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1 Introduction

Hello!

Welcome to the ballot guide. I try to include as much information as possible without directly recreating the official ballot guide. The information is sourced from the official ballot guide, calmatters, Ballotpedia, LA Times, voter's edge, and Mercury News. I have included sources links where appropriate.

I have done my best to keep my views out of it.

I started this to help my two aunts. They would ask me to simplify their ballots for them and since I was, in their words, “into politics.” Democracy relies on an informed and participatory citizenry, but this isn’t an easy task. This ballot guide is meant to alleviate some of the burden. If you notice any errors, you feel like I’ve missed something, or you’ve found this guide helpful, feel free to email me at lizmuehlmann@gmail.com.

If you’re looking for a different city, county, or state, additionally guides are available on my Github here: https://github.com/liz-muehlmann/Election_Guides or on my website here: https://liz-muehlmann.github.io/pages/election_guides.html

Helpful Resources:

1. Check your registration status: <https://voterstatus.sos.ca.gov/>
2. Access the official voter guide: <https://voterguide.sos.ca.gov/>
3. Early voting & ballot drop off locations: <https://caearlyvoting.sos.ca.gov/>
4. Track your ballot: <https://california.ballottrax.net/voter/>
5. If you are in the Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Orange County area and need help getting to your polling place I will either find you resources or help you get there. If you feel unsafe going to your polling place, I will also go with you.

1.1 Introduction to this election

This is a *special election*. Special elections are open to current, active, and registered voters. In this election we will be voting on the new congressional district maps for 2026, 2028, 2030. These are *temporary* maps. In 2031 the maps will once again be redrawn after the 2030 Census.

1.2 Important definitions & facts

Redistricting	Redistricting is the “process of redrawing electoral boundaries” (https://redistrictingdatahub.org/resources/redistricting-basics/#whatisredistricting)
	Electoral boundaries are different than administrative boundaries (like city or county lines) because they are drawn based on population rather than land.

	In California, we have a California Citizens Redistricting Commission (established in 2010) which includes 14 members (5 democrats, 5 republicans, and 4 that are not registered with either party). All district maps have to follow federal and state laws. For example, disadvantaging minorities or splitting up neighborhoods. The CCRC is also forbidden from considering current office holders or people running for office (i.e., it can't draw a map to help get its preferred politician into office).																				
Gerrymandering	Gerrymandering is when district maps are drawn to secure “unfair electoral gain” (https://redistrictingdatahub.org/resources/redistricting-basics/#whatisredistricting). Gerrymandering often results in some wonky maps where districts are split or cut and their shapes do not make logical sense when considering things like neighborhoods, land, natural borders, or cities. Gerrymandered maps only make sense when considering the types of people that live within a gerrymandered location (i.e., do they reliably vote Republican or Democrat). Example gerrymandered maps from the Daily KOS How Gerrymandering Can Swing Elections Republican Congressional Map Used in 2012 and 2014 <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>District Type</th> <th>Count</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Democratic Districts</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Republican Districts</td> <td>10</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> Hypothetical Democratic Congressional Map <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>District Type</th> <th>Count</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Democratic Districts</td> <td>9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Republican Districts</td> <td>4</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> Hypothetical Nonpartisan Congressional Map <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>District Type</th> <th>Count</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Democratic Districts</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Republican Districts</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Swing Districts</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> DAILY KOS ELECTIONS In the top and center maps, gerrymandering is evident. The blue bits that extend like tentacles (district 1, 4, 12 in the top map, district 6, 11, 12 in the center map) are designed to group Republicans or Democrats into a district to secure electoral victory – or seats in the house or senate.	District Type	Count	Democratic Districts	3	Republican Districts	10	District Type	Count	Democratic Districts	9	Republican Districts	4	District Type	Count	Democratic Districts	5	Republican Districts	5	Swing Districts	3
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1.3 Purpose of the special election

