

# REAPPORTIONMENT AND REDISTRICTING IN NEVADA: An Overview

Every ten years, following the United States Census, the Nevada Legislature is charged with reapportioning and redistricting the state’s districts for:

- The U.S. House of Representatives;
- The Nevada State Senate;
- The Nevada State Assembly; and
- The Board of Regents of the University of Nevada.<sup>1</sup>

Redistricting was last completed in 2011, after the 2010 Census, and will again be undertaken by the Legislature in 2021, using data from the 2020 Census. Typically, redistricting proposals are drafted into legislation that follows the same legislative hearing and voting process as other bills, and must then be approved by the governor.

The overarching goal of reapportionment and redistricting is to ensure equal representation for voters as district populations shift over time.

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The primary requirement for reapportionment and redistricting in Nevada appears in [Article 4, Section 5](#), of the *Nevada Constitution*, which specifies that after each decennial census, the Legislature shall fix by law the number of senators and members of the Assembly and apportion them—based on the number of inhabitants—among legislative districts established by statute. The *Constitution* further provides that “representation shall be apportioned according to population” ([Article 1, Section 13](#)) and that the census “...shall serve as the basis of representation in both houses of the Legislature” ([Article 15, Section 13](#)).

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<sup>1</sup> In Nevada, local governments are responsible for reapportioning and redistricting the districts for county commission, city council, school boards of trustees, and certain other entities. For more information, contact the relevant local governing body.

# WHAT ARE REAPPORTIONMENT AND REDISTRICTING?

## REAPPORTIONMENT

The division of a given number of elected members among established political subdivisions in accordance with an existing plan or formula.

In short, the process of determining how many districts a jurisdiction will receive.

*Examples: Every ten years following the federal census, the 435 seats of the U.S. House of Representatives are reapportioned among the 50 states based on current population. In Nevada, reapportionment would mean the reallocation or reassignment of any existing legislative seats.*

## REDISTRICTING

The redrawing of district borderlines to create districts with different boundaries.

The process of adjusting districts within a particular jurisdiction to ensure, as nearly as possible, equal population among districts.

*Examples: Redrawing the boundary lines for election districts at the local, state, or federal levels.*

Current size of the Nevada Legislature (1983–present)

**63** members  
• 21 Senate  
• 42 Assembly

Nevada's largest legislature

**75** members (1873–1881)

Nevada's smallest legislature

**45** members (1893–1899)

**75** Constitutional maximum for number of legislators (total for both houses)

([Article 15, Section 6](#))

Other requirements: "...the number of Senators shall not be less than one-third nor more than one-half of that of the members of the Assembly"

([Article 4, Section 5](#))

## 2011 REAPPORTIONMENT AND REDISTRICTING

In 2011, the Legislature passed three bills related to reapportionment and redistricting of legislative, congressional, and Board of Regents districts:

BILL	SUBJECT MATTER	GOVERNOR ACTION
<a href="#"><u>Assembly Bill 566</u></a>	Revises legislative and congressional districts	Vetoed
<a href="#"><u>Senate Bill 497</u></a>	Revises legislative and congressional districts	Vetoed
<a href="#"><u>Assembly Bill 570</u></a>	Revises the districts for the Board of Regents	Signed

Because the bills regarding legislative and congressional districts were vetoed by Governor Brian Sandoval—and no attempts were made to override or sustain the vetoes—the Legislature was unable to complete the redistricting process during the 120-day regular session. Legislators were not called into a special session to finish redistricting, so the task fell to the courts.

Following a number of hearings, judicial briefs, motions, and pleas, District Court Judge James T. Russell, in First Judicial District Case *Guy et al. v. Miller*, appointed three special masters to accomplish redistricting. The resulting court-approved maps included four congressional districts (an increase of one from 2001), while the size of the Legislature remained at 63 members.

The maps eliminated two multi-member Senate districts, meaning all districts in both houses would be represented by a single member. Also, for the first time in Nevada's redistricting history, each Senate district had nested within it two Assembly districts.

After the 2011 redistricting exercise, 15 Senate districts were wholly within Clark County; 4 were in the Washoe County/Carson City area, 1 of which included five counties in western Nevada; and 2 were rural districts. One rural district consisted of Churchill, Douglas, Lyon, and Storey Counties. The other consisted of Elko, Eureka, Lincoln, White Pine, and parts of Nye and northern Clark Counties. The 42 Assembly districts included 30 districts wholly within Clark County, 8 districts in the Washoe County/Carson City/western Nevada area, and 4 rural districts within the 2 rural Senate districts. (For Senate and Assembly district maps resulting from 2011 redistricting, see [Appendix A](#).)

