



Fair Districts Talking Points

Whenever you contact your legislators, be prepared with a couple of talking points before making your call. Then:

- Introduce yourself
- Give the name of your town so they know you are a constituent
- Identify the legislation/proposal you are calling about
- Ask to speak to the correct staff person
- In the end, thank them for their time

If you don't know who your legislators are, find them here:

<https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/districts/municipalities.asp>

Sample script if someone answers:

"Hi, my name is Jane Voter and I'm a constituent from Woodbridge. I'm calling to urge Senator/ Assemblyperson _____ to vote "no" on SCR43/SCR152 (if you're calling your State Senator) and ACR60/ACR205 (if you're calling your Assembly members). I have concerns with how these proposals would change the way our legislative district lines are drawn. Is there someone I could speak to about redistricting?"

If "yes," great! Be prepared to share just a couple of talking points with the person who takes your call.

If "no, no one is available," just let the staff person know: "Please let Senator _____ or Assemblyperson _____ know I strongly urge them to vote "no" on SCR43/SCR152 (the Senate versions of the proposal) and ACR60/ACR205 (the Assembly versions). New Jersey residents deserve a fair redistricting process and fair maps."

REDISTRICTING TALKING POINTS

I oppose SCR43/SCR152 and ACR60/ACR205 because (pick just a few):

- Our legislative district lines should be drawn in a way that is transparent, fair and community-driven.
- Our final district maps should represent our diverse communities, reflect the will of the people, and afford everyone equal and fair representation. They should not be drawn to predict election outcomes.
- A redistricting process that requires the use of past election results lays the foundation for partisan gerrymandering – the manipulation of district lines to favor one group over another.
- Language that allows for partisan gerrymandering in our state does not belong in our Constitution.
- Complicated calculations that use a decade's worth of election data do not belong in our Constitution.

- When legislators feel secure in gerrymandered districts, they are less likely to listen to voters and are harder to hold accountable. This contributes to voter frustration and voter apathy.
- When partisan gerrymandering occurs, it's always at the expense of the political voice of communities of color. New Jersey is one of the most diverse states in the country, and our diverse communities need to be protected so we can all be fairly and equally represented.
- When voters go to the polls, they should have trust and confidence in the system. They should not feel as though their votes don't matter because their district lines have been manipulated by party politics.
- District lines should not be **manipulated** in the name of competitiveness. We should not rely on metrics that ignore the will of the people and allow our diverse communities to be broken apart in the name of "competition."
- These proposals would not give New Jerseyans the meaningful redistricting reforms that are needed to produce "fair" maps. In fact, these proposals would make our legislative redistricting process worse.
- States across the country are passing meaningful redistricting reforms to protect their residents from partisan gerrymandering. These proposals would do the opposite and take New Jersey backwards.

In short:

- Voters should be choosing their politicians, not the other way around.
- Civic engagement is on the rise in New Jersey. Supporting this bill would run counter to all principles of good governance and destroy the public's trust in our systems.
- No other state in the country has introduced redistricting reform language like this. This would be a step in the wrong direction for New Jersey.

ADDITIONAL FAIR DISTRICTS/INDEPENDENT COMMISSION TALKING POINTS:

- Our redistricting process *does* need to be reformed. It needs to be more transparent. It needs to involve the public and prioritize public input. It needs to establish fair line-drawing standards. That's what voters in four states just approved in these past elections, following the lead of CA and AZ.
- When 2 major parties control the redistricting process – in a state where more than 40% of registered voters are not even affiliated with a political party—the voices of too many New Jerseyans are missing.
- An Independent Citizen-led Commission in NJ would put the redistricting power where it belongs: in the hands of ordinary citizens, not elected officials or party insiders.
- Fair Districts New Jersey believes removing politicians and party insiders from the redistricting process, and increasing transparency and public input, will result in districts that are truly fair and responsive to the will of the people.
- Competitiveness would be a natural by-product of these fairly-drawn districts (as demonstrated by research on the final map drawn by California's citizen-led redistricting commission).
- And when ordinary citizens are drawing the lines themselves, voters will have more trust in the system because they will know their district lines have not been manipulated by party politics.