

For Immediate Release



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**From the Office of Sen. Joyce Waddell, NC Senate
Mecklenburg County**

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Greetings:

At the General Assembly *For the Week*

Last week I participated and attended meetings throughout the district. The General Assembly will meet sometime next week to vote on the redistricted maps.

Joyce Waddell

New Maps

North Carolina lawmakers are poring over proposed new election maps that will help decide control of the state General Assembly, and the U.S. Congress, for the rest of this decade. State House and Senate committees met Thursday to discuss, for the first time in public, maps for the state's U.S. House of Representatives districts and for the state legislature. Republican lawmakers drew those maps in secret, a departure from recent years, and unveiled them Wednesday. The maps may still be tweaked, but some version of them will likely be law by the end of next week.

The Senate Minority leader also questioned why Raleigh is split into three congressional districts in both maps, when legally it only needs to be split twice.

As for the state legislative maps, Democrats also sharply questioned Republican lawmakers on why they made certain decisions. At times GOP leaders declined to answer, saying their attorneys have advised them not to talk too much about their actions since they will probably be sued once the maps become law.

In addition to being tight-lipped in explaining their own decisions, GOP leaders said they also do not plan to allow the public to comment on the maps before passing them into law. Written comments can still be submitted to the legislature, but there are no plans for another public hearing. Lawmakers previously held three hearings around the state — but there were no maps to comment on at the time. It was stated that this is why they should have more public hearings now, since the maps are out for all to see.

Republicans defended their decision to use the maps to increase their political power at the legislature, citing a state Supreme Court decision earlier this year, by the court's new GOP majority, giving them broad authority to gerrymander.

House members also met to discuss their own state House map, which lays out lines for their chambers' 120 districts. The meeting focused not on the map but on procedure.

At least some redistricting documents will come out as part of the inevitable lawsuits that will follow next week's map votes. The Southern Coalition for Social Justice sent lawmakers a letter last week demanding that they preserve all redistricting records.

I believe that when creating laws and drawing maps for our great state, we commit a true injustice to the people by not properly considering their wants and needs for fair democracy. All who live in North Carolina and pay taxes should have a voice. Considering all that has been done at the legislative level and all that is being done against the people's wills, we are effectively silencing voices of those whose voice should be articulated. Nothing done in the legislature for the people should be done in secret. Nothing!

Congressional Districts

Lawmakers unveiled two potential new congressional district maps Wednesday that, if either is approved, would likely spell political doom in next year's elections for multiple Democrats who represent North Carolina in the U.S. House of Representatives.

The maps could still change. Committee meetings at the legislature to debate the districts are scheduled to start Thursday. Any changes are more likely to be minor tweaks than wholesale re-draws.

North Carolina's 14-seat congressional delegation currently consists of seven Democrats and seven Republicans. If one of the proposals stands as drawn, the new districts would flip as many as four U.S. House districts from blue to red in the 2024 elections — a boost to national Republicans, who control a shaky majority of just a few seats in the House, as illustrated by recent unsuccessful attempts by Republican members of Congress to pick a permanent Speaker of the House.

One of the new maps would give Republicans an all-but-certain 11-3 advantage in future elections, while the other would likely be a 10-4 or 11-3 split. New maps for the state's 50 Senate districts and 120 House districts were also made public Wednesday, drawn by Republican leaders. Preliminary analysis indicates the newly proposed legislative maps would maintain Republican majorities in both chambers and could result in continued supermajorities.

Once the new maps pass, they will likely be used in every election until after the 2030 Census triggers another round of redistricting, but first, they will likely have to survive court challenges.

Redistricting is only supposed to happen once per decade, after each new census. But North Carolina's decades-long history of gerrymandering lawsuits has meant that in practice the maps get redrawn every few years. They are being redrawn again now because of the legislature's court loss over their original 2021 maps: State law says any court-ordered maps can only be used once.

I am serving my 5th term as a North Carolina Senator and this experience reaches further than what I have witnessed before since serving at the General Assembly.

Republicans would have little fear of losing their legislative majorities even if most voters wanted them out, the evidence showed: Democrats would have had to win far more than 50% of the statewide vote to have a chance at getting a tie in the state legislature, let alone a majority.

Likewise, the original 2021 maps would have all but guaranteed Republicans to keep a supermajority in the legislature — which is 60% of the seats, enabling them to override any vetoes from a future governor — even with far less than 60% of the statewide vote.

Vaccines

The roll out on the new COVID vaccine has been a bit slow but vaccines and boosters for COVID and Influenza are available through your local health department or your healthcare provider. Please consider getting them.



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