



Colorado Independent
Redistricting Commissions

Colorado Independent Redistricting Commissions Staff

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MEMORANDUM

September 15, 2021

TO: Independent Congressional Redistricting Commission

FROM: Colorado Independent Redistricting Commissions Staff

SUBJECT: Second Congressional Staff Plan

Preliminary Statement

At its meeting on Monday, September 15, 2021, the Colorado Independent Congressional Redistricting Commission ("Commission") voted to direct the Colorado Independent Redistricting Commissions Staff ("Nonpartisan Staff") to start its Second Congressional Staff Plan ("Second Plan") using the Coleman P.004 Analytics V 1 Plan ("Coleman Adjusted Plan").¹ Nonpartisan staff loaded this plan into the ESRI Redistricting software. When a plan developed using another software program is loaded into ESRI Redistricting, it does not always transfer seamlessly. Nonpartisan staff cleaned up the Coleman Adjusted Plan by assigning unassigned census blocks and noncontiguous. This included eastern portions of Aurora in Arapahoe and Adams Counties that are not contiguous to the rest of Aurora. Staff started with this plan.

At the September 15 meeting, Commissioner Coleman submitted a list of suggested population adjustments to create districts with the required population deviation. Nonpartisan staff then adjusted the districts, largely following Commissioner Coleman's suggestions, to arrive at districts with populations within the required deviations.

At the September 15 meeting, other commissioners gave suggested changes and areas of concern. Nonpartisan staff further adjusted the plan to meet many of these suggestions.

Description of Congressional Districts

Congressional District 1. Congressional District 1 is composed entirely of the area within the boundaries of the City and County of Denver. The population of Denver is 715,522. The

¹ Article V, Section 44.4 (3) authorizes the Commission to adopt standards, guidelines, and methodologies to direct nonpartisan staff for the development of staff plans if approved by eight of the commissioners including at least two commissioners who are unaffiliated with a political party. Eight Commissioners, including at least two unaffiliated voters, approved this directive, so Nonpartisan Staff considered this a standard, guideline or methodology and started this Second Staff Plan with that plan.

population of the enclaves of Arapahoe County completely surrounded by Denver add an additional 7,348 for a total population within the boundaries of Denver of 722,870, or 1,156 over the ideal district size of 721,714. Nonpartisan staff moved the additional population from Denver into Congressional District 6.

Congressional District 2. Congressional District 2 is a mountain district consisting of the following whole counties: Eagle, Grand, Jackson, Routt, and Summit. It includes all of Boulder County except the census-designated place of Coal Creek, and all of Larimer County except for the cities of Loveland and Wellington, the portion of Windsor in Larimer County, and areas around those cities. It also includes portions of Weld County necessary to keep municipalities whole, including Berthoud, Longmont, and Erie. The population was equalized between Congressional Districts 2 and 4.

Congressional District 3. Congressional District is a western and southern district consisting of the following whole counties: Alamosa, Archuleta, Conejos, Costilla, Crowley, Delta, Dolores, Hinsdale, Huerfano, Garfield, Gunnison, La Plata, Las Animas, Mesa, Mineral, Moffat, Montezuma, Montrose, Otero, Ouray, Pitkin, Pueblo, Rio Blanco, Rio Grande, Saguache, San Juan, and San Miguel. The required population is then met by adding a small portion of southwestern Eagle County in the Roaring Fork Valley. This required a split of the town of El Jebel.

Congressional District 4. Congressional District 4 is an eastern district consisting of the following whole counties: Baca, Bent, Cheyenne, Elbert, Kiowa, Kit Carson, Lincoln, Logan, Morgan, Phillips, Prowers, Sedgwick, Washington, and Yuma. It then includes most of the population of Douglas County, the eastern portion of El Paso County not in Congressional District 5, the eastern portion of Arapahoe County not in Congressional District 6, and the eastern portion of Adams County not in Congressional District 6 or 8. It then includes much of Weld County not in Congressional District 8. The population is then equalized by taking the portions of Larimer County not in Congressional District 2.

Congressional District 5. Congressional District 5 is composed of nearly all of El Paso County including all of Colorado Springs. The population of El Paso County is 730,395, or 8,681 over the ideal district size. Nonpartisan staff moved the excess population in the eastern portion of El Paso County to Congressional District 4.

Congressional District 6. Congressional District 6 consists of western Arapahoe County, including the cities of Sheridan, Littleton, and Centennial. It also includes parts of Jefferson County including the Columbine and Ken Caryl areas and the portion of Bow Mar in Jefferson County. It also includes nearly all of the City of Aurora in Adams and Arapahoe Counties. The population is equalized along the border with Congressional District 4 in Arapahoe County.

Congressional District 7. Congressional District 7 is a Front Range District consisting of the whole counties of Chaffee, Clear Creek, Custer, Fremont, Gilpin, Lake, Park, and Teller, plus part of the City and County of Broomfield. It includes nearly all of Jefferson County except for the portion in Congressional District 6. The required population is obtain by adding a portion of Douglas County.

Congressional District 8. Congressional District 8 consists of the eastern portion of Adams County including the cities of Brighton, Commerce City, Northglenn, and Thornton. It also includes the portions of Arvada and Westminster in Adams County. It then includes Greeley and the cities in southern Weld County, including Firestone, Frederick, and Mead. The town of

Johnstown is split between Congressional Districts 2 and 8 along the border between Larimer and Weld Counties.

Constitutional Criteria

Equal Population. The population of each of the districts is within one person of the ideal district size of 721,714.

Federal Voting Rights Act. Nonpartisan staff does not believe that there is sufficient voting age population to create a majority-minority congressional district within Colorado that complies with the requirements of the Colorado Constitution. The Commission has not received any comments suggesting that a majority-minority district must be created.

Contiguity. All portions of the congressional districts are contiguous to other portions of the same congressional districts.

Preservation of communities of interest and political subdivisions. When it was necessary for nonpartisan staff to divide a county to arrive at the required congressional district population, nonpartisan staff attempted to keep communities of interest together, such as keeping the Roaring Fork Valley together when dividing Eagle County and keeping cities together when dividing Larimer County. Of the 64 counties in Colorado only eleven were split, and all of these counties had to be split in order to equalize population across the congressional districts. To the extent possible, nonpartisan staff kept municipalities that include portions in two counties together or split those municipalities at the county border.

Compactness. Nonpartisan staff believes that the districts are reasonably compact. Some congressional district border lines are irregular due to municipal boundaries or the shape of census blocks necessary to equalize the population.

Politically competitive districts. The Commission has not identified a standard for judging competitiveness. The Commission has identified eight statewide races that it believes should be used in determining competitiveness.² The report on election results accompanying the Second Congressional Staff Plan shows an average of the difference between the votes cast for Democratic and Republican candidates across these eight elections. A positive number indicates that there were more votes cast for the Republican candidates, and a negative number indicates that there were more votes cast for the Democratic candidates.

Diluting a racial or language minority group's electoral influence. To the extent that section 44.4 (4)(b) is a restatement of the federal Voting Rights Act, nonpartisan staff does not believe that there is an area in Colorado with sufficient citizen voting age minority population to form a majority-minority congressional district. Nonpartisan staff considered communities of interest in creating this plan and does not believe that the electoral influence of any such community was diluted in this plan.

² The eight elections are: From the 2016 General Election: Colorado Senator and President; From the 2018 General Election: Governor, Attorney General, Treasurer, Secretary of State, and at-large Regent of University of Colorado; and From 2020 General Election: Colorado Senator.