again, as in the O.J. Simpson trial, our judicial system has failed us.

Not only are our own personal values as a society going down-
hill, our country as a whole is in a downward spiral.

As a U.S. Army veteran, it shames me to know that I wasted three years of my life serving a country that is not worthy of the efforts of our military troops that guard us from harm.

In our case, harm will undoubtedly come.

Danny W. Sather, Jacksonville

Casey Anthony was found not guilty.

Casey Anthony Trial

Defense dream team

The verdict of a jury that went through a very long trial was very impressive.

Casey Anthony was found not guilty.

Casey Anthony Trial

Like the D.J. verdict

Once again, as in the O.J. Simpson trial, our judicial system has failed us.

Not only are our own personal values as a society going down-
hill, our country as a whole is in a downward spiral.

As a U.S. Army veteran, it shames me to know that I wasted three years of my life serving a country that is not worthy of the efforts of our military troops that guard us from harm.

In our case, harm will undoubtedly come.

Danny W. Sather, Jacksonville

Casey Anthony Trial

Defense dream team

The verdict of a jury that went through a very long trial was very impressive.

Casey Anthony was found not guilty.

Casey Anthony Trial

Like the D.J. verdict

Once again, as in the O.J. Simpson trial, our judicial system has failed us.

Not only are our own personal values as a society going down-
hill, our country as a whole is in a downward spiral.

As a U.S. Army veteran, it shames me to know that I wasted three years of my life serving a country that is not worthy of the efforts of our military troops that guard us from harm.

In our case, harm will undoubtedly come.

Danny W. Sather, Jacksonville

Casey Anthony Trial

Defense dream team

The verdict of a jury that went through a very long trial was very impressive.

Casey Anthony was found not guilty.

Casey Anthony Trial

Like the D.J. verdict

Once again, as in the O.J. Simpson trial, our judicial system has failed us.

Not only are our own personal values as a society going down-
hill, our country as a whole is in a downward spiral.

As a U.S. Army veteran, it shames me to know that I wasted three years of my life serving a country that is not worthy of the efforts of our military troops that guard us from harm.

In our case, harm will undoubtedly come.

Danny W. Sather, Jacksonville

Casey Anthony Trial

Defense dream team

The verdict of a jury that went through a very long trial was very impressive.

Casey Anthony was found not guilty.

Casey Anthony Trial

Like the D.J. verdict

Once again, as in the O.J. Simpson trial, our judicial system has failed us.

Not only are our own personal values as a society going down-
hill, our country as a whole is in a downward spiral.

As a U.S. Army veteran, it shames me to know that I wasted three years of my life serving a country that is not worthy of the efforts of our military troops that guard us from harm.

In our case, harm will undoubtedly come.

Danny W. Sather, Jacksonville

Casey Anthony Trial

Defense dream team

The verdict of a jury that went through a very long trial was very impressive.

Casey Anthony was found not guilty.
Don Gaetz and Will Weatherford: Your opportunity to help guide the state's reapportionment

By Don Gaetz and Will Weatherford
Special to The Sun
Published: Monday, July 11, 2011 at 6:01 a.m.

This summer, lawmakers from across the state will begin the process of redrawing Florida's legislative and congressional district boundaries.

This historic event happens just once every 10 years, as directed by the United States Constitution.

In keeping with the Sunshine State's strong commitment to transparency, the Florida Legislature has been working hard to ensure that you will have unprecedented access to all of the information, tools and resources that you need to impact the redistricting process.

With that responsibility in mind, we are making your community aware that Florida's legislators are hosting a series of 26 public input meetings on redistricting throughout the state.

The pair of public redistricting meetings in North Central Florida will be held Wednesday from 8 a.m. until noon in The Villages in Marion County; and from 6 p.m. until 9 p.m. at Santa Fe College.

The purpose of these public hearings is to listen to you, not for politicians to stand on their soapboxes.

We want to get your thoughts about what you believe are the important facts and unique characteristics of your community.

