

Special Election November 2025: Redistricting and the Consequences for Asian American Voters

ASIAN AMERICAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER POLICY INITIATIVE

Executive Summary

In November, Californians will go to the polls in a special election to decide if a newly redrawn state congressional district map will be adopted for the 2026, 2028 and 2030 elections. This report provides an analysis of the proposed congressional district map, focusing on the possible consequences for Asian American voters

This analysis finds:

- The proposed map does not dramatically change districts for most Asian American voters across the state.
- The proposed map likely will increase Asian American voting power since it will create 5 congressional districts where Asian Americans make up the largest racial group of eligible voters, two of which will hold near Asian American majorities.

Background: What are We Voting for in the November 2025 Special Election?

Redistricting is the process where voters and land areas are assigned to a congressional district. Typically, in California, an Independent Redistricting Commission made up of California residents decides the map of how congressional district lines are drawn. The most recent redistricting occurred in 2021 and the next cycle was to be in 2031. But in November, California voters will decide if there will be a new congressional district map temporarily used for the 2026, 2028 and 2030 elections and then returning back to an Independent Redistricting Commission in 2031. Proponents of the new map include Governor Gavin Newsom and other Democrats, and opponents of the new map include former Republican Speaker Kevin McCarthy and other Republicans.

For the November special election, voters will take a position on **Proposition 50**: a **YES** vote will implement the proposed map temporarily until 2031, while a **NO** vote will retain the original map drawn by the Independent Redistricting Committee.

To help voters prepare for the special election in November, this report shares an analysis comparing how Asian American voters will likely be affected if the proposed map would be temporary implemented until 2031. The intent is not to endorse either position but rather provide information for voters about the possible effects of the proposed maps.

Similarities Between Current and Proposed Map

We find many similarities between the Current and Proposed Map. Table 1 compares the top 10 districts with the largest Asian American citizen voting age population (CVAP) in the Current Map (implemented by the Independent Redistricting Commission in 2021) and in the Proposed Map (to be implemented if voters approve the November special election).

The Current Map created 10 congressional districts with a population makeup of 20% or more Asian American CVAP. Districts with the largest Asian American CVAP were largely in the Bay Area, with CD 17 (D-Khanna) being comprised of a near majority of Asian Americans.

In the Proposed Map, there continues to be 10 districts with a population makeup of more than 20% Asian American CVAP. Overall, the Proposed Map mainly increased the share of Asian American voters of those existing districts that already had large Asian American populations. The most apparent change made in the Proposed Map was the increase in the share of Asian American CVAP in CD 47 (D-Min) in Orange County increasing the share of Asian American CVAP from 19.3% to 25.3%. In contrast, the share of Asian American CVAP in CD 7 (D-Matsui) in Sacramento dropped to 19.4% from 21.1%.

Table 1: Congressional Districts with Largest Asian American CVAP: Comparison of Current and Proposed Map

District	Representative	% Asian American CVAP in Current Map	% Asian American CVAP in Proposed Map	Difference
17	Khanna	46.6%	48.1%	+1.5
45	Tran	36.9%	40.8%	+4.0
15	Mullin	36.8%	38.5%	+1.7
28	Chu	35.3%	35.0%	-0.3
14	Swalwell	31.9%	37.6%	+5.7
11	Pelosi	31.6%	33.3%	+1.7
16	Liccardo	25.5%	29.1%	+3.6
12	Simon	21.4%	22.3%	+0.9
7	Matsui	21.1%	19.4%	-1.7
38	Sanchez	21.0%	26.4%	+5.4
47	Min	19.3%	25.3%	+6.1

Data Sources: <https://wedrawthelines.ca.gov/final-maps/>

A review of the maps also shows that several districts that were crafted for the Current Map by the 2021 Independent Redistricting Commission in response to public comment testimony around Asian American communities of interest are relatively or completely unchanged. For example, CA-16 in the Bay Area and CA-28 in the San Gabriel Valley were shared as important communities of interest to members of the public, and these districts are nearly kept the same in geographical terms in the new map. See Appendix A.

Proposed Map Offers New Electoral Advantages to Asian American Voters

Most consequentially, the proposed map increases the total number of districts where Asian Americans represent the largest racial group among the district's eligible voters (see Table 2). In the Current Map, there are 3 districts with Asian Americans as the plurality group in their district. In the Proposed Map there are 5 districts where Asian Americans are the plurality group.

In these districts where Asian Americans represent the largest racial group of voters, their vote can be consequential to deciding the election outcome. The addition of 2 districts with Asian Americans as the plurality group in the Proposed Map offers a distinct electoral advantage for Asian American voters over what now exists in the Current Map.

