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Arizona Gains Rhode Island's Seat With New 2018 Census Estimates; But Greater Change Likely by 2020

New Census Bureau population estimates for 2018 released today shows a change of one more seat between two states from last year's study generated by Election Data Services, Inc. on which states would gain or lose congressional seats if the current numbers were used for apportionment in 2018. But projecting these numbers to 2020, using several different methods, leads to more states being impacted by the decennial census scheduled to take place in just two years. These numbers will also be impacted by financial considerations being debated in the states, as well as in Congress as Commerce Department and Census Bureau appropriations hang in the balance of the government "shut-down" debate this week.

The Bureau's 2018 total population estimates shows that now 13 states will be impacted by changes in their congressional delegation if these new numbers were used for apportionment today. The state of **Arizona** joins the previously indicated states of **Colorado**, **Florida**, **North Carolina**, and **Oregon** to each gain a single seat while the state of **Texas** is now shown to gain a second seat with the new data. The states of **Rhode Island** join the states of **Illinois**, **Michigan**, **Minnesota**, **New York**, **Pennsylvania** and **West Virginia** to lose a seat in Congress using the new data.

The new numbers, however, reflect subtle changes taking place across the nation in birth and death rates and resulting total population numbers that become magnified when the information is projected forward to coincide with the taking of the 2020 Census on April 1 that year. Election Data Services created a variety of different methodologies to project the 2018 data forward nearly two years to 2020 (several short-term projection methods for the trend occurring in 2017-2018, 2016-2018 and 2015-2018, a middle term methodology using the 2014-2018 trend, and a long-term projection for 2010-2018). The different methodologies benefit some states and disadvantage others in the "musical-chairs" effort of allocating 435 seats to the 50 states. All the methods would add a seat to **Montana**, a second seat for **Florida** and a third seat for **Texas**, to the list of states noted above that will gain one or more seats by 2020. The list of losing states will expand to also include **Alabama**, **Ohio**, and a second seat from **New York** by the time the Census is taken in 2020.

The various methodologies diverge at several important points, however, that could impact a number of different states. For example, the various short-term projection methods would indicate that **California** will lose a congressional district in 2020, falling to seat position 436 by only 81,165 to 170,607 people, depending on the projection method used. This would be the first time that **California** has ever lost a seat in its nearly 160-year history. The mid- and long-term trend would have **California** keeping the seat (#435) by only 40,458 to 56,565 people to spare.

The short-term loss for **California** would result in **Minnesota** keeping their last seat (their 8th) by just 13,077 to 29,655 people to spare. **Minnesota**'s state demographer has indicated that recent influx of people to the state has boosted their numbers and it is likely to have had an impact on reapportionment.

The contentious nature of the apportionment process can be observed by the states right around the 435 cut-off mark first established in 1910. Our 2020 projections found **Illinois** gaining seat #435 (the last one to be handed out) by just 25,149 to 53,598 people to spare, depending on the projection methodology utilized, so that they would only lose a single seat in 2020. Earlier estimates pointed to Illinois possibly losing a second seat in 2020.

All the projection methods indicate **New York** will lose two congressional districts in 2020, but that second seat is actually very close to the margin, coming in at seat #436 or #437 depending on the projection model. The state missed keeping that seat by as close as 19,648 people.

Using any methodology, the population projections points toward a ten (10) seat change over 16 states across the nation by year 2020. States that will gain single seats include **Arizona, Colorado, Montana, North Carolina, and Oregon**, while **Florida** is set to gain two congressional districts and **Texas** would gain three seats. Single seat losses will again occur in the Midwest and Northeast sections of the nation, where **Alabama, Illinois, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island** and **West Virginia**, as well as possibly **California** and **Minnesota** would each lose a seat. All other states would keep the same number of representatives they were awarded in December 2010 when the official 2010 Census numbers were released.

