



## The Nevada Policy Research Institute

For Immediate Release  
February 24, 2011

Contact Victor Joecks  
(702) 222-0642

### **NPRI vice president: Nevada lawmakers should not gerrymander state's district lines**

LAS VEGAS — In response to the release today of U.S. Census Bureau data on Nevada's population, Steven Miller, the Nevada Policy Research Institute's vice president for policy, offered the following comments:

Over the past 10 years, Nevada has experienced both a substantial growth and shift in population. As lawmakers receive this U.S. Census data and begin to draw new legislative and congressional districts, they should make every effort to ensure equal representation for Nevada's voters.

This means that lawmakers' first priority should be to create districts that are roughly equal in population and in the number of registered voters. Other important factors should include the districts' compactness and the extent to which they reflect naturally existing geographic areas and communities.

In 2000, Senate Republicans and Assembly Democrats conspired to gerrymander Nevada's legislative districts. As a result, only 17 percent of Assembly races and 9 percent of Senate races featured competitive elections over the past decade.

Samuel Issacharoff, a constitutional law professor at New York University, defines an election as competitive if the two leading candidates finish within 10 percentage points of each other. Alternatively, an election is considered a landslide if a candidate wins by more than 10 percentage points.

Said Miller:

Since redistricting is an inherently political process, Nevada's elected officials must be especially transparent in presenting and considering their proposals. Uncompetitive,

gerrymandered districts ultimately discourage debate, while competitive races force candidates to engage in meaningful dialogue on the issues important to Nevada's citizens.

Several states around the country, including Arizona and California, have established bi-partisan commissions to draw their districts. Nevada policymakers should observe this alternative approach over the next decade and seriously consider it for implementation in the Silver State.

**More information:**

Nevada's 2010 Census Data: <http://2010.census.gov/2010census/data/>

###

The Nevada Policy Research Institute • 3155 E. Patrick Lane, Suite 10, Las Vegas, NV 89120  
Phone: (702) 222-0642 • Fax: (702) 227-0927 • Web site: [www.npri.org](http://www.npri.org)