



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
House of Representatives
State House, Boston 02133-1054

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House approves new redistricting maps for 2022 elections

BOSTON – Representative Todd M. Smola (R-Warren, Ranking Member, Committee on Ways & Means) recently joined with his colleagues to support the establishment of new district maps for the House of Representatives that will take effect for the 2022 state elections.

House Bill 4210, *An Act relative to establishing representative districts in the General Court*, was given initial approval on a vote of 158-1 in the House of Representatives on October 21. The bill now requires Senate approval and enactment in both branches before it can be sent to Governor Charlie Baker for his review and signature.

Representative Smola noted that the new legislative districts outlined in House Bill 4210 reflect the population changes identified by the 2020 U.S. Census. Legislators are required to redraw the districts every 10 years based on the Census results to ensure a roughly equal number of people reside in each district. With Massachusetts' population increasing to 7,029,917, the size of each Representative's district has grown to 43,937 compared to 40,923 in 2011, the last year the maps were redrawn.

Representative Smola said the new district boundaries for the House of Representatives are being set now in advance of a November 8 deadline because House candidates must reside in their district for one year prior to their election. New district maps for the Massachusetts Senate, Governor's Council, and Congress will be finalized in the coming weeks, as candidates for these offices are not subject to the same one-year residency requirement.

Members of the Joint Special Committee on Redistricting held 20 hearings and created a website to solicit input from the public on the new House district maps. The committee took those comments into consideration when filing its final recommendations on October 19, noting that it worked to ensure that the new districts "comply with all constitutional and legal requirements,"

including prior federal decisions and rulings issued by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court.

According to Representative Smola, cities and towns traditionally redraw their local voting precincts by June of the year following the Census, but the challenges posed by COVID-19 resulted in final Census figures not being released until September. As a result of this delay, the process has been reversed this year, with the state taking the first steps to redraw the maps and cities and towns expected to revise their precinct boundaries based off of the state maps. The new House maps expand the number of majority-minority districts across the state from 20 to 33, reflecting increases in the state's Black, Asian and Hispanic populations. According to the committee, "The new districts reflect neighborhoods and communities of interest. They preserve compactness and contiguity. And they advance equal electoral opportunity for all residents."

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