These boundaries will remain in place until the 2021 redistricting process is complete, and the resulting new boundaries will take effect starting with the 2022 election cycle.

### 2010 AVERAGE POPULATION

Senate district:

128,598

Assembly district:

64,299

### 2019 AVERAGE POPULATION (ESTIMATED)

Senate district:

146,674

Assembly district:

73,337

Source: [U.S. Census Bureau](#)

In preparation for redistricting in 2021, the 2019 Legislature adopted [Senate Concurrent Resolution 9](#), creating the [Committee to Conduct an Interim Study of the Requirements for Reapportionment and Redistricting in the State of Nevada](#). The Committee met four times over the 2019–2020 Interim and received testimony from a wide variety of stakeholders and experts, including Census Bureau representatives, the Nevada State Demographer, and state election officials. At its final meeting, the Committee approved several recommendations relating to procedure, technology, staffing, public involvement, and other matters. For a full list of the interim study’s recommendations, see the Committee’s [Summary of Recommendations](#).

## REDISTRICTING IN OTHER STATES

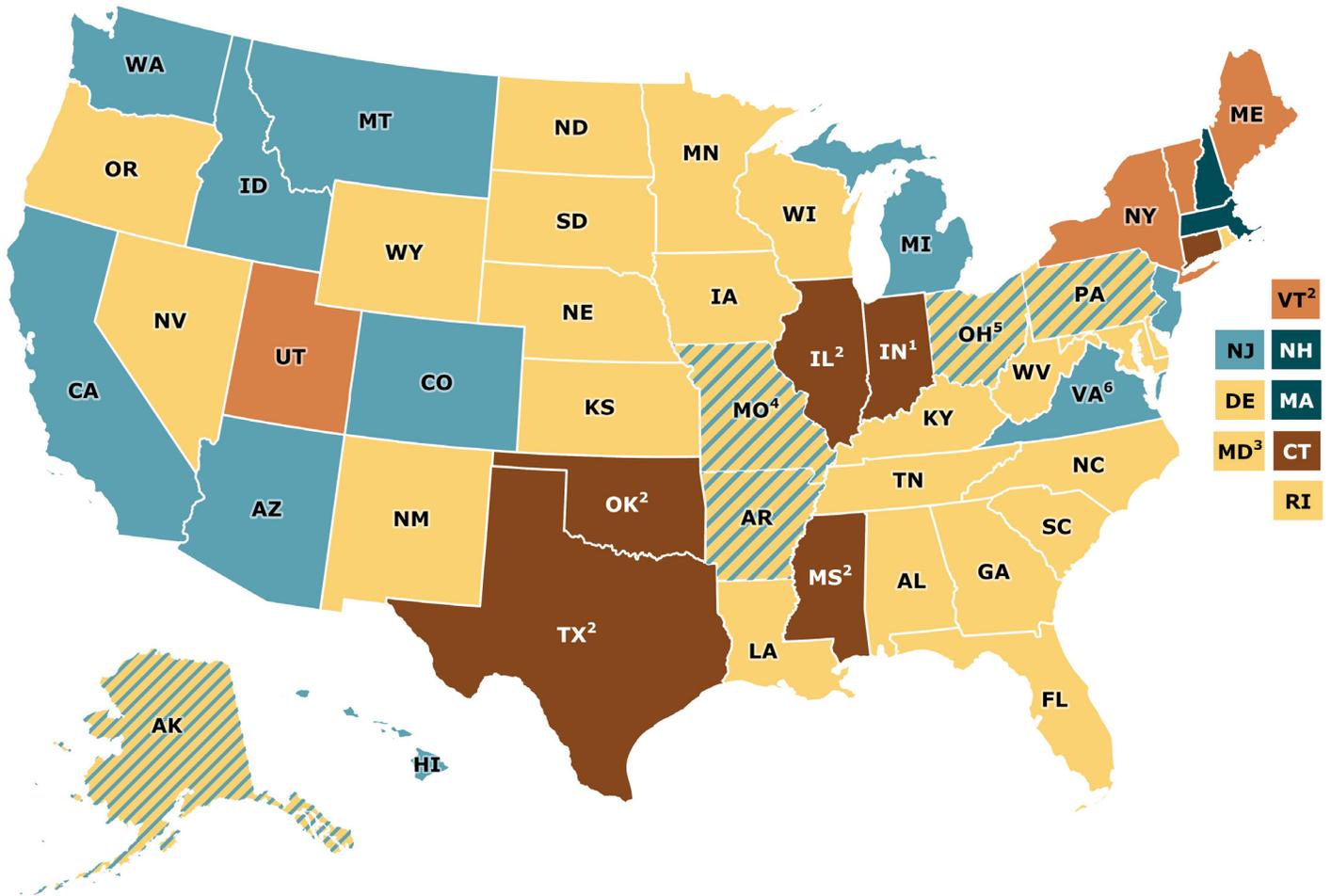
Though the Legislature is the primary authority for congressional and legislative redistricting in Nevada, that is not the case in all states. Some states use a commission to redistrict, and two states—Massachusetts and New Hampshire—rely on the general court.

