



CALIFORNIA
LOCAL REDISTRICTING PROJECT

UNIVERSITY OF THE
PACIFIC
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California Local Redistricting Project Releases New Tool to Facilitate Local Redistricting Reform

Today, the [California Local Redistricting Project](#) – a joint project of the University of the Pacific, [McGeorge School of Law’s Capital Center for Law & Policy](#) and [California Common Cause](#) – announced the release of a new tool to enable local governments to fight redistricting abuse at the local level. The Project’s ordinance generator, hosted at www.localredistricting.org/generator, enables any user to easily draft a sample ordinance for establishing a local, independent redistricting commission, which is considered a vital redistricting best practice by good government watchdogs.

“California’s local governments are leading the way on redistricting reform,” said **Nicolas Heidorn, Director of the Project**. “We view this tool as a big step forward towards providing local officials and advocates with the educational resources and tools they need to consider and implement reform in their communities.”

The generator seeks to make redistricting reform more accessible, and more customizable, to local officials and advocates. Instead of providing locals with a single template for reform, the generator presents locals with choices for reform, and helps guide them through those decision points. After answering a series of redistricting prompts, the generator produces a sample ordinance customized entirely to the user’s preferences. Sample questions include whether the commission is being created for a city or a county, how many members serve on the commission, what qualifications are required of commissioners, and whether or not the commission has the power to adopt new election district boundaries independent of the city council or board of supervisors.

“This is an exciting, game-changing model for promoting local reform,” said **Professor Leslie Gielow Jacobs, Director of McGeorge’s Capital Center**. “This is worlds away from the

traditional, one-size-fits-all packaged approach to reform. The ordinance generator gives local advocates a smarter tool to craft a reform that is tailored to the needs of their communities. This is a pioneering approach to encouraging context-dependent model legislation that we hope gets imitated in other contexts.”

California has been a leader in state and also local redistricting reform. In 2008, Californians passed Proposition 11, establishing the state Citizens Redistricting Commission to redraw state legislative and congressional election district boundaries. While newspaper articles across the nation decry the extreme partisan gerrymanders which have distorted the democratic process in other states, California has been held up as the gold standard for fair and effective redistricting reform. Since the passage of Proposition 11, redistricting reform has also taken hold at the local level as well in California. Thirteen local governments in California now use independent redistricting commissions to redraw their city council and board of supervisors’ district lines, including the cities of Chula Vista, Oakland, San Francisco, and Modesto, and the Counties of Los Angeles and San Diego.

“When incumbents, at any level of government, draw their own election districts, it is human nature to give themselves an electoral advantage,” said **Kathay Feng, Executive Director of California Common Cause**, and one of the authors of Proposition 11. “At the local level, we have seen redistricting used to expel political challengers and excise communities of color who, incumbents fear, may not vote for them. Independent, commission-based redistricting is vital to giving all Californians a voice in our democracy.”

The California Local Redistricting Project (www.localredistricting.org) is the most comprehensive educational resource on local redistricting in the nation. The Project was made possible through a grant from the James Irvine Foundation.

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