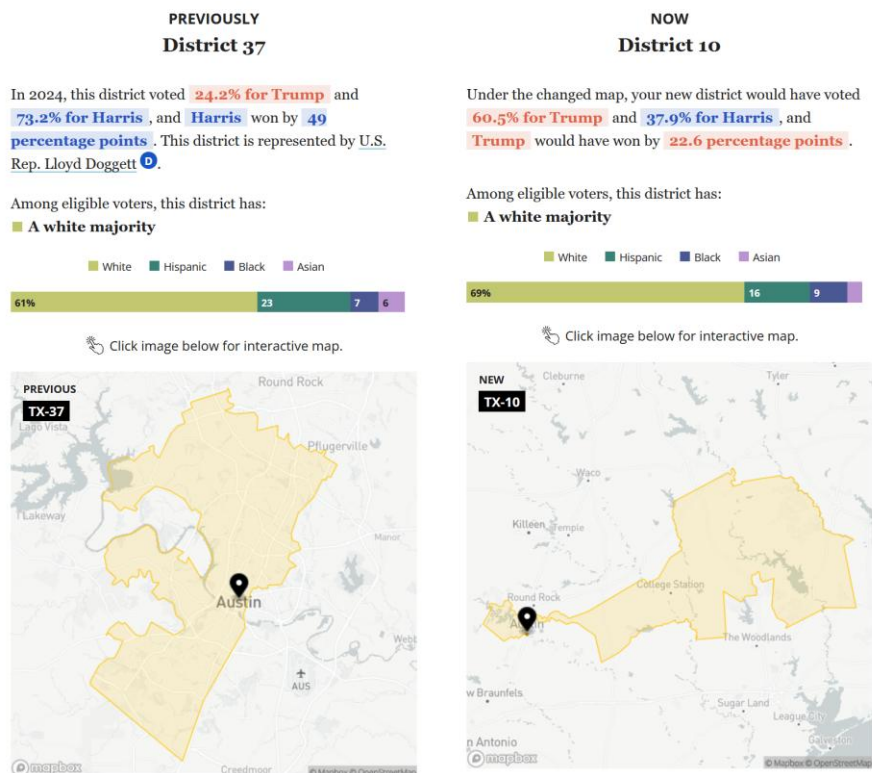
In normal years, redistricting happens every 10 years (after the decennial Census) because the Census tells redistricting committees and other people where people live. People vote; land doesn't. However, Texas, Florida, Ohio, Indiana, Missouri, New Hampshire, Nebraska, and South Carolina are all considering mid-decade redistricting to deliver more House seats to Republican candidates.

Texas' proposed map would give Republicans 5 more seats in the House.

It is difficult to remain non-partisan in this instance as the redistricting in both the aforementioned states and in California are inherently partisan. The reason California is trying to redraw its maps mid-decade is because it wants to offset the imbalance caused by mid-decade redistricting in other states.

Texas, in particular, has redrawn their maps to disproportionately privilege white Republican voters in the midterm elections set to occur next year (2026). Trump pushed for the redistricting because it will (most likely) result in Republicans gaining more seats in Congress (<https://www.texastribune.org/2025/09/04/2025-texas-redistricting-maps/>).

One example of Texas' new districts which flips the district in favor of Trump.



Note: Texas Legislative Council calculated eligible voter data using estimates of citizen voting age population from the U.S. Census 2019-2023 American Community Survey. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to a small percentage of eligible voters identifying as American Indian, Native Hawaiian or having two or more races. Icon by Lewen Design from Noun Project.
Source: Texas Legislative Council
Credit: Carla Acordillo

California is trying to counter this redistricting with its own to keep the existing power balance in Congress.

Note: Texas has a population of 31,853,800 which is second to California's 39,663,800. Again, *people vote; land does not.*

2 On the ballot

Proposition 50

3 State Measure / Proposition 50

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE	PLAIN ENGLISH	PEOPLE THAT WANT YOU TO VOTE YES:
Requires temporary use of new congressional district maps through 2030. Directs Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission to resume enacting congressional district maps in 2031. Establishes policy supporting nonpartisan redistricting commissions nationwide. Fiscal impact: One-time costs to counties of up to a few million dollars statewide to update election materials to reflect new congressional district maps.	Temporarily override existing congressional maps with new ones to counter gerrymandering in other states. Essentially, fight fire with fire. Texas is trying to (and will likely succeed) in increasing the number of Republicans in Congress. California wants to redistrict to do the same for the Democrats.	Gov. Gavin Newsom Sen. Alex Padilla Nancy Pelosi Sac City Teachers Assoc. Planned Parent Affiliates Commissioner CCRC
		PEOPLE THAT WANT YOU TO VOTE NO:
		First Citizens Redistricting Commission United Latinos Action National Diversity Coalition Community RePower Movement
VOTING YES MEANS		VOTING NO MEANS
New congressional maps will be drawn (they’re in the official election guide and here: https://voterguide.sos.ca.gov/proposition/50/analysis.htm) KMPH also has an interactive map showing how the changes would affect your district:		- Keep the congressional maps as they are (last drawn in 2020). - Likely to result in the same amount of Democratic seats

This guide is for California – Tuesday, November 4th
2025 Special Election – Statewide

https://kmph.com/news/local/find-out-how-cas-prop-50-redrawn-congressional-maps-would-effect-your-area	in Congress after the midterm elections in 2026.
• Likely to secure more Congressional seats for Democratic candidates after the midterm election in 2026.	
MORE DETAILS:	
Pro-Prop 50 says it's to maintain existing balance. This appears to be factual considering the maps revert after the next Census. CA argues that countering mid-decade redistricting in other states is the only way to preserve democracy. The state argues that if Trump & the Republicans are successful in redistricting other states to secure more Republican seats, then there will be little chance that Democrats can counter Trump's policies after the midterm elections in 2026. Republicans will likely have super-majority meaning there will be no counterbalance to Trump coming from either Congress or the Supreme Court (which currently has a Conservative majority). California argues that the only way to prevent this is to redraw our maps to privilege Democratic candidates until the next Census in 2030.	