In the majority of states, however, the legislature is the primary redistricting authority for congressional and legislative redistricting. Of these states, some also have an advisory commission to provide input to the legislature, or a backup commission to step in if the legislature is unable to agree on a redistricting plan.

Ten states use a commission for both congressional and legislative redistricting, with Virginia becoming the most recent state to shift this responsibility from the legislature to a commission upon voter approval of a 2020 ballot question. An additional five states have a commission for redistricting legislative districts, but still require the legislature to redistrict congressional districts.

The number of redistricting commissions has nearly doubled over the past decade as more states shift to the commission model. Four states—Colorado, Michigan, Ohio, and Virginia—will be using their redistricting commissions for the first time in the 2021 redistricting cycle. In Nevada, an initiative petition regarding an independent redistricting commission was filed with the secretary of state in 2019, but it did not qualify for placement on the 2020 ballot.

# STATE REDISTRICTING AUTHORITIES MAP



## Map Footnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Backup commission for congressional redistricting only.
- <sup>2</sup> Advisory/backup commission for legislative redistricting only.
- <sup>3</sup> Maryland's governor has an advisory commission that provides information to the legislature.
- <sup>4</sup> Missouri will have a state demographer produce maps for the two legislative commissions to consider for the 2020 cycle.
- <sup>5</sup> Ohio also has a backup commission for congressional redistricting.
- <sup>6</sup> Virginia's commission is comprised of eight legislators and eight citizen members.

- Legislature
- Legislature for Congressional Districts; Commission for Legislative Districts
- Legislature; Advisory Commission
- Legislature; Backup Commission
- Commission
- General Court

Sources: [National Conference of State Legislatures](#); [Virginia Redistricting Commission](#)

## CURRENT STATUS

With the 2019–2020 Interim redistricting study complete and the 81<sup>st</sup> Legislative Session underway, Nevada now awaits delivery of the 2020 Census redistricting data. The redistricting data, or [P.L. 94-171 data](#), contains the population counts for small areas of geography needed to create redistricting plans.

Under usual circumstances, Nevada would receive the redistricting data by the statutory deadline of March 31, 2021. However, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent delays in 2020 Census operations, the U.S. Census Bureau has announced it plans to release the redistricting data by September 30, 2021.

The 2020 Census apportionment counts, which determine how many congressional seats each state will receive, are also delayed. At the time of publication, these were expected to be released by the Census Bureau by April 30, 2021, four months after the original statutory deadline of December 31, 2020.

## NEXT STEPS AND RESOURCES

Given the delay in Census data delivery, Nevada’s Legislature will determine how best to move forward with the 2021 reapportionment and redistricting cycle. Any updates to the timeline and process, including when and how the public can be involved, will be shared on the Legislature’s [2021 Nevada Reapportionment and Redistricting webpage](#).

In addition to status updates, the website contains general and historical information on redistricting, current district maps, district demographic maps, and contact information for Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB) staff involved in redistricting.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Nevada Reapportionment and Redistricting webpage (LCB):**

<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Division/Research/Districts/Reapp/2021/>

