

PUBLIC ACCESS POLICY
Mississippi Standing Joint Legislative Committee on Reapportionment
March 15, 2012

I. Public Access Regarding Documents and Records

Pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. §§ 5-3-91 *et seq.* and 5-3-121 *et seq.*, the Mississippi Standing Joint Legislative Committee on Reapportionment (“Joint Committee”) shall draw plans to redistrict congressional districts and state legislative districts. The Joint Committee has adopted the following procedure to afford all interested persons reasonable access to public information.

A. Public Access Generally

1. Members of the general public may obtain public documents from the Joint Committee by submitting a written request to: James F. Booth, Staff Counsel, Mississippi Standing Joint Legislative Committee on Reapportionment, P. O. Box 1204, Jackson, MS 39215-1204.
2. The Joint Committee may charge any member of the general public who submits a written request the actual cost of retrieving and copying of the requested documents.
3. Public access to the Joint Committee computer system for legislative redistricting is available each business day, March 19, 2012 through April 11, 2012 between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. At this time, members of the public will have access to the data derived from the 2010 Census and existing districts.

Members of the public must be accompanied by a member of the Joint Committee staff or its agent when using the Joint Committee’s computer system, and must call at least 24 hours in advance and schedule an appointment to use the computer system. Appointments will be made in three (3) hour time blocks and any additional usage period shall be approved by the Chairman of the Joint Committee. To make an appointment, call James F. Booth, Staff Counsel, at 601-359-1226.

4. All public information will be accessible as it becomes available at the Joint Committee website, www.msjrc.state.ms.us/, or by contacting James F. Booth at (601) 359-1226.
5. Any citizen may submit written comments electronically to the Joint Committee at ted.booth@peer.state.ms.us or by writing to James F. Booth, P. O. Box 1204, Jackson, MS 39215-1204.

B. Documents Produced by Public

1. Any citizen of the State of Mississippi may present a proposed plan to the Joint Committee at a public meeting or by submission in writing to the Joint Committee at P. O. Box 1204, Jackson, MS 39215-1204. All plans submitted by citizens shall be made part of the public record and made available in the same manner as other public documents of the Joint Committee.
2. Any proposed redistricting plan drafted into legislation may only be offered by a member of the House or Senate for introduction.
3. Any redistricting plan developed by anyone outside the House or Senate must meet the following criteria:
 - a. Depicted on maps which follow 2010 Census geographic boundaries;
 - b. Accompanied by a statistical sheet listing population breakdowns for each district and census geography comprising each district;
 - c. Serve as a complete statewide plan for redistricting or, if a partial plan, capable of fitting into the plan which is being modified; and
 - d. Comply with any other guidelines developed by the Joint Committee.
4. Any citizen may submit a proposed redistricting plan electronically to the Joint Committee at ted.booth@peer.state.ms.us or by providing a CD rom to James F. Booth, P. O. Box 1204, Jackson, MS 39215-1204. Any plans submitted electronically must be accompanied by paper materials meeting the criteria in paragraph B (3) above.

C. Documents Produced by Legislators

1. Any redistricting plan or portion thereof or work product developed by or at the request of any member of the House or Senate or staff shall be confidential and will not be released without written permission of the member, subject to the following paragraph.
2. Any proposed redistricting plan will become public information upon its presentation for consideration by the Joint Committee or upon its introduction as a bill in the legislative process.
3. All members of the House or Senate shall be allowed access to the Joint Committee computer system upon request to staff. The Joint Committee staff will make every effort to provide technical assistance to all members upon request and subject to availability.

D. Committee Meetings and Public Hearings

1. All meetings of the Joint Committee will be subject to the Open Meetings Act, Miss. Code Ann. §§ 25-41-1 *et seq.* Copies of minutes of all public meetings will be available to the public.
2. All public hearings will be open to the public and written transcripts of all public hearings will be made available to the public.

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