We will provide Floridians with opportunities to ask questions throughout the process; however, legislators will dedicate the time spent in your community to hearing from you.

Those who cannot attend but would like to listen to the meeting can access a live web stream provided by the Florida Channel at www.thefloridachannel.org.

If you cannot attend or tune in to the web stream, there are still many ways to actively participate in the redistricting process.

We invite you to visit the web pages launched by both the Florida House of Representatives (www.floridaredistricting.org) and the Florida Senate (www.flsenate.gov/Redistricting). Both sites are filled with information about redistricting, and allow users to create and submit your own redistricting maps using the same data and tools that legislators will use to draw legislative and congressional boundaries.

The online district building applications were created with you in mind, and include training resources that can help you get started drawing your own plan. Demonstrations of the web applications will be set up outside of each community meeting and everyone will have the chance to ask House and Senate staff about the applications and the redistricting process in general.

Floridians also can go online to submit comments, to access committee and public
hearing schedules or to keep up with the latest information on the process.

Legislators will use your feedback, comments and submitted plans to help construct their redistricting proposals.

This is your opportunity to help shape the districts that form the basis of your representation in Tallahassee and Washington, D.C.

We invite you to stay informed about the process through the tools and information online, and we hope that you will join us at one or more redistricting public hearings to make your voice heard.

Lawmakers from across the state have begun the process of redrawing Florida’s boundary lines for equal representation.

This historic event happens just once every 10 years, as directed by the United States Constitution.

In keeping with our state’s strong commitment to transparency, the state Legislature has been working hard to ensure that you will have unprecedented access to all of the information, tools and resources you need to impact the redistricting process.

With that responsibility in mind, Florida’s legislators are hosting a series of 26 public input meetings on redistricting throughout the state. We travel next to an area of particular importance to this process — Central Florida. This leg of our tour takes us along the I-4 corridor, an area that saw significant population growth over the last decade, and to the Space Coast.

We will host a meeting from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Thursday at the Brevard County Government Center in Viera. We invite you to join us.

The purpose of these public hearings is to listen to you. Legislators will dedicate the time spent in your community to hearing from you. We want to get your thoughts about what you believe are the important facts and unique characteristics of your community.

While legislators will dedicate the time spent in your community to hearing from you, Floridians will have many opportunities to ask questions during the process.

Those who cannot attend but would like to listen to the meeting can access a live web stream via the Florida Channel at www.thefloridachannel.org. If you cannot attend or tune in to the web stream, there still are many ways to actively participate in the redistricting process.

Visit the web pages launched by both the Florida House of Representatives (www.floridaredistricting.org) and the Florida Senate (www.flsenate.gov/Redistricting), which are filled with information about redistricting. Both sites even include options to create and submit your own redistricting maps using the same data and tools that legislators will use to draw legislative and congressional boundaries.

The online computer programs that we will use to build districts were created with you in mind. There are training resources that will help you get started drawing your own plan. Demonstrations of the web applications will be set up outside of each community meeting.

House and Senate staff will be available to talk to those in attendance about using the applications to build districts and how the redistricting process works.
In addition to drawing districts, you may go online now to submit comments, access committee and public hearing schedules or simply keep up with the latest information on the process.

Legislators will use your feedback, comments and submitted plans to help inform their redistricting proposals.

Redistricting is your opportunity to help shape the districts that are the basis of your representation in Tallahassee and Washington, D.C.

We invite you to stay informed about the process through the tools and information online, and we hope that you will join us at one or more redistricting public hearings so that your voice can be heard.

Redistricting Meetings Next Week

The meetings begin Monday in Lakeland from 2 to 5 p.m. at Polk State College. On Tuesday, it is at the Hardee County Civic Center in Wauchula, from 8 to 11 a.m.

By WILL WEATHERFORD & DON GAETZ
Published: Friday, July 22, 2011 at 12:01 a.m.

Lawmakers from across the state have begun the process of redrawing Florida’s boundary lines for equal representation. This historic event happens just once every 10 years, as directed by the United States Constitution. In keeping with our state’s strong commitment to transparency, the Florida Legislature has been working hard to ensure that you will have unprecedented access to all of the information, tools and resources that you need to impact the redistricting process.