Using the new sets of projected 2020 data, the apportionment calculations show that 15 to 16 states could gain or lose 8 to 10 districts by the time the Census is taken in 2020. The gainers and losers are:

States Gaining Districts (7)

Arizona +1 (from 9 to 10)
Colorado +1 (from 7 to 8)
Florida +2 (from 27 to 29)
Montana +1 (from At-large to 2)
North Carolina +1 (from 13 to 14)
Oregon +1 (from 5 to 6)
Texas +3 (from 36 to 39)

States Losing Districts (8 or 10)

Alabama -1 (from 7 to 6)
California -1 or even (from 53 to 52 or no change)
Illinois -1 (from 18 to 17)
Michigan -1 (from 14 to 13)
Minnesota -1 or even (from 8 to 7 or no change)
New York -2 (from 27 to 25)
Ohio -1 (from 16 to 15)
Pennsylvania -1 (from 18 to 17)

Rhode Island -1 (from 2 to 1)
West Virginia -1 (from 3 to 2)

The Census Bureau’s press release accompanying the December 19th, 2018 release of the population estimates notes that **Nevada** and **Idaho** are the nation’s fastest growing state in the past year, followed by **Utah, Arizona, Florida** and **Washington**. But this population growth has only impacted the congressional allocation for **Arizona** and **Florida**. The 2018 numbers show **Idaho** would stay at two seats, and miss gaining an additional seat by as few as 91,487 people. But projecting the numbers forward to 2020 using one of the short-term methodologies shows **Idaho** as few as 18,559 people away from gaining a third seat. All of the population projection methodologies keep the state of **Nevada** at four seats and sufficiently away from any margins of a fifth possible seat. **Utah** is similar in that it would take more than 89,000 extra people for the state to gain a fifth district.

Since 1941, by law the number of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives has been capped at 435. As a result, there has always been interest in finding which states are close to that magic bubble, either just gaining their last seat, or just missing their next seat. The following table shows the results of the 2018 population estimates, as well as one of the short-term trend methodology calculations (2016-2018) for the seats within five positions of the 435 cut off.

2018 Reapportionment Analysis			
2018 Population Estimates		2020 Projections (using 2016-2018 short-term trend)	
Last Five Seats	Margin of Gain	Last Five Seats	Margin of Gain
431 Colorado (8 th)	74,375	431 California (52 rd)	762,731
432 Arizona (10 th)	45,488	432 Texas (39 th)	420,300
433 Ohio (16 th)	52,474	433 Montana (2 nd)	13,782
434 Alabama (7 th)	19,778	434 Minnesota (8 th)	26,293
435 California (53 rd)	122,773	435 Illinois (17 th)	45,184
Next Seats	Margin of Loss	Next Seats	Margin of Loss
436 Montana (2 nd)	?	436 California (53 rd)	143,827
437 Minnesota (8 th)	27,512	437 New York (26 th)	108,582
438 Rhode Island (2 nd)	?	438 Ohio (16 th)	93,419
439 Florida (29 th)	172,169	439 Alabama (7 th)	40,764
440 Texas (39 th)	305,524	440 Idaho (3 rd)	18,559

Kimball Brace, President of Election Data Services, Inc. cautioned users to take the projections as very preliminary and subject to change. “The change in administration, the lack of a Census Director, shortness of funds appropriated to the Bureau, and how well individual states conduct their own Complete Count campaigns could have a profound impact on how well the 2020 Census is conducted, and therefore the counts that are available for apportionment,” Brace noted. “Having worked with Census data and estimates since the 1970s, it is important to remember that major events like Katrina and the 2008 recession each changed population growth patterns and that impacted and changed the next apportionment,” he said.

Brace also noted that major changes in the counting process are in the works for 2020 and that reduced budget funding could impact those plans. “History can also be a guide, recalling that the 1920 apportionment was cancelled because the numbers showed for the first time that more people resided in urban areas than rural areas” said Brace.

Because congressional apportionment also impacts the Electoral College and the vote for President, Election Data Services took the 2020 projections for each state and applied the Presidential election results from the past five Presidential contests to determine the Electoral College outcomes in the past 16 years. The study shows that none of the presidential contests would have elected a different presidential candidate using the new apportionment counts but they would have been more Republican in nature. For example, in 2016 President Trump would have gained two additional electoral college votes under the new apportionment projections. In 2012 President Obama would still have won the Electoral College, but with five less votes (327 vs 332) that he won at the time of the voting. The biggest change would have occurred in the 2000 presidential election where George Bush would have gained an additional 20 electoral votes had the new 2020 apportionment projections determined the number of congressional seats in each state.

