

Reapportionment, Redistricting, and Gerrymandering

- Reapportionment is the process by which the government reallocates the number of representative each state/area is entitled to.
- This needs to be done because:
 - the numbers of representatives stays the same, but the population grows and moves
 - each district should have populations that are roughly equal
 - representatives' districts do not cross state boundaries
- To determine the number of each state is entitled to, the process is:
 - US House of Representatives has 435 members (fixed number)
 - Each state gets at least 1 member regardless of population
 - The other 385 representatives are apportioned according to population
 - The population of the US is counted and divided by 435 (310 million/435 = 713,000)
 - This is the number of people each member of the House should represent
 - Each state's population is counted and divided by 713,000
 - This determines the number of representatives each state gets.
- Some states will gain representatives, some states will lose representatives and some states will have the same number of representatives as before.
- Once representatives are reapportioned, the districts must be redrawn. This process is called Redistricting.
- States must draw new lines every 10 years due to:
 - The change in the number of people each house member represents
 - Shifts in population
- Inside each state:
 - The state government must draw districts that are roughly equal in population
 - In Colorado there must be 7 districts with approximately 720,000 people each.
- The new lines are often drawn to try to maximize political advantage (Gerrymandering)
 - Political parties try to draw lines to gain power
 - Ethnic/Racial groups want better representation