With that responsibility in mind, Florida’s legislators are hosting a series of 26 public input meetings on redistricting throughout the state.

We travel next to an area of particular importance to this process — Central Florida. This leg of our tour takes us along the Interstate 4 corridor, an area that saw significant population growth over the last decade, and to the Space Coast. Along the way we will visit one of Florida’s Section 5 jurisdictions, Hardee County.

The meetings in your area begin Monday in Lakeland from 2 to 5 p.m. at Polk State College. On Tuesday, meetings will be at the Hardee County Civic Center in Wauchula, from 8 to 11 a.m., and at the gym at Wiregrass Ranch High School in Wesley Chapel from 6 to 9 p.m.

The purpose of these public hearings is to listen to you. Legislators will dedicate the time spent in your community to hearing from you. We want to get your thoughts about what you believe are the important facts and unique characteristics of your community. While legislators will dedicate the time spent in your community to hearing from you, Floridians will have numerous opportunities to ask questions throughout the process.

Those who cannot attend but would like to listen to the meeting can access a live Web stream via the Florida Channel at www.thefloridachannel.org. If you cannot attend or tune-in to the web stream there are still many ways to actively participate in the redistricting process.

We invite you to visit the webpages launched by both the Florida House of Representatives at www.floridaredistricting.org and the Florida Senate at www.flsenate.gov/redistricting. They are filled with information about redistricting. Both sites even include options to create and submit your own redistricting maps using the same data and tools that legislators will use to draw legislative and congressional boundaries.

The online computer programs that we will use to build districts were created with you in mind. There are training resources that will help you get started drawing your own plan. Demonstrations of the web applications will be set up outside of each community meeting. House and Senate staff will be available to talk to those in attendance about using the applications to build districts and how the redistricting process works.

In addition to drawing districts, you may go online now to submit comments, access committee and public hearing schedules, or simply keep up with the latest information on the process. Legislators will use your feedback, comments and submitted plans to help inform their redistricting proposals.
Redistricting happens only once a decade. It is your opportunity to help shape the districts that are the basis of your representation in Tallahassee and Washington. We invite you to stay informed about the process through the tools and information online, and we hope that you will join us at one or more redistricting public hearings so that your voice can be heard.

[ State Rep. Will Weatherford, R-Wesley Chapel, is chair of the House Redistricting Committee. State Sen. Don Gaetz, R-Niceville, is chair of the Senate Committee on Reapportionment. ]
Your chance to be heard on redistricting

BY REP. WILL WEATHERFORD AND SEN. DON GAETZ
gaetz.don.web@flsenate.gov

During the regular session that starts Jan. 10, the State Legislature must redraw Florida’s legislative and congressional district boundaries based on the 2010 Census. This historic event happens just once every 10 years, as directed by the U.S. and Florida constitutions.

In keeping with the Sunshine State’s strong commitment to transparency in government, the Florida Legislature has been working hard to ensure that you will have unprecedented access to all of the information, tools and resources that you need to participate in the redistricting process.

With that responsibility in mind, this summer we are hosting a series of 26 public meetings on redistricting throughout the state.

We head to Miami Dade College’s Wolfson Campus in downtown Miami from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. on Wednesday, August 17. Later that day, we will go to Florida International University’s Law School Auditorium on the Modesto A. Maidique Campus in western Miami-Dade County from 6-9 p.m. The week of public hearings concludes with a stop in Key West on Thursday, Aug. 18, at Florida Keys Community College from 4-7 p.m.

The meeting in Key West will also give residents of Monroe County, a jurisdiction covered under Section 5 of the federal Voting Rights Act, the opportunity to comment on how redistricting uniquely affects their communities.

The purpose of these public hearings is to listen to constituents. Miami-Dade County has changed dramatically in the last 10 years. We want to get your thoughts about what you believe are the important facts and unique characteristics of your community. We will provide opportunities for an open dialogue between legislators and the public throughout the process; however, legislators will dedicate the time spent in your community to hearing from you.

