

Redistricting plan shakes up California congressional map



Rep. David Dreier is one Republican who could be placed at risk by California's proposed congressional map. (Charles Dharapak / Associated Press)

By Richard Simon Washington Bureau

June 10, 2011, 11:07 a.m.

Proposed political maps released today could shake up the California congressional delegation, creating new risks for a number of longtime and influential [Democrats](#) and [Republicans](#) in the state's delegation.

The draft redistricting plan, released by a voter-approved citizens' commission, dramatically reconfigures the political boundaries of districts represented by prominent politicians such as Republican [David Dreier](#), chairman of the House Rules Committee.

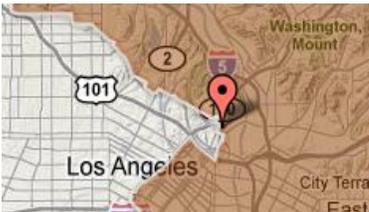
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David Wasserman, House editor of the Cook Political Report, said the maps could boost the Democrats' numbers in the state's 53-member House delegation by four seats, identifying as among the biggest losers in the remapping proposals Dreier, of San Dimas, and fellow Republicans [Elton Gallegly](#) of Simi Valley, Gary Miller of Diamond Bar and either [Brian Bilbray](#) of Carlsbad or [Jeff Denham](#) of Atwater.

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Congressional staffs and party officials pored over the maps today, scrambling to crunch the demographic and political numbers in order to get a better understanding of their political prospects.

The new maps promise to cause political [migraines](#) for a number of incumbents, including one of Los Angeles' most enduring Democratic politicians, [Howard L. Berman](#).

Berman could face a challenge from a well-known Latino if he runs in a more Latino east San Fernando Valley district carved from a chunk of the congressman's current district, or a possible race against fellow Democrat [Brad Sherman](#) in a new district that includes Berman's home and extends through the west San Fernando Valley.

Virtually all of state's House members gain new territory, forcing them to make themselves known to new potential voters fast before the 2012 election. Some are likely to have to go shopping for a new home. House members are not required to live in their districts but could face charges of carpetbagging if they don't move into the districts where they run.

"It certainly means there will be a lot of battlefields in California," said Sherman, whose district was extended westward through the west San Fernando Valley into Ventura County to include territory he previously represented.

The map virtually ensures that California, often irrelevant in the national battle for control of Congress because of decades of maps drawn to protect incumbents, will become a battleground in the 2012 campaign.

But the maps could lessen the state's influence on Capitol Hill by putting at risk a number of California lawmakers who, by virtue of their seniority, have gained leadership positions.

The districts of high-profile Latinos -- Democrats [Xavier Becerra](#) and [Lucille Roybal-Allard](#), both of Los Angeles, [Linda Sanchez](#) of Lakewood and Grace Napolitano of Norwalk -- also undergo significant change under the proposed maps, possibly forcing the lawmakers to play what redistricting expert Bruce Cain of UC Berkeley said would be a game of political musical chairs. Rep. [Loretta Sanchez](#) (D-Garden Grove) also faces the prospect of running in a less friendly, though still winnable, district.