The 2016 Electoral College was muddled because 7 electors voted for a different candidate than what they had pledged based on the vote totals. As a result, the overall change in candidate votes based on the new apportionment numbers shows just two vote difference in the bottom line results. President elect Trump’s ability to carry states that will be losing congressional seats in 2020 also contributed to a reversal of the pattern depicted in previous elections.

It should be noted that the 2020 Presidential election and resulting Electoral College will occur before the results of the 2020 Census are released by December 31, 2020. Therefore, the Electoral College results in 2020 will be governed by the state’s apportionment allocation as they exist today, having been first determined in 2011. The first time the new 2020 apportionment results will be utilized will be the 2024 Presidential election. Election Data Services, Inc. has also worked with the website [270ToWin](#), who has built an interactive map of the these new apportionment results where users can adjust state outcomes to discover Electoral College outcomes for the presidential elections back to 2000.

Major weather events have also affected apportionment. The Census Bureau’s estimated populations released for 2005 showed **Louisiana** would keep all their congressional districts that decade. Even the Bureau’s own projections for 2010 released that same year showed **Louisiana** staying the same. Then hurricane Katrina hit **Louisiana** at the end of August 2005 (after the date of the population estimates). Devastation and population loss impacted New Orleans in a major way, and when the Bureau’s 2006 population estimates were released **Louisiana** was looking at losing a congressional seat. That was ultimately confirmed when the 2010 Census was taken, and state data was released at the end of that year.

As Election Data Services, Inc. noted last year in the 2017 study, the year of 2017 saw 18 hurricanes and tropical storms, three of which had a potential of impact on population movements in the United States. Two of these storms: Irma (impacting Miami and the Florida Gulf Coast), and Maria (which devastated Puerto Rico)) affected **Florida** and the new population estimates reflect that fact. Last years study showed **Florida** was 366,735 people away from gaining a third seat.

The 2018 shows the state is only 172,169 people away from a third additional seat, an improvement of nearly 200,000 people.

On November 11, 2018 the editorial writers at the *New York Times* suggested an increase in the size of the US House of Representatives to 593 members in order to bring down the size of each district. Election Data Services, Inc.’s apportionment calculator allows us to change the number of seats to be assigned, as well as allowing the **District of Columbia** to gain a Representative. Changing the number of seats in the House and running the apportionment program allows us to see how many seats would go to each state under that scenario. As expected, most states would see an increase in their representation in a 593-member House of Representatives. **California** would gain 19 seats, **Florida** an additional 13 seats, and **Texas** an additional 17 seats. All other states are single-digit seat increases and no state would lose any representatives from their current allocation. Only the states of **Alaska, Maine, North Dakota, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia** and **Wyoming** would stay with the number of representatives they currently have in 2018. A table of these results are included in this packet.

The 2018 population estimates have not been statistically adjusted for any known undercount that may take place when the Census is conducted. In addition, no estimates were provided for U.S. military personnel overseas. This component has in the past been counted by the Census Bureau and allocated to the states. Overseas military personnel have been a factor in the apportionment formula for the past several decades, including the switching of the final district in 2000 that went from **Utah** to **North Carolina**. Observers are also awaiting the Census Bureau’s and/or Trump administration’s release of the “residency rules” that will dictate where college students, the military, and prisoners will be counted in the 2020 census, which in turn could impact the apportionment process.

Past apportionment studies by Election Data Services, Inc. can be found at <https://www.electiondataservices.com/reapportionment-studies/>. A historical chart on the number of districts each state received each decade from 1789 to current is also available at this web address and linkable at <https://www.electiondataservices.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/CD-apportionment-1789-2010.pdf>.

Election Data Services Inc. is a political consulting firm that specializes in redistricting, election administration, and the analysis of census and political data. Election Data Services, Inc. conducts the congressional apportionment analyses with each annual release of the census population estimates. For more information about the reapportionment analysis, contact Kimball Brace (703-580-7267 or 202-789-2004 or kbrace@electiondataservices.com).