



Press Release

For Immediate Release

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Azavea Releases Study on Compactness of Redistricted U.S. Congressional Districts

White paper documents least compact U.S. Congressional districts, and examines possible correlations of the composition of election commissions to average district compactness scores.

Philadelphia, PA, October 23, 2012 – [Azavea](http://www.azavea.com), a geospatial analysis (GIS) software development company announces the release “Redraw the Map on Redistricting 2012 – Addendum”, a new study that examines how the most recent round of redistricting has affected the geometry and geography of legislative districts in the United States. The white paper is available for download at: <http://www.azavea.com/redistricting-white-papers>

In 2006, Azavea released its first white paper related to redistricting and gerrymandering in the United States. In anticipation of the 2010 Census, Azavea released a completely revised white paper in 2010. With the latest round of Congressional redistricting now complete, Azavea set out to measure Congressional districts compactness again and assess how the results from this latest round of redistricting has affected legislative district nationwide. Using four different measure of compactness, the new study reveals that NC-12, FL-05, MD-03, OH-09, and TX-35 are among the least compact districts in the nation. Compactness is an important indicator of gerrymandering. While poor compactness scores do not prove that gerrymandering has occurred, it is an important quantitative indicator of the practice.

In this new study, Azavea also examined the conditions under which redistricting processes occurred, including types of redistricting authority - a state legislature, a legislative commission, an independent commission, or a court - as well as the party controlling the process. Their conclusion is that districts drawn by independent commissions appear to be more compact, even in those states where requirements under the Voting Rights Act (VRA) result in some convoluted districts.



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"We had tremendous positive feedback on our previous white papers, but with a completely new congressional district plan 2012 and many changes to the redistricting process in California, Florida and other states, we wanted to take a look at how these changes are affecting the quality of the resulting district plans," said Robert Cheetham, Founder and CEO of Azavea. "The good news here is that changes to the redistricting process are having a significant, positive impact on the compactness and legibility of legislative districts."

Azavea is no stranger to political and redistricting projects. In addition to its previous white papers, the firm released the "Redistricting The Nation" website (<http://www.redistrictingthenation.com>) in 2009 to provide the public with better information about the legislative redistricting process and tools that support and encourage fair representation and competitive elections. Azavea is planning to update all district information contain on the website after the November 2012 election. In August 2011, it also launched FixPhillyDistricts.com (<https://www.fixphillydistricts.com/>), the first online public redistricting contest in Philadelphia. The system, which enabled the public to automatically calculate contiguity, compactness, and population statistics on-the-fly as users built their plans, was built with award-winning DistrictBuilder platform (<http://www.azavea.com/districtbuilder>), the open source software they developed in collaboration with leading redistricting experts at the Public Mapping Project (<http://www.publicmapping.org/>).

About Azavea - Azavea is an award-winning geospatial analysis (GIS) software development firm specializing in the creation of location-based web and mobile software as well as geospatial analysis services. Azavea is a [certified B Corporation](http://www.azavea.com) that applies geographic data and technology to promote the emergence of more dynamic, vibrant, and sustainable communities while advancing the state-of-the-art through research. Each of Azavea's projects, products and pro bono engagements showcases this commitment. Find out more at <http://www.azavea.com>.

If you would like more information about Azavea or to schedule an interview with Robert Cheetham, Azavea CEO and President, please contact Amy Trahey at (215) 558 – 6184 or e-mail atrahey@azavea.com.

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