Those who cannot attend but who would like to listen to the meeting can access a live web stream provided by the Florida Channel at www.thefloridachannel.org. If you cannot attend or tune-in to the web stream there are still many ways to actively participate in the redistricting process.

We invite you to visit the web pages hosted by the Florida House of Representatives (www.floridaredistricting.org) and the Florida Senate (www.flsenate.gov/Redistricting). Both sites are filled with information about redistricting and allow users to create and submit their own redistricting maps using the same data and tools that legislators will use to draw legislative and congressional boundaries.

The online district-building applications were created with you in mind, and include training resources that can help you get started drawing your own plan. Demonstrations of the web applications will be set up outside of each community meeting, and everyone will have a chance to ask House and Senate staff about the applications and the redistricting process in general.

Floridians can also go online to submit comments, to access committee and public hearing schedules, or simply to keep up with the latest information on the process. Legislators will use your feedback, comments and submitted plans to help construct their redistricting proposals.

This is your opportunity to help shape the districts that form the basis of your representation in Tallahassee and Washington, D.C. We invite you to stay informed about the process through the tools and information online, and we hope that you will join us at one or more redistricting public hearings to make your voice heard.

Lawmakers seek to draw voters into Florida redistricting process

By Will Weatherford and Don Gaetz

August 10, 2011

During the regular session that starts Jan. 10, the Legislature must redraw Florida's legislative and congressional district boundaries based on the 2010 Census. In keeping with the Sunshine State's strong commitment to transparency in government, the Florida Legislature has been working hard to ensure that you will have unprecedented access to all of the information, tools and resources that you need to impact the redistricting process.

With that responsibility in mind, this summer we are hosting a series of 26 public meetings on redistricting throughout the state.

The next leg of our trip goes from the Treasure Coast through Palm Beach and Broward counties. Stops include Florida Atlantic University's campus in Boca Raton from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. Aug. 16, and from 6 p.m. until 9 p.m. at the Davie campus of Broward College.

The purpose of these public hearings is to listen to you. We want to get your thoughts about what you believe are the important facts and unique characteristics of your community. We have heard some incredibly helpful testimony from residents from the Panhandle, Northeast and Central Florida. We hope that you will share your thoughts on how your communities have changed in the last 10 years.

Those who cannot attend but would like to listen to the meeting can access a live web stream provided by the Florida Channel at http://www.thefloridachannel.org. If you cannot attend or tune in to the web stream, there are still many ways to actively participate in the redistricting process.

We invite you to visit the Web pages hosted by the Florida House of Representatives (www.floridaredistricting.org) and the Florida Senate (www.flsenate.gov/Redistricting). Both sites are filled with information about redistricting and allow users to create and submit your own redistricting maps using the same data and tools that legislators will use to draw legislative and congressional boundaries.

The online district building applications were created with you in mind, and include training resources that can help you get started drawing your own plan. Demonstrations of the web applications will be set up outside of each community meeting, and everyone will have a chance to ask House and Senate staff about the applications and the redistricting process in general.

Floridians can also go online to submit comments, to access committee and public hearing schedules, or simply to keep up with the latest information on the process. Legislators will use your feedback, comments and submitted plans to help construct their redistricting proposals.

This is your opportunity to help shape the districts that form the basis of your representation.
Tallahassee and Washington, D.C. We invite you to stay informed about the process through the tools and information online, and we hope that you will join us at one or more redistricting public hearings to make your voice heard.


Copyright © 2011, South Florida Sun-Sentinel
Will Weatherford & Don Gaetz: Legislators looking forward to Florida residents' ideas on redistricting

Legislators seeking Floridians' ideas on legislative redistricting Upcoming meetings in Stuart, south, your opportunity to impact process

Will Weatherford, R-Wesley Chapel, is chairman of the House Redistricting Committee. Don Gaetz, R-Fort Walton Beach, is chairman of the Senate Reapportionment Committee.

