

Southern Echo, Inc.
and the
MS Delta Catalyst Roundtable
Community-based Recommendations for Values, Benchmarks and Standards
to be used in the 2011 Redistricting of Congressional, Legislative and Judicial Districts

1. Before any redistricting plans for the Congress, Legislature or Judiciary are adopted by the Joint Standing Committee on Reapportionment for recommendation to the Legislature, at least one public hearing shall be held in each Congressional District to inform the public as to its provisions, and to provide effective opportunity for the public to provide input, feedback and alternative plans to the Joint Standing Committee on Reapportionment.
2. The Joint Standing Committee on Reapportionment shall give serious consideration to alternative redistricting plans presented by the public to the Committee, including but not limited to plans submitted by minority communities.
3. Every redistricting plan adopted shall comply with the One Person, One Vote requirements of the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution.
4. A redistricting plan will not have either the purpose or the effect of diluting racial, ethnic or language minority voting strength, and shall otherwise comply with Sections 2 and 5 of the Voting Rights Act and the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments to the Constitution.
5. Every plan adopted shall be drawn in such manner that there is *no retrogression* from gains which have been made by minority communities to have districts where minority communities have a reasonable opportunity to elect representatives of their own choice.
6. Districts shall be based on consideration of the varied factors that can create or contribute to *communities of interest*. These factors may include, among others, economic factors, social factors, cultural factors, housing, education and health factors, geographic features, governmental jurisdictions and service delivery areas, political beliefs and voting trends. Local government jurisdiction and precinct lines may reflect communities of interest to be balanced, but they should not be entitled to any greater weight as a matter of state policy than other identifiable communities of interest.
7. Redistricting plans must meet the provisions of the *Voting Rights Act* and shall be constructed so as not to impede the opportunities of African Americans and other racial and ethnic groups protected by the Act to participate in the political process and elect representatives of their choice.
8. Proposed redistricting plans must not employ standards, practices, or procedures which have the purpose of, or result in, the denial or abridgment of the right to vote on account of race, ethnicity or color, or because a person is a member of a language minority group.
9. Every district must be contiguous and district lines must follow *census block* geography in order to maintain the integrity of the census data statistical analysis.
10. In the event of conflict among the criteria priority shall be given to population equality among districts and compliance with federal and state constitutional requirements and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.
11. Nothing in these guidelines shall be construed to require or permit any districting policy or action that is contrary to the United States Constitution or the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

The partner organizations of the Mississippi Delta Catalyst Roundtable are:

Action Communication & Education Reform (Montgomery County)

Activists With A Purpose (Grenada County)

Concerned Citizens for a Better Greenville (Washington County)

Concerned Citizens for a Better Tunica County

Citizens for Educational Awareness (Montgomery County)

Sunflower County Parents & Students Organization

Nollie Jenkins Family Center, Inc. (Holmes County)

The Fannie Lou Hamer Institute for Change (Webster County)

Southern Echo (statewide)

Youth Innovation Movement Solutions (Lee County)