



For more information about Prison-Based Gerrymandering, see our website and weekly newsletter at <http://www.prisonersofthecensus.org>

Prison-based Gerrymandering in Illinois

The U.S. Census Bureau counts incarcerated people where they are confined not where they are from. Using these counts to draw legislative districts violates Illinois state law and makes democracy suffer.

The Prisons

- Every prison built since 1941 is more than 100 miles away from Chicago.
- The average distance from Chicago to a prison is more than 200 miles.

The People

- 60% of prisoners come from Cook County (containing Chicago).
- Virtually all (90%) of Illinois' prisoners are incarcerated downstate.
- In 2000, Cook County suffered a net loss of 26,304 people to the Census Bureau's prison miscount.

The Districts

- 60% of prisoners come from Cook County (containing Chicago)
- 65% of the state's prisoners are Black, but 95% of the state's prison cells are located in House districts that are disproportionately White.
- The 91st House District, represented by Michael K. Smith (D), contains 3,576 prisoners – more than any other Illinois House district.
- Of the 105,248 residents of District 91, 3.1% are incarcerated and barred by law from voting for or against Representative Smith.
- There are 11 House districts where at least 2% of each district's population is incarcerated.
- 25% of the "residents" in Lee County's 4th district are actually people incarcerated at the Dixon Correctional Center, giving each group of 75 residents of this district the same voting power as 100 residents in the other districts.

In 2000, the Census Bureau counted **26,304 Chicago residents** in downstate prison cells.



What will Illinois do about it in 2010?

Not just unfair, prison-based gerrymandering flouts the law:

- The U.S. Supreme Court requires districts to be based on equal numbers of people, giving all residents the same access to government, yet some districts are being padded with large numbers of non-resident prisoners.
- The Illinois courts have explicitly held that "a person confined in prison under the judgment and sentence of a court does not thereby change his residence" *County of Franklin v. County of Henry*, 26 Ill.App. 193 (Ill.App. 2 Dist. 1887).