Friday, August 12, 2011

During the regular session that starts Jan. 10, the state Legislature must redraw Florida's legislative and congressional district boundaries based on the 2010 Census. This historic event happens just once every 10 years, as directed by the U.S. and Florida Constitutions.

In keeping with the Sunshine State's strong commitment to transparency in government, the Florida Legislature has been working hard to ensure that you will have unprecedented access to all of the information, tools, and resources that you need to impact the redistricting process.

With that responsibility in mind, this summer we are hosting a series of 26 public meetings on redistricting throughout the state.

The next leg of our trip goes from the Treasure Coast through the Palm Beaches, Broward, and Miami-Dade down to the Keys.

Stops include the Blake Library in Stuart (6-9 p.m. Aug. 15); Florida Atlantic University's campus in Boca Raton (10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Aug. 16), and the Davie campus of Broward College (6-9 p.m. Aug. 16). We head south after that through Aug. 18, when we will meet in Key West.

The purpose of these public hearings is to listen to you, not for politicians to stand on their soapboxes. We want to get your thoughts about what you believe are the important facts and unique characteristics of your community. We have heard some incredibly helpful testimony from residents from the Panhandle, Northeast and Central Florida. We hope that you will share your thoughts on how your communities have changed in the last 10 years.

Those who cannot attend but would like to listen to the meeting can access a live Web stream provided by the Florida Channel at thefloridachannel.org. If you cannot
attend or tune-in to the stream there are still many ways to actively participate in the redistricting process.

We invite you to visit the Web pages hosted by the Florida House of Representatives (www.floridaredistricting.org) and the Florida Senate (www.flsenate.gov/Redistricting). Both sites are filled with information about redistricting and allow users to create and submit your own redistricting maps using the same data and tools that legislators will use to draw legislative and congressional boundaries.

The online district building applications were created with you in mind, and include training resources that can help you get started drawing your own plan. Demonstrations of the web applications will be set up outside of each community meeting, and everyone will have a chance to ask House and Senate staff about the applications and the redistricting process in general.

Floridians can also go online to submit comments, to access committee and public hearing schedules, or simply to keep up with the latest information on the process. Legislators will use your feedback, comments and submitted plans to help construct their redistricting proposals.

This is your opportunity to help shape the districts that form the basis of your representation in Tallahassee and Washington, D.C. We invite you to stay informed about the process through the tools and information online, and we hope that you will join us at one or more redistricting public hearings to make your voice heard.
Will Weatherford & Don Gaetz: Legislators looking forward to Florida residents' ideas on redistricting

Legislators seeking Floridians' ideas on legislative redistricting Upcoming meetings in Stuart, south, your opportunity to impact process

Will Weatherford, R-Wesley Chapel, is chairman of the House Redistricting Committee. Don Gaetz, R-Fort Walton Beach, is chairman of the Senate Reapportionment Committee.

Friday, August 12, 2011

During the regular session that starts Jan. 10, the state Legislature must redraw Florida's legislative and congressional district boundaries based on the 2010 Census. This historic event happens just once every 10 years, as directed by the U.S. and Florida Constitutions.

In keeping with the Sunshine State's strong commitment to transparency in government, the Florida Legislature has been working hard to ensure that you will have unprecedented access to all of the information, tools, and resources that you need to impact the redistricting process.

With that responsibility in mind, this summer we are hosting a series of 26 public meetings on redistricting throughout the state.

The next leg of our trip goes from the Treasure Coast through the Palm Beaches, Broward, and Miami-Dade down to the Keys.

Stops include the Blake Library in Stuart (6-9 p.m. Aug. 15); Florida Atlantic University's campus in Boca Raton (10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Aug. 16), and the Davie campus of Broward College (6-9 p.m. Aug. 16). We head south after that through Aug. 18, when we will meet in Key West.

