

REDISTRICTING

“Whether Democrats have a long-term majority will be decided by the outcome of hand-to-hand combat in all 50 states over the next two years. In most cases, state legislatures and governors elected in 2010 will determine the outcome of this fight. Call redistricting a process, a game or program — what it really is an added incentive for victory.”

— Michael Steele, 1/9/09

Redistricting — the process by which legislative districts’ boundaries are drawn — is the foundation that will determine which party controls power at both the state and national level for years to come. This critical (and complex) process is controlled by those with the electoral clout and organizational prowess to determine the outcome. As it stands, our Party is at a disadvantage. Perhaps the biggest consequence of two straight electoral failures is the negative impact they have had on our ability to control redistricting. The reality we face now is harsh: Democrats are prepared to redraw the political map of the country, and we are not. For us, redistricting is an “added incentive for victory” in the coming election cycles.

But to turn the redistricting process to our advantage, we will need more than success at the ballot box. We need a coordinated effort — led at the national level — that marshals our legal, political, communications and technology resources, and puts them to work. And, we must embark on an aggressive fundraising campaign to finance the tremendous effort necessary to achieve our mission. We have to do this quickly. And we have to do this now.

The good news is we have the expertise, we have the support and we have the desire to get the job done.

1. SHAPING OF THE FUTURE

The upcoming redistricting process will have a huge impact on the future of our Party. It will determine whether Democrats are in a position to place us at a greater electoral disadvantage, and will decide whether communities are given a real choice in who will represent them in their state legislature and Congress. We owe it to these Americans to take an active role in shaping the process.

We all appreciate the magnitude of the moment. Our efforts must be coordinated, and our resources amplified to help shape the desired outcome. Under my chairmanship, the Republican National Committee will bring together the brightest minds and the most nimble regional teams to address the unique political and legal needs of each state.

In order to fight for Republican principles in all 50 states, we must equip ourselves to advocate vigorously in every corner of the nation by extending to our State Party allies and Republican legislative caucuses real-time access to the legal, demographic and political resources they will require to affect positive change throughout the redistricting process.

1. PREPARED FOR CHANGE

Redistricting, with its roots in each community, on every block, is an inherently local process. It is governed by state law and negotiated neighborhood by neighborhood. Its implications, however, build like so many waves approaching the shore. The RNC, as a national organization and a highly identifiable “face” of our Party, must lead. Under my chairmanship, the RNC will move quickly to put into place a strategy that fights for fair representation on the ground by harnessing national resources for local utilization.

I call on State Party leaders to work with the RNC to rapidly identify outstanding legal, political, communications, and technology needs. This dialogue will provide the framework to build a centralized resource bank of knowledge and assets, and will shape state-specific action plans to affect positive change.

While each state’s redistricting process is unique, there are two central concerns that apply to all: the need to identify the political and legal methods by which redistricting occurs, and the need to meet those challenges head on. The RNC will create a focused redistricting committee, populated with legal experts and state leaders, and led by RNC Members with redistricting expertise and experience to offer each State Party assistance in both those areas:

- Providing subject matter expertise and on-the-ground support for the actual drawing of plans;
- Building a redistricting legal team that can assess plan compliance and react to events rapidly and assertively;
- Developing a unified communications enterprise that can support each state’s redistricting efforts;
- Developing external allies who can shape the national dialogue on Members of Congress.

The shared findings of the RNC Redistricting Committee and State Parties will fuel the formation and operation of state-specific action plans to:

- Roadmap the redistricting procedure in each state and create state-specific strategies for redistricting;
- Work with each state Party to develop the right criteria for proposals, including articulation of reform agendas that emphasizes neutral criteria and enhanced competitiveness in districts that require criteria revision;

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- Effectively communicate our principled intentions to non-political decision-makers and decision-influencers;
- Build and maintain a real-time redistricting database for each state;
- Identify key thought-leaders for outreach efforts; and,
- Identify, recruit, and help to educate leading legal figures in each state to assist in possible legal challenges.

3. POSITIONING FOR TOMORROW TODAY

By taking strong steps to secure our future now, we can position ourselves to lend insight and authority to this process. Arcane and sometimes labyrinthine, redistricting can inspire concern in even the most stalwart Republican organization. By breaking the process down to common sense strategy, alchemy into science, by deploying a national message, harnessing the brightest minds across the nation and approaching each state as a unique but eminently winnable battle, we can turn this process into a real opportunity.

We must move quickly and with purpose, and, with your active participation and support for the process we will succeed. Working together, leveraging resources and leveraging the best insights of our leaders and operatives, we will give each American a real choice in every district in the nation.

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