**U.S. Census Bureau:**

<https://www.census.gov/>

**2020 Census operational updates:**

<https://2020census.gov/en/news-events/operational-adjustments-covid-19.html>

**National Conference of State Legislatures Redistricting webpage:**

<https://www.ncsl.org/research/redistricting.aspx>

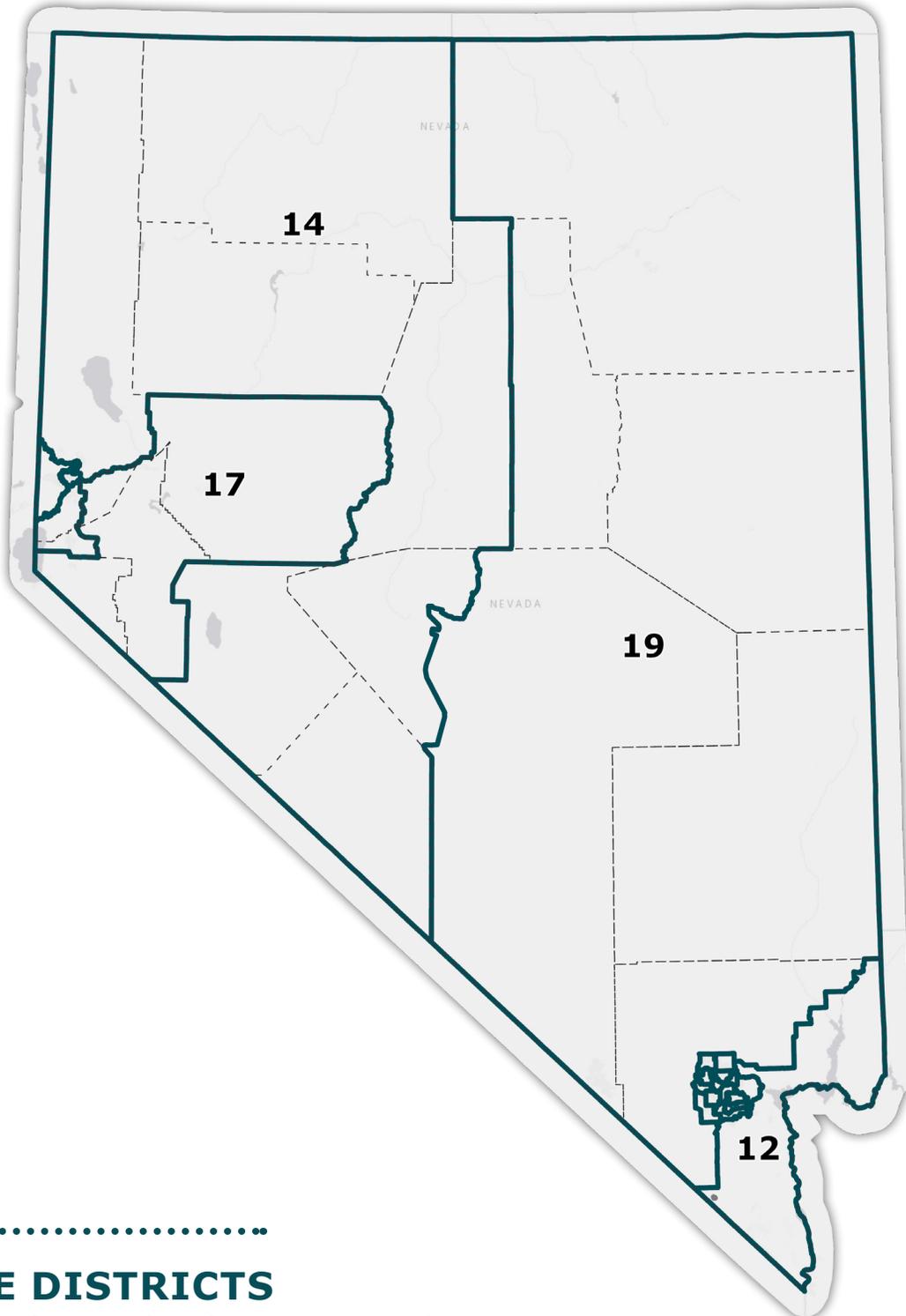
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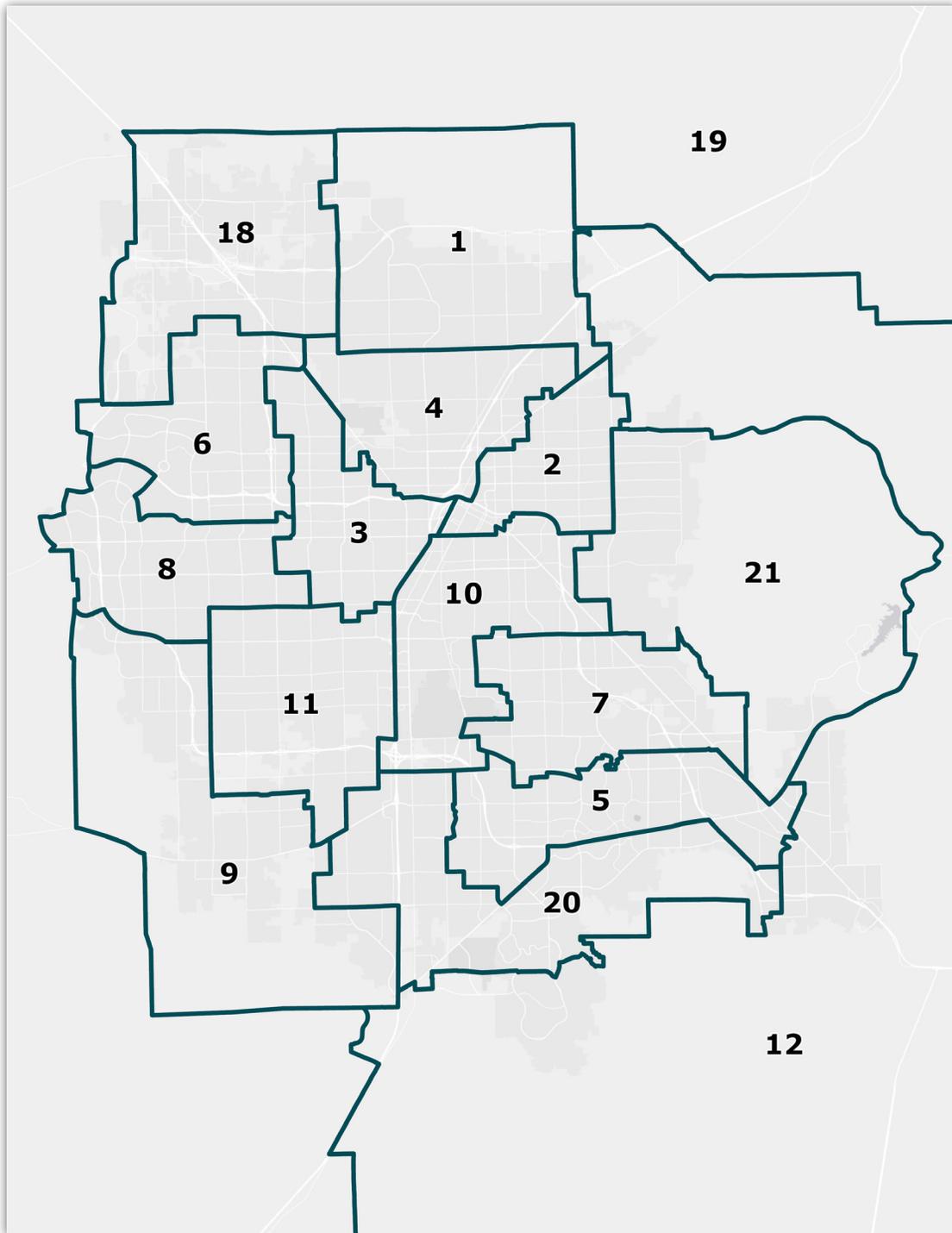
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**Nevada Legislative District Maps**