The purpose of these public hearings is to listen to you, not for politicians to stand on their soapboxes. We want to get your thoughts about what you believe are the important facts and unique characteristics of your community. We have heard some incredibly helpful testimony from residents from the Panhandle, Northeast and Central Florida. We hope that you will share your thoughts on how your communities have changed in the last 10 years.

Those who cannot attend but would like to listen to the meeting can access a live Web stream provided by the Florida Channel at thefloridachannel.org. If you cannot
attend or tune-in to the stream there are still many ways to actively participate in the redistricting process.

We invite you to visit the Web pages hosted by the Florida House of Representatives (www.floridaredistricting.org) and the Florida Senate (www.flsenate.gov/Redistricting). Both sites are filled with information about redistricting and allow users to create and submit your own redistricting maps using the same data and tools that legislators will use to draw legislative and congressional boundaries.

The online district building applications were created with you in mind, and include training resources that can help you get started drawing your own plan. Demonstrations of the web applications will be set up outside of each community meeting, and everyone will have a chance to ask House and Senate staff about the applications and the redistricting process in general.

Floridians can also go online to submit comments, to access committee and public hearing schedules, or simply to keep up with the latest information on the process. Legislators will use your feedback, comments and submitted plans to help construct their redistricting proposals.

This is your opportunity to help shape the districts that form the basis of your representation in Tallahassee and Washington, D.C. We invite you to stay informed about the process through the tools and information online, and we hope that you will join us at one or more redistricting public hearings to make your voice heard.
My Word: Districts don't have to be compact

August 17, 2011 | By State Sen. David Simmons

In November, voters changed the rules and set new standards for legislative and congressional redistricting by adding amendments 5 and 6 to Florida's Constitution. While one amendment sets standards for legislative districts and the other sets standards for congressional districts, the amendments are substantively identical.

The amendments' new standards for redistricting fall into two tiers. Tier 1 prohibits the Legislature from drawing districts with the intent of favoring or disfavoring a political party or incumbent. Tier 1 also prohibits "abridging the equal opportunity of racial or language minorities to participate in the political process" or diminishing "their ability to elect representatives of their choice."

The amendments also have a second-tier analysis that is subordinate to the requirements of Tier 1. Tier 2 requires the Legislature to draw districts that are compact and, where feasible, to use existing political and geographical boundaries in doing so.

As such, the amendments require, and their proponents have admitted, that preserving and creating minority-opportunity districts is a first priority of the Legislature, and must be done at the expense of compactness. In this regard, it is apparent that compactness simply cannot be achieved in many areas of Florida where the Legislature must preserve or create opportunities for racial or language minorities.

Take, for example, Congressional District 3, which has been represented by Congresswoman Corrine Brown since 1993. Congressional District 3, a minority-access district, includes parts of Jacksonville down to Orlando. It has been targeted as an example of the evils of gerrymandering. But Amendment 6 prohibits the Legislature from diminishing the ability of minority voters in this district to choose their own representative, and it seems to require preservation of such a district in northeast Florida.

Thus, amendments 5 and 6, contrary to requiring compact districts, now have enshrined many odd-shaped minority districts into Florida's Constitution.

The amendments also have a second-tier analysis that is subordinate to the requirements of Tier 1. Tier 2 requires the Legislature to draw districts that are compact and, where feasible, to use existing political and geographical boundaries in doing so.

As such, the amendments require, and their proponents have admitted, that preserving and creating minority-opportunity districts is a first priority of the Legislature, and must be done at the expense of compactness. In this regard, it is apparent that compactness simply cannot be achieved in many areas of Florida where the Legislature must preserve or create opportunities for racial or language minorities.

Take, for example, Congressional District 3, which has been represented by Congresswoman Corrine Brown since 1993. Congressional District 3, a minority-access district, includes parts of Jacksonville down to Orlando. It has been targeted as an example of the evils of gerrymandering. But Amendment 6 prohibits the Legislature from diminishing the ability of minority voters in this district to choose their own representative, and it seems to require preservation of such a district in northeast Florida.

Thus, amendments 5 and 6, contrary to requiring compact districts, now have enshrined many odd-shaped minority districts into Florida's Constitution.

