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Utah Passes Option C Congressional Map Following Court-Ordered Redistricting Deadline

Insight — October 10, 2025

On Monday morning, October 6th, the Utah Redistricting Committee passed Option C related to new congressional maps. This has been a quickly evolving issue over the past 30 days despite being tied to a slow-burn lawsuit related to a 2018 voter initiative, Prop 4. The Utah State Legislature is now in a redistricting battle following a ruling from Judge Dianna Gibson where she ordered the Legislature to redraw the redistricting maps. Based on this ruling, and pressure to prepare for the 2026 election filing window in early January 2026, the Legislature put together an expedited schedule to adopt new maps while also still pursuing legal options to express opposition and overturn the underlying ruling.

For background, in 2018, voters passed Proposition 4, a ballot initiative to create an independent redistricting commission to recommend redistricting plans to the Legislature that divides the state into districts for elections. In the 2020 Utah Legislative Session, the Legislature modified Prop 4 by giving lawmakers more say over what map would be approved. In 2021, the Legislature rejected maps from the Independent Redistricting Commission and instead drew its own congressional map, which divided Salt Lake County into four separate districts. The Utah League of Women Voters and the Mormon Women for Ethical Government filed a lawsuit in 2022 against the Legislature saying government-reform initiatives are constitutionally protected from “unfettered legislative amendment, repeal, or replacement.” Last year, in July of 2024, the Utah Supreme Court issued a unanimous ruling stating that lawmakers do not have unfettered power to repeal or change all types of ballot initiatives, and that if they make changes, they must show it’s “narrowly tailored to advance a compelling government interest.”

In August of this year, Judge Dianna Gibson struck down the 2021 congressional map and ruled that the Legislature must redraw the maps. The Legislature sought an appeal to pause the district court’s ruling which was ultimately denied by the Utah Supreme Court. Faced with the pressing election deadline, the Legislature begrudgingly created a truncated redistricting committee process that included three committee hearings, 6 maps (5 drawn by the Majority Republican side and 1 drawn by the Minority Democratic side), and included 10 days of public comment. Surprising no one, the Redistricting Committee passed out Map C which has been forecast as the Majority party’s favorite map. The bill containing

Map C, SB1012, went to the full House and Senate floors, along with another bill, SB1011 Redistricting Standards, which installs 3 partisan balance tests that will guide map drawing for this process and in future.

Governor Cox immediately signed the bill passing Map C which will now go to Judge Gibson for her review of meeting the Prop 4 standards. If she finds the map deficient, then the plaintiff can submit maps for her consideration. This next phase, all within the control of Judge Gibson, must conclude by Nov. 10th—the date the State Elections Office has identified as the drop-dead date for maps to guide the 2026 election filing process. Stay tuned as we see if Map C will indeed be the one that drives Utah's 2026 Congressional elections or if it will be ruled deficient and a new map substituted.

View the interactive map or see an easier-to-read version (scroll to Option C).

Current Districts:

District 1: Blake Moore

District 2: Celeste Maloy

District 3: Mike Kennedy

District 4: Burgess Owens

Filing for congressional office will happen January 2-8, 2026. As to who will officially run for the new congressional districts, it is anticipated that all current incumbents will file again, but it may be in a different district and district number than they currently represent. Most likely, it would include Blake Moore filing in CD1, Burgess Owens filing in CD2, Mike Kennedy filing in CD3, and Celeste Maloy filing in CD4. Because of the shifting of congressional districts, it will not be surprising to see primary challengers to any and all of the Republican incumbents. Democrats are lining up to file for the seats they will see as most competitive due to the changed maps, likely eying CD2 and CD3.

Shortly following the Special Session, the plaintiffs in the lawsuit over Utah's 2021 congressional redistricting maps filed a new complaint regarding SB1011 (partisan balance test bill) and the new map. The list of plaintiffs includes the League of Women Voters of Utah, Mormon Women for Ethical Government, and several individual plaintiffs. Judge Dianna Gibson, who the complaint was brought to, will need to decide shortly if the recent action by the Utah Legislature is Constitutional due to the deadline of November 10 for new boundaries to be in place for the 2026 elections.

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