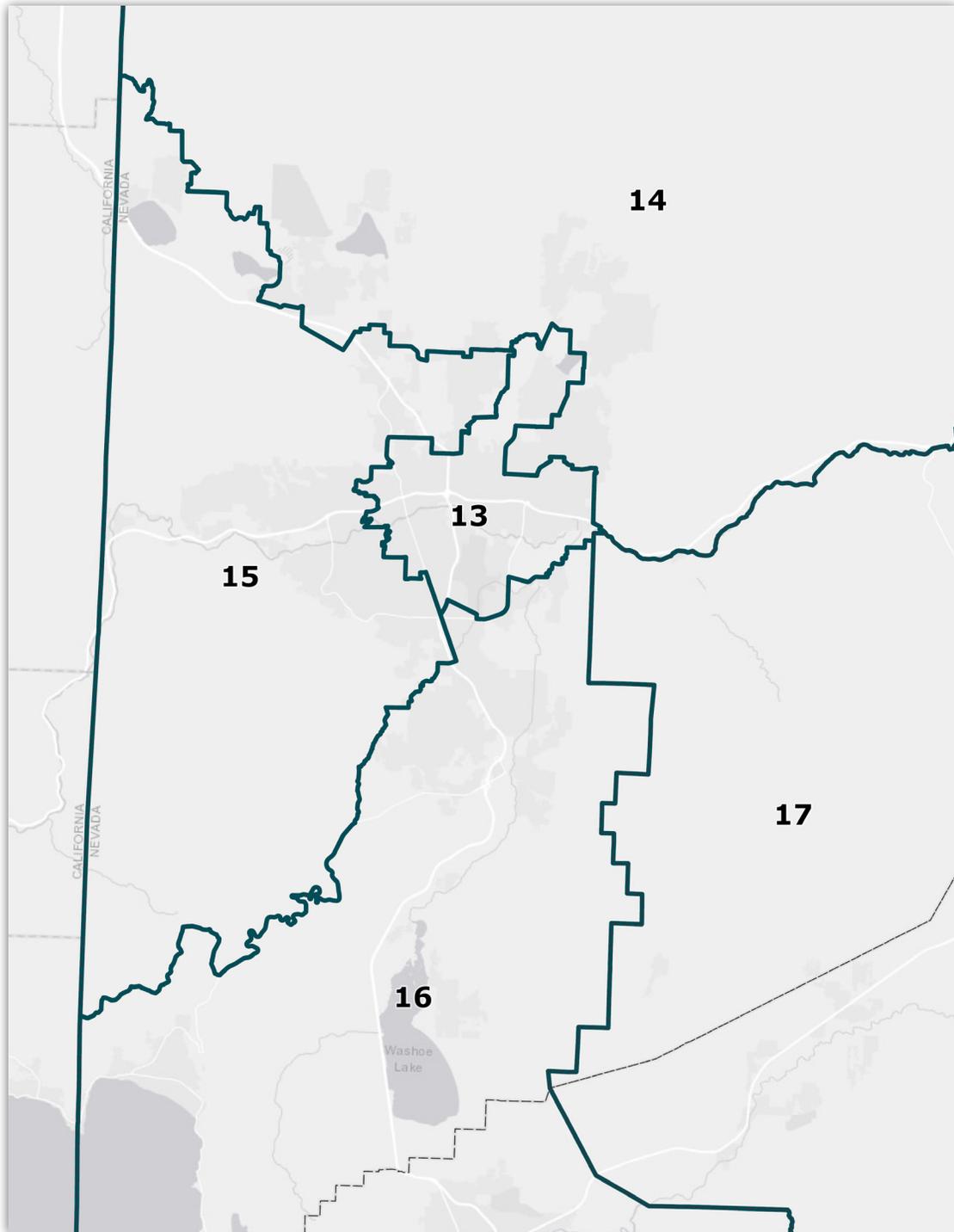
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**SENATE DISTRICTS  
LOCATED IN RURAL NEVADA**