The amendments also have a second-tier analysis that is subordinate to the requirements of Tier 1. Tier 2 requires the Legislature to draw districts that are compact and, where feasible, to use existing political and geographical boundaries in doing so.

As such, the amendments require, and their proponents have admitted, that preserving and creating minority-opportunity districts is a first priority of the Legislature, and must be done at the expense of compactness. In this regard, it is apparent that compactness simply cannot be achieved in many areas of Florida where the Legislature must preserve or create opportunities for racial or language minorities.

Take, for example, Congressional District 3, which has been represented by Congresswoman Corrine Brown since 1993. Congressional District 3, a minority-access district, includes parts of Jacksonville down to Orlando. It has been targeted as an example of the evils of gerrymandering. But Amendment 6 prohibits the Legislature from diminishing the ability of minority voters in this district to choose their own representative, and it seems to require preservation of such a district in northeast Florida.

Thus, amendments 5 and 6, contrary to requiring compact districts, now have enshrined many odd-shaped minority districts into Florida's Constitution.
Cops: Teen posing as physician's assistant worked in Osceola hospital's ER
Nurse who was late for work charged in fatal Christmas Eve crash
GOP's Cain tells Central Floridians: I'm no politician

MORE:
Tedy Bruschi rips Chad Ochocinco about tweet, Tom Brady defends
Cindy Anthony told Dr. Phil that Casey Anthony may have had seizure when Caylee was dying
19-year-old sentenced for molesting girl as father awaits trial for same crime
Florida cities, counties must take local gun laws off books
Don't miss: Marc Anthony
Deputies: 43-year-old woman raped boy at her parents' apartment
Let's talk redistricting

By WILL WEATHERFORD, DON GAETZ

This summer, lawmakers from across the state will begin the process of redrawing Florida's legislative and congressional district boundaries. This historic event happens just once every 10 years, as directed by the U.S. Constitution. In keeping with the Sunshine State's strong commitment to transparency, the Florida Legislature has been working hard to ensure that you will have unprecedented access to all of the information, tools and resources that you need to impact the redistricting process.

With that responsibility in mind, we are making your community aware that Florida's legislators are hosting a series of 26 public input meetings on redistricting throughout the state.

We travel next to Southwest Florida for public redistricting meetings. On the final leg of our tour we will stop in Tampa at the Jefferson High School Auditorium on Monday from 4 p.m. until 8 p.m. We head to Largo on Tuesday for hearings at the Epicenter at St. Pete College from 8 a.m. until 11 a.m., and then to Sarasota to New College of Florida from 6 p.m. until 9.

We will host a meeting in Naples on Wednesday from 8 a.m. until 11 a.m. at the Naples Daily News community room before heading to Lehigh Acres at the Veterans' Park Gymnasium from 6 p.m. until 9 p.m. Our travels end in Clewiston on Sept. 1 from 8 a.m. until 11 a.m. at the Hendry County Health Department.

The purpose of these public hearings is to listen to you, not for politicians to stand on their soapboxes. We want to get your thoughts about what you believe are the important facts and unique characteristics of your community.

We will provide Floridians with opportunities to ask questions throughout the process; however, legislators will dedicate the time spent in your community to hearing from you. The meetings will also give residents of Collier, Hendry and Hillsborough counties, all of which are jurisdictions covered by Section 5 of the federal Voting Rights Act, the opportunity to comment on the impact of redistricting to their unique communities.

Those who cannot attend but would like to listen to the meeting can access a live Web stream provided by the Florida Channel at www.thefloridachannel.org. If you cannot attend or tune in to the stream there are still many
ways to actively participate in the redistricting process.

We invite you to visit the Web pages launched by both the House of Representatives (www.floridaredistricting.org) and the Senate (www.flsenate.gov/Redistricting). Both sites are filled with information about redistricting and allow users to create and submit your own redistricting maps using the same data and tools that legislators will use to draw legislative and congressional boundaries.

