

Rutgers professor to likely cast deciding vote in redrawing N.J. legislative districts

Published: Friday, March 04, 2011, 6:00 AM Updated: Friday, March 04, 2011, 2:24 PM



By **Matt Friedman/Statehouse Bureau**

TRENTON — With both political parties deadlocked, a Rutgers political science professor respected by Republicans and Democrats will likely cast the deciding vote in how the state redraws its 40 legislative districts.

Since the five Democrat and five Republican members of the New Jersey Apportionment Commission could not meet Thursday's deadline to agree on a new map, state Supreme Court Chief Justice Stuart Rabner appointed public policy professor Alan Rosenthal as the commission's 11th, tie-breaking member.

"I'm honored that the chief justice would choose me," said Rosenthal, 78. "It's an important process and I'm privileged to be part of it."

Rosenthal has spent his career studying state legislatures and has written several books, most recently "Engines of Democracy: Politics and Policymaking in State Legislatures." The Princeton resident chairs the legislative ethics committee and served twice as the tie-breaking member of the U.S. House redistricting commission, in 1992 and 2001.

Gov. Chris Christie praised Rosenthal on Thursday, saying he has "great respect for him."

Rosenthal was selected after both parties included him among their recommendations of potential tie-breakers to Rabner.

Assemblyman John Wisniewski (D-Middlesex), who leads the Democrats' redistricting team, said that "attests to his well-earned reputation of exceeding fairness and knowledge in this area."

With Rosenthal now on board, the commission has one more month to redraw the state's legislative districts — a once-in-a-decade process. Most legislative districts in New Jersey tend to lean towards one political party, so the map's configuration has a large influence on which party will control both houses of the Legislature.

A process to redraw the state's U.S. House districts will begin later this year.

Previous coverage:

- **N.J. redistricting commission to request tie-breaking 11th member**
- **N.J. redistricting panel member refuses to attend public meetings until he has an official role**



Jennifer Hulshizer/For The Star-Ledger

Alan Rosenthal, professor of public policy at the Eagleton Institute at Rutgers University is expected to be appointed the 11th, tie-breaking member of the legislative redistricting commission.

- **With release of census data, N.J. Legislature has 60 days to come up with redistricting map**
- **N.J. Democrats ask Republicans to disclose donors to organization funding redistricting efforts**
- **N.J. redistricting could shift legislative seat toward southern part of state**
- **N.J. legislative redistricting commission starts process that will redraw congressional lines**
- **N.J. Democrats, Republicans agree on Rutgers professor as 11th member of redistricting commission**

© 2011 NJ.com. All rights reserved.