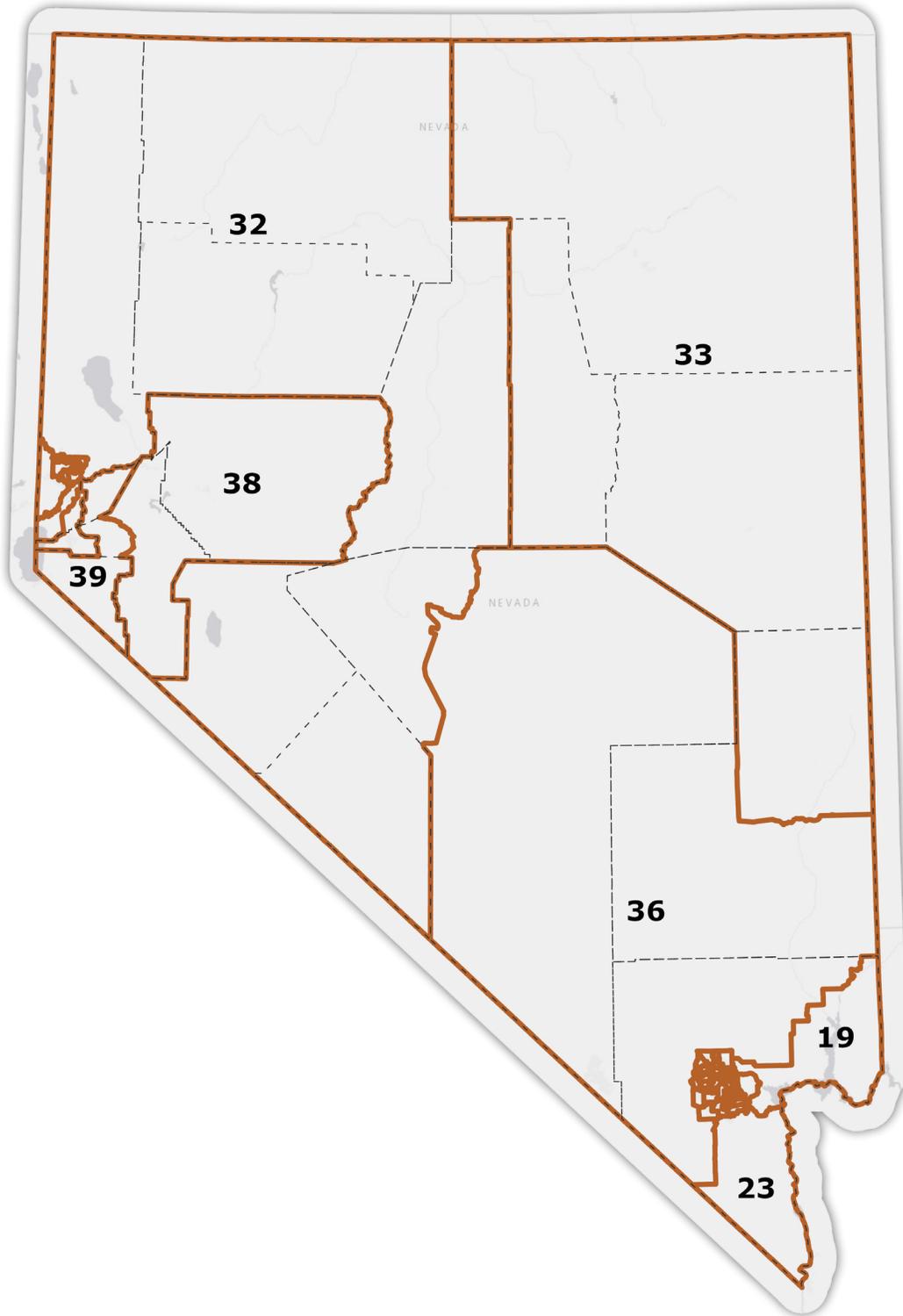
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## SENATE DISTRICTS LOCATED IN SOUTHERN NEVADA