The online district-building applications were created with you in mind and include training resources that can help you get started drawing your own plan. Demonstrations of the web applications will be set up outside of each community meeting, and everyone who will have the chance to ask House and Senate staffs about the applications and the redistricting process in general.

Floridians can also go online to submit comments, to access committee and public hearing schedules, or simply to keep up with the latest information on the process.

Legislators will use your feedback, comments and submitted plans to help construct their redistricting proposals.

This is your opportunity to help shape the districts that form the basis of your representation in Tallahassee and Washington, D.C.

We invite you to stay informed about the process through the tools and information online, and we hope that you will join us at one or more redistricting public hearings to make your voice heard.
Guest opinion: We request your help, comments on redistricting

10:10 PM, Aug. 29, 2011

This summer, lawmakers from across the state will begin the process of redrawing Florida’s legislative and congressional district boundaries.

This historic event happens just once every 10 years, as directed by the U.S. Constitution.

In keeping with the Sunshine State’s strong commitment to transparency in government, the Florida Legislature has been working hard to ensure that you will have unprecedented access to all of the information, tools, and resources that you need to impact the redistricting process.

With that responsibility in mind, we invite you to the Florida Legislature’s public input meetings on redistricting throughout the state.

On this final leg of our tour, we will stop in Largo today for a hearing at the EpiCenter at St. Pete College from 8 a.m. until 11 a.m., and then to Sarasota to New College from 6 p.m. until 9 p.m.

We will host a meeting in Naples on Wednesday from 8 a.m. until 11 a.m. at the Naples Daily News Community Room before heading to Lehigh Acres at the Veterans’ Park Gymnasium from 6 p.m. until 9 p.m.

Our travels end in Clewiston on Thursday, from 8 a.m. until 11 a.m. at the Hendry County Health Department.

The purpose of these public hearings is to listen to you.

We want to get your thoughts about what you believe are the important facts and unique characteristics of your community.

Southwest Florida has changed dramatically in the last 10 years, and residents are facing new, unique challenges.

We will provide Floridians with opportunities to ask questions throughout the process; however, legislators will dedicate the time spent in your community to hearing from you.

The meetings will also give residents of...
Collier, Hendry and Hillsborough counties, all of which are jurisdictions covered by Section 5 of the federal Voting Rights Act, the opportunity to comment on the impact of redistricting to their unique communities.

Those who cannot attend but would like to listen to the meeting can access a live web stream provided by the Florida Channel at thefloridachannel.org.

If you cannot attend or tune-in to the webstream there are still many ways to actively participate in the redistricting process.

We invite you to visit the webpages launched by both the Florida House of Representatives (floridaredistricting.org) and the Florida Senate (flsenate.gov/Redistricting).

Both sites are filled with information about redistricting, and allow users to create and submit your own redistricting maps using the same data and tools that legislators will use to draw legislative and congressional boundaries.

The online district building applications were created with you in mind, and include training resources that can help you get started drawing your own plan.

Demonstrations of the web applications will be set up outside of each community meeting and everyone who will have the chance to ask House and Senate staff about the applications and the redistricting process in general.

Floridians can also go online to submit comments, to access committee and public hearing schedules, or simply to keep up with the latest information on the process. Legislators will use your feedback, comments and submitted plans to help construct their redistricting proposals.

This is your opportunity to help shape the districts that form the basis of your representation in Tallahassee and Washington.

We invite you to stay informed about the process through the tools and information online, and we hope that you will join us at one or more redistricting public hearings to make your voice heard.
If you go
Redistricting meetings in Lee, Collier and Hendry counties. They are open to the public.

Wednesday, Aug. 31
• 8 a.m. — Naples, Naples Daily News community room
• 6 p.m. — Lehigh Acres, Veterans Park gymnasium, 55 Homestead Road.

Thursday, Sept. 1
• 8 a.m. — Clewiston, Hendry County Health Department, 100 South Olympia Ave.

Related Links

Collier County redistricting meetings next week
Exclusive: Redistricting — Drawing The Lines
Redistricting Q & A