Note that the public data provided about the Current and Proposed Maps use 2020 Census data to estimate the population. Our analysis tracking data from 2020 to 2023 finds that the Asian American population in the state has grown by 3% in only three years, with certain counties such as Orange County showing even faster growth than the state average. So Asian American pluralities are today likely larger than what is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Districts where Asian Americans are the Largest Racial Group: Comparison of Current vs Proposed

Current Districts by CVAP					
District	Rep	% Asian American	% White	% Latino	% Black
17	Khanna	46.6%	33.0%	15.4%	3.4%
45	Tran	36.9%	35.6%	23.0%	2.9%
28	Chu	35.3%	34.4%	23.7%	5.2%

Proposed Districts by CVAP					
District	Rep	% Asian American	% White	% Latino	% Black
17	Khanna	48.1%	30.6%	16.3%	3.2%
45	Tran	40.8%	26.4%	28.3%	2.9%
15	Mullin	38.5%	35.2%	20.6%	3.5%
14	Swalwell	37.6%	32.7%	20.2%	6.6%
28	Chu	35.0%	32.5%	25.8%	5.5%

Data Sources:
<https://aelc.assembly.ca.gov/proposed-congressional-map>

Districts with Significant Net Gain or Loss of Asian American Eligible Voters

Some districts in the Proposed Map were more dramatically changed from the current lines resulting in major changes for some voters being either moved into a new district with a new representative and out of their current one. Table 3 lists proposed districts that will have the largest net gain of Asian American eligible voters (districts where the most Asian Americans were moved into the district) and which had the largest net loss (districts where the most Asian American eligible voters were moved out of the district).

Our analysis generally finds that those congressional districts which saw the most competitive races in the last 2024 election are districts that the Proposed Map most dramatically changes for Asian American voters. For example, in Orange County, CD 47 (D-Min) had the largest net gain of Asian American voters. In the 2024 election, this district was decided by a little over 10,000 votes. The proposed CD47 will get a net gain of over 33,000 eligible Asian American voters and will make Asian Americans a critical voting bloc in this district. On the other hand, CD 40 (R-Kim) also in Orange County will be drawn with a sizable net loss of Asian American eligible voters.

Table 3: Proposed Districts that Result in the Largest Net Gain or Loss of Asian American Eligible Voters

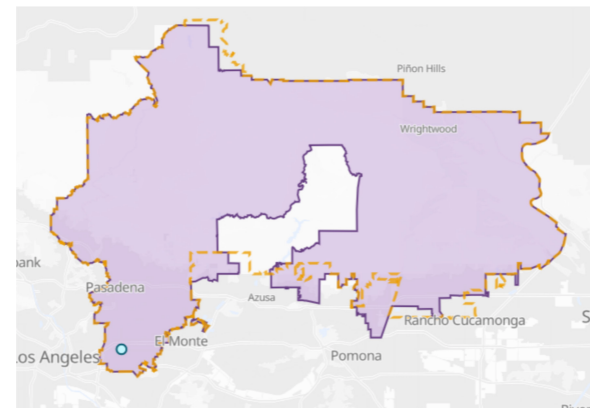
Proposed Districts with Largest Net GAIN of Asian American CVAP			Proposed Districts with Largest Net LOSS of Asian American CVAP		
District	Rep	Net Gain of Asian Americans	District	Rep	Net Loss of Asian Americans
47	Min	33,003	51	Jacobs	-31,923
49	Levin	29,834	40	Kim	-29,676
9	Harder	28,309	44	Barragan	-9,157
50	Peters	26,585	52	Vargas	-5,645
42	Garcia	26,271	1	LaMalfa	-4,143
3	Kiley	20,579	28	Chu	-1,563
14	Swalwell	20,461	18	Lofgren	-99

Data Sources:
<https://wedrawthelines.ca.gov/final-maps/>

Appendix A: Comparison of Current District Lines and Proposed District Lines

Voters can check how their districts may be changed with the Proposed Map at the website:
<https://calmatters.org/politics/2025/08/find-out-if-your-vote-could-be-affected-by-newsoms-redistricting-plans/>

Here is an example of CD 28 (D-Chu) provided by Cal Matters. The purple lines represent the Current Map district lines and the orange lines represent the Proposed Map district lines. Neighborhoods with large Asian American residents remain in the same district.



Source:
<https://calmatters.org/politics/2025/08/find-out-if-your-vote-could-be-affected-by-newsoms-redistricting-plans/>