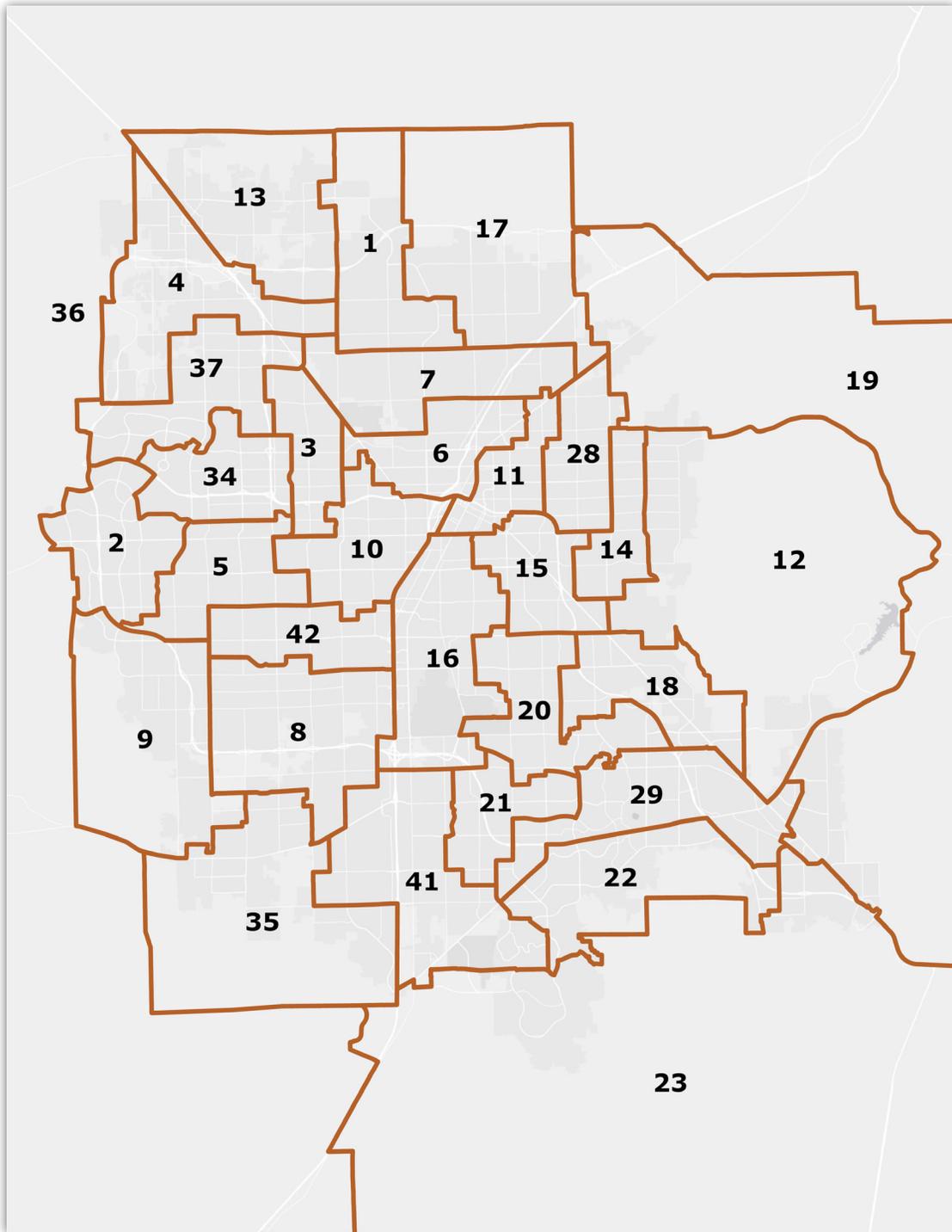
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## SENATE DISTRICTS LOCATED IN NORTHERN NEVADA



