



American Council of Engineering Companies – North Carolina

Legislative Report
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North Carolina lawmakers are poring over proposed new election maps that will help decide control of the state General Assembly, and the U.S. Congress, for the rest of this decade. State House and Senate committees met Thursday to discuss, for the first time in public, maps for the state's U.S. House of Representatives districts and for the state legislature. Republican lawmakers drew those maps and the maps may still be tweaked, but some version of the maps will likely be law by the end of next week.

Lawsuits challenging the lines are all but assured. The top Senate Democrat, Sen. Dan Blue (D-Wake), intimated Thursday that the congressional maps, which are expected to result in either a 11-3 or 10-4 Republican majority, might violate the Voting Rights Act. Republican leaders have introduced two potential congressional maps, each of which could draw out one of North Carolina's three Black representatives, either U.S. Rep. Valerie Foushee (D-Orange), or U.S. Rep. Don Davis (D-Greene). A top redistricting official, Sen. Ralph Hise (R-Mitchell) said he and his fellow Republicans did not use racial data when drawing the maps. Senator Hise also said there are no plans for another public hearing. Lawmakers previously held three hearings around the state — but there were no maps to comment on at the time.

The state House and Senate maps would likely solidify Republican supermajorities in the state legislature, largely by redrawing the suburbs around Raleigh and Charlotte — counties where Democrats currently hold nearly all the legislative seats. Republicans defended their decision to use the maps to increase their political power at the legislature, citing a state Supreme Court decision earlier this year, by the court's new Republican majority, giving them broad authority to gerrymander. "Political considerations are now allowed to be used," Senator Warren Daniel (R-Burke) said. "So it might be that that criteria explains some of the changes."

House members also met to discuss their own state House map, which lays out lines for their chambers' 120 districts. The meeting focused not on the map but on procedure, and House Redistricting Chairman Destin Hall (R-Caldwell) told members that the House relied heavily on data from past elections to draw state House districts, a common procedure that helps mapmakers predict the outcomes of elections and lock in power for one political party.

The House and Senate committees considering the district maps will meet Monday and/or Tuesday of next week, and the maps are expected to be approved by the House and Senate on Tuesday and Wednesday.

As we approach the end of the long session in October, the legislative agenda is nearing its conclusion. Only a budget technical correction bill and a handful of outstanding conference reports remain for potential consideration.

For more information about legislation described in this report, feel free to contact me at dferrell@maynardnexsen.com or (919) 573-7421. Information is also available on the General Assembly's website: www.ncleg.gov.

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