

AZ FACT CHECK

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--Who said it?--

The issue: Arizona redistricting mandate

Who said it: **Jan Brewer, governor**

by Mary Jo Pitzl - October 11, 2011, 9:36 am

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What we're looking at

Gov. Jan Brewer implied that the decennial redistricting process in Arizona is supposed to "tweak" congressional boundaries instead of completely redrawing the district lines.

The comment

"Arizona undergoes redistricting every 10 years, with the new map generally tweaking congressional boundaries to account for population shifts and the gain or loss of districts. This new proposal, however, throws that concept out the window — completely rewriting Arizona's congressional lines in a move that splits counties and communities and tosses large numbers of voters and sitting members of Congress into new districts."

Jan Brewer



Party: Republican

Office: Governor



FALSE



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Brewer's media release on map

The forum

Media release issued Oct. 5, 2011.

Analysis

Arizona voters changed the way redistricting was done in 2000, when they approved Proposition 106. That ballot measure took the process out of the hands of state lawmakers and put a five-member citizen panel in control.

The state is required to redraw political boundaries for Congress and the Legislature after every decennial census. After the 2010 census, Arizona was found to have enough population increase to add a ninth congressional district, which means the commission must make a new map with nine districts.

The Arizona Constitution requires the commission to start fresh every 10 years. It states, "The commencement of the mapping process for both the congressional and legislative districts shall be the creation of districts of equal population in a grid-like pattern across the state."

After the grid is created, the commission must adjust it using these factors:

- Protection of minority voting rights, meaning minority candidates must have a good chance at winning a seat.
- Equal population in each district, to the extent practicable.
- District boundaries should be geographically compact and contiguous, to the extent practicable.
- Respect for communities of interest, to the extent practicable.
- Adherence to visible geographic features (rivers, mountains), local-government boundaries and keeping census tracts whole, to the extent practicable.
- Creation of competitive districts, to the extent practicable and "where to do so would not create any significant detriment to the other goals."

The Constitution also prohibits the commission from paying attention to where incumbents or candidates reside. Specifically, it states, "The places of residence of incumbents or candidates shall not be identified or considered."

Bottom line: The governor was wrong in how she portrayed the redistricting process. The Arizona Constitution requires the old congressional map be thrown out and requires the Arizona Independent Redistricting Commission to start anew, using six criteria to create new districts. It specifically directs the commission to disregard where incumbents and candidates live.

release on map

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