



Redistricting and the Importance of Engagement

- In 2018, Michigan voters approved an amendment to our state constitution taking the redistricting process out of the hands of the state legislature and putting it in the hands of the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (MICRC).
- The MICRC is made up of 13 Michigan citizens – 4 Democrats, 4 Republicans and 5 “Independents” – who were randomly selected (with some demographic and geographic weighting included in the algorithm to reflect Michigan’s population) from the approximately 9,300 individuals who applied.
- The members of the MICRC, with the help of staff and consultants that they have hired, will draw the boundaries for Michigan’s 13 (down from the current 14) Congressional districts, 38 State Senate districts and 110 State House districts.
- Unlike previous redistricting cycles, Michigan’s elected officials will have NO role in this process and are strongly discouraged from attempting to directly influence the commissioners as the constitutional amendment prohibits the consideration of incumbency or other political factors when drawing the lines.
- Additionally, the amendment minimizes the importance of the “Apol Standards,” which have been in use since the 1980 redistricting cycle and prioritize keeping existing municipal lines intact, in favor of the vague “Communities of Interest” standard.
- From May 11th and ending July 1st, the MICRC will hold 16 public hearings to take input from Michigan residents on which “Communities of Interest” are important to them to assist them with the drawing of lines.
- To ensure that the commissioners hear from all points on the political spectrum, and that our political lines are drawn FAIRLY, it is critical that all Michigan citizens are actively engaged in this process as well.
- Recent public polling highlights the difficulty of getting participation in this process. Of the 600 registered voters surveyed at the end of March:
 - only 24% of all respondents had heard of the MICRC.
 - even among respondents who indicated that they were “highly engaged in the political process” 66% had NOT heard of the MICRC.
 - 57% of respondents identifying as “strong Democrats” who had heard of the MICRC indicated a favorable opinion, while 24% of “strong Republicans” said the same.
- However, despite these challenges, there is an opportunity for encouraging engagement. With adequate funding and organization, we can reach these individuals, educate them on the role of the MICRC and stress the importance of engaging with it over the coming weeks and months.