

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2012 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Reapportionment

CS/SB 1174 — Establishing the Congressional Districts of the State
by Reapportionment

This Act divides the state into 27 congressional districts (plan [H000C9047](#)). It was approved by the Governor as Chapter 2012-2, L.O.F.

Based on the 2010 United States Census, Florida was apportioned two additional seats in the United States House of Representatives (total of 27) for elections starting in 2012. The ideal district population is 696,345 (8.9% more than ideal population based on the 2000 Census).

Under federal and state law, it is a duty of the Legislature to draw 27 single-member congressional districts based on the Decennial Census. In November 2010, voters amended the State Constitution and set standards for the Legislature to follow in congressional districting Art. III s. 20(a) provides:

- Districts cannot be drawn with the intent to favor or disfavor a political party or an incumbent.
- Districts cannot be drawn with the intent or result of denying or abridging the equal opportunity of racial or language minorities to participate in the political process; or to diminish their ability to elect representatives of their choice.
- Districts must be contiguous.

Subsection (b) provides, unless it would conflict with federal law or the standards described in subsection (a):

- Districts must be as nearly equal in population as practicable,
- Districts must be compact, and
- Districts must, where feasible, follow existing political and geographical boundaries.

The Legislature's stated intent was to draw new districts consistent with federal and state law. The new districts also follow public input, testimony, and feedback collected during Florida's most transparent and inclusive redistricting process ever. Legislators heard suggestions from more than 1,600 citizens during a 26 city statewide tour. The Senate and House made computer programs and information for redistricting freely available and invited tens of thousands of individuals to participate. Citizens formally submitted 177 redistricting plans.

The new plan keeps two African-American majority districts, creates a third African-American majority district, and keeps three Latino majority districts. It also provides a new Latino opportunity district in Orange, Osceola, and Polk Counties. All 27 districts are contiguous, and the total deviation between the most populous district and the least populous district is 1 person. Where not in conflict with federal law or Art. III s. 20(a) of the State Constitution, the new districts are compact and utilize existing political and geographical boundaries where feasible. The new plan keeps 46 of 67 counties and 383 of 410 municipalities wholly contained within districts (compared to 37 and 300 in the benchmark congressional map), and district boundaries

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follow political and geographic boundaries to a greater extent than the boundaries of current districts.

As provided in Art. X s. 8(a) of the State Constitution, the bill officially adopts the United States Decennial Census of 2010. The bill also contains plain-language descriptions of each district, and provides for the treatment of omitted areas and for any areas specified for inclusion in one district that are entirely surrounded by other districts.

The Act took effect upon becoming a law, and the congressional districts described in the Act shall apply with respect to the qualification, nomination, and election of congressional representatives in the primary and general elections held in 2012 and thereafter. Because the Act relates to voting and elections in Collier, Hardee, Hendry, Hillsborough, and Monroe counties, it is subject to preclearance by the U.S. Department of Justice in accordance with Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act (42 U.S.C. §1973c).

Vote: Senate 32-5; House 80-37