

“Communities of Interest” in State Redistricting Law

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State	Source of law	Provision
Alaska	Constitution	“Each house district shall be formed of contiguous and compact territory containing as nearly as practicable a relatively integrated socio-economic area.”
Alabama	Legislative guidelines	“The integrity of communities of interest shall be respected to the extent feasible. For purposes of these Guidelines, a community of interest is defined as an area with recognized similarities of interests, including but not limited to racial, ethnic, geographic, governmental, regional, social, cultural, partisan, or historic interests; county, municipal, or voting precinct boundaries; and commonality of communications. It is inevitable that some interests will be recognized and others will not, however the legislature will attempt to accommodate those felt most strongly by the people in each specific location.” *
Arizona	Constitution	“District boundaries shall respect communities of interest to the extent practicable.” *
Colorado	Constitution	“[C]ommunities of interest, including ethnic, cultural, economic, trade area, geographic, and demographic factors, shall be preserved within a single district wherever possible.”
Hawaii	Constitution	“Where practicable, submergence of an area in a larger district wherein substantially different socio-economic interests predominate shall be avoided.” *
Idaho	Statute	“To the maximum extent possible, districts shall preserve traditional neighborhoods and local communities of interest.” *
Kansas	Legislative guidelines	“There should be recognition of similarities of interest. Social, cultural, racial, ethnic, and economic interests common to the population of the area, which are probable subjects of legislation (generally termed “communities of interest”), should be considered. While some communities of interest lend themselves more readily than others to being embodied in legislative districts, the Committee will attempt to accommodate interests articulated by residents.” *
Maine	Statute	“The commission shall . . . give weight to the interests of local communities when making district boundary decisions.”
Montana	Commission guidelines	“The commission will consider keeping communities of interest intact. Communities of interest can be based on trade areas, geographic location, communication and transportation networks, media markets, Indian reservations, urban and rural interests, social, cultural and economic interests, or occupations and lifestyles.”
North Carolina	Court	“[C]ommunities of interest should be considered in the formation of compact and contiguous electoral districts.”
Oklahoma	Constitution	“In apportioning the State Senate, consideration shall be given to . . . economic and political interests . . . to the extent feasible.”
Oregon	Statute	“Each district, as nearly as practicable, shall . . . [n]ot divide communities of common interest. . .” *
South Dakota	Statute	“[T]he following principles are of primary significance: . . . Protection of communities of interest by means of compact and contiguous districts.”
Vermont	Statute	“The representative and senatorial districts shall be formed consistent with the following policies insofar as practicable: . . . recognition and maintenance of patterns of geography, social interaction, trade, political ties and common interests.”
Washington	Statute	“District lines should be drawn so as to coincide with . . . areas recognized as communities of interest.” *
Wisconsin	Statute	“To the very limited extent that precise population equality is unattainable, [the districts] reflect a good faith effort to apportion the legislature giving due consideration to the need for . . . the maintenance of . . . communities of interest . . .”
West Virginia	Statute	“[T]he Legislature, in dividing the state into senatorial districts . . . , has: . . . [a]lso taken into account in crossing county lines, to the extent feasible, the community of interests of the people involved.”

* Applies to congressional districts and to state legislative districts.

In several states, when the primary redistricting body has not drawn district lines, courts forced to take up the task have considered communities of interest. *See, e.g., Wilson v. Eu*, 1 Cal.4th 707, 714 (1992); *Beauprez v. Avalos*, 42 P.3d 642, 651-52 (Colo. 2002); *Zachman v. Kiffmeyer*, Case No. C0-01-160, Order (Minn. Special Redistricting Panel Dec. 11, 2001).