



THE FLORIDA SENATE
SENATOR WILTON SIMPSON
President

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Senators
FROM: Wilton Simpson
SUBJECT: Reapportionment Information – Census Bureau Releases Redistricting Data
DATE: August 12, 2021

Today the U.S. Census Bureau released census data that is necessary for the map drawing process to take place during the 2022 Legislative Session.

As you may be aware, Senate staff have been planning for software and other infrastructure needed to draw maps and will be working to input the newly received census data. This effort includes coordination with the Florida House, at the staff level, to develop a joint website that will launch in the coming weeks. This is ultimately the site that will provide the public with information about opportunities for appropriate engagement and with access to the data and mapping application.

Constituent Inquiries

Given that redistricting occurs only once a decade, I understand Senators are fielding many questions from local civic groups and constituents who are interested in learning about the process. Our Senate staff is developing an informational presentation that Senators will be able to use to communicate with their constituents and at public events and speaking engagements. The presentation will include information about the history of reapportionment, the timeline and process, and opportunities for appropriate public participation. In the meantime, a draft constituent reply is attached for your reference and use in customizing a response to inquiries on the 2022 redistricting process.

Communications and Record Retention

All Senators should be aware that, in prior redistricting cycles, significant litigation has followed passage of new maps. The Florida Supreme Court has also limited the scope of legislative privilege when it comes to redistricting. Sitting legislators may be compelled to produce records or be subject to questioning under oath about conversations with colleagues, with legislative staff, or with outside parties who may attempt to persuade the Legislature to pass maps that favor or disfavor a political party or incumbent.

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As we move forward, Senators should take care to insulate themselves from interests that may intentionally or unintentionally attempt to inappropriately influence the redistricting process.

Senators should continue to adhere to the records retention policy as directed by Art. I, s. 24 of the Florida Constitution, s. 11.0431, F.S., and Senate Rule 1.48. Senators and staff should also be mindful that correspondence, emails, texts, and other electronic communications related to the enactment of new districts, whether sent or received on official Senate accounts or devices or personal email accounts or devices, may be of permanent or archival value and those records should be preserved accordingly.

If you have questions about record retention, I encourage you to contact the Senate General Counsel at (850) 487-5237.

As we move forward towards our interim committee weeks, I will continue to keep Senators and the public informed of any updates.