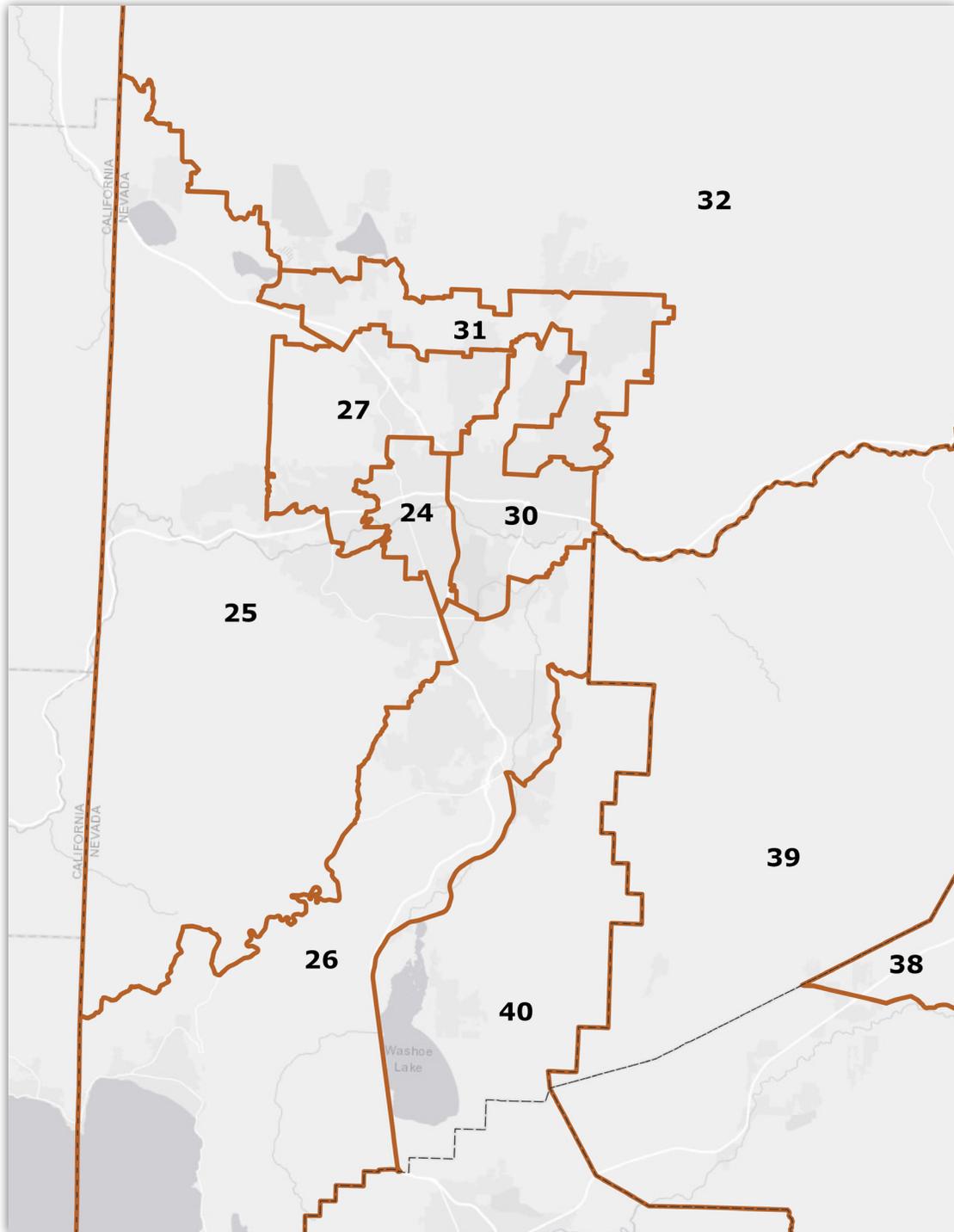
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## ASSEMBLY DISTRICTS LOCATED IN RURAL NEVADA



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## ASSEMBLY DISTRICTS LOCATED IN SOUTHERN NEVADA



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**ASSEMBLY DISTRICTS  
LOCATED IN NORTHERN NEVADA**