

# SJR7: PROPOSED NM REDISTRICTING LAW

## KEY SPONSORS

NM Sen. Leo Jaramillo  
 NM Sen. Antoinette Sedillo Lopez  
 NM Rep. Natalie Figueroa

## BASICS OF THE PROPOSAL

**AUTHORITY:** [Senate Joint Resolution 7](#) calls for the creation of an Independent Redistricting Commission (IRC) to replace the Citizens Redistricting Committee (CRC) created for the 2021 redistricting cycle. The IRC would become responsible for creating binding legislative, congressional, and Public Education Commission maps, beginning in 2030. **A [bipartisan majority \(77%\)](#) of likely voters in NM support the establishment of an IRC.**

**COMPOSITION AND OVERSIGHT SELECTION:** The nine members would be selected from a *statistically weighted* pool of qualified public applicants: three Republicans, three Democrats, three independent/third party members. The Secretary of State’s office would solicit and review applications, hire an independent expert contractor to manage the random selection under carefully designed rules, and host materials related to the commission’s work until they hire their own staff. Once the commission is up and running, it would become independent of the Secretary of State.

## IMPROVEMENTS OVER CURRENT NM REDISTRICTING ACT

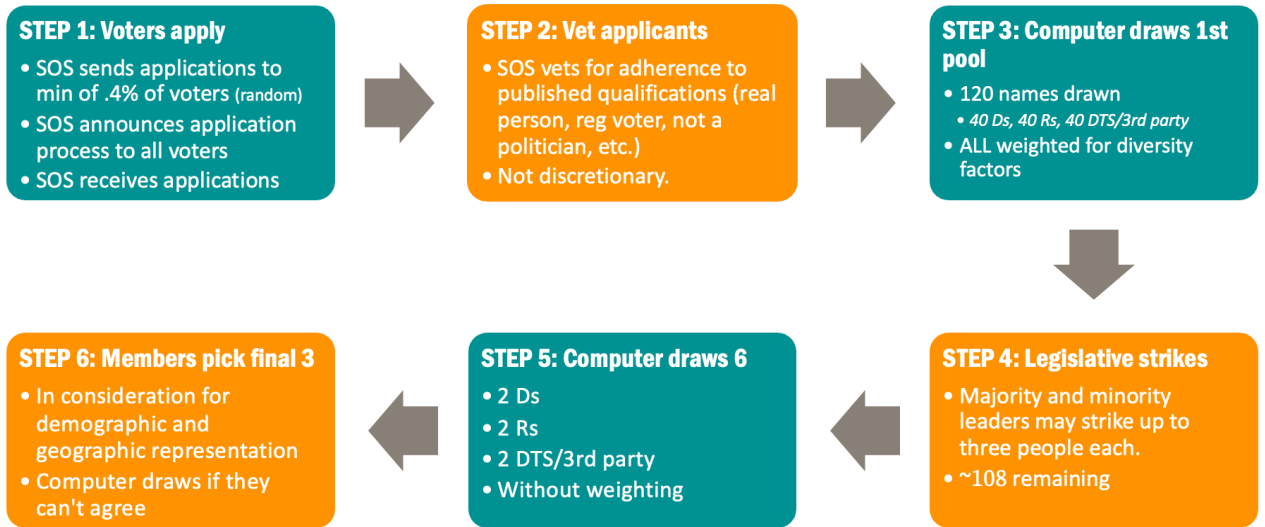
The 2021 CRC provided a considerable improvement to the state’s redistricting process. Under SJR7, the CRC’s core elements that were [highly favored](#) by the public (i.e., transparency, public engagement, fairness) would remain in place. However, the CRC process had several shortcomings, which would be addressed by passage of SJR7.

CRC PROBLEMS	SJR7 SOLUTIONS
Retained conflict of interest by allowing the legislature to modify or ignore CRC maps. This problem of insider control, in NM and nationally, erodes citizen trust.	Removes conflict of interest by giving map-drawing authority to an independent commission.
Partisan actors controlled the selection process; as a result, almost all the CRC members were political insiders.	Drawing on best practices from CO, MI, and CA (and proposed in OH), most commissioners are selected randomly in phase-one of selection.
CRC lacked adequate diversity, tribal representation, and geographic representation.	Random selection is “weighted” to ensure a representative sample; phase-one commissioners will fill any gaps by picking the final three members.
Redistricting process became much less transparent when process moved to legislature.	Provisions require open meetings, comment periods, and public access to proceedings.

## DETAIL: COMMISSIONER SELECTION

**WHY USE RANDOM SELECTION?** Throughout the nation, voters and experts increasingly understand that introducing judgment or control by lawmakers is an invitation from one or both parties to unfairly bias the process. Random selection removes from legislators the appearance – or reality – of favoring their own interests.

**HOW WILL THE SELECTION PROCESS WORK?** In short, citizens of the state will apply to be on the new IRC. Applications will be vetted by the Secretary of State and are given statistical “weight” to account for demographic representation, such as age, gender, and region. Six commissioners will be drawn from this pool; those six will pick the final three.



## DETAIL: COMMISSION PROCEDURE AND DETAILS

**SAFEGUARDS:** Language in the proposed amendment prohibits a commissioner from having recently been an elected official, party official, state agency head, and so forth. Switching party affiliation within the last two years is also prohibited.

**AUTONOMY:** After the commission is created, it has autonomy to hire staff and counsel, select a chair, undergo training (which organizers recommend be rigorous), establish rules and procedures, hire contractors as needed, and set schedules and deadlines. Such decisions of the commission are made by majority vote.

**HEARINGS AND TRANSPARENCY:** The commission will conduct well-telegraphed hearings across the state, on tribal and non-tribal lands. Records of proceedings must be made available to the public.

**VACANCIES AND REMOVALS:** Empty seats on the commission will be filled by random selection of another member of the same party from the semifinalist pool of applicants. The Supreme Court may remove commissioners for neglect, gross misconduct, or inability to conduct duties of the office.

**DRAWING THE MAPS:** The commission and its staff will draw the maps, which must adhere to certain criteria (very similar to what’s in current law). Maps will be made public, and public comments may be used to adjust the maps. The commission will not use partisan data in this process except to ensure compliance with the aforementioned criteria.

**PICKING THE FINAL MAPS:** Final maps must be approved by a majority vote of the commission including at least one Republican, one Democrat, and one who affiliates with neither major party.

### LEARN MORE ABOUT REDISTRICTING REFORM:

- [RedistrictNM.org](https://redistrictnm.org)
- [Fair Districts NM](#)
- [Navajo Human Rights Commission](#)
- [Election Reformers Network](#)
- [New Mexico First](#)
- [Common Cause NM](#)

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