

Kern County Redistricting Timeline

On Feb. 23, 2018, a U.S. District Court judge ruled in a lawsuit filed by MALDEF that a redistricting plan adopted in 2011 by the Kern County, California Board of Supervisors unlawfully denies Latinos the right to elect candidates of their choice, in violation of Section 2 of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. After negotiations this week, a new map was drawn to remedy the violation. Here is a list of significant dates in the case:

2011: The Kern County Board of Supervisors adopts a new five-district county Supervisorial plan based on 2010 U.S. Census data. The plan contains one district – District 5 – where Latinos constitute a majority of the eligible voters, but divides a politically cohesive Latino community in the northern part of Kern County into two Supervisorial districts, neither one of which has sufficient Latino population to enable Latino voters to elect a candidate of their choice.

April 22, 2016: MALDEF files suit, [*Oscar Luna, Alicia Puentes, Dorothy Velazquez, and Gary Rodriguez v. County of Kern, Kern County Board of Supervisors*](#), in U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California on behalf of Latino plaintiffs against the Kern County Board of Supervisors, for violating Section 2 of the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Sept. 6, 2016: U.S. District Court Judge Dale A. Drozd [rejects](#) Kern County's motion to dismiss the lawsuit.

Dec. 5, 2017: Bench trial presided over by Judge Drozd [begins](#) in U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California in Fresno.

Dec. 19, 2017: Trial concludes after 11 days of testimony. In a [statement](#), MALDEF president and general counsel Thomas A. Saenz says, "From late revelations of testimony from Kern County expert witnesses that damaged the defendants' own defense, to contentions that historical KKK activity in the County was 'morality policing' rather than supremacist fear-mongering, Kern County offered a cynical and disappointing defense in this trial."

Feb. 23, 2018: Judge Drozd [rules](#) that the 2011 redistricting plan unlawfully denies Latinos the right to elect candidates of their choice, in violation of Section 2 of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. He sets a March 6 date for the litigation to proceed to the remedial phase to hear the proposals for adoption of a new lawful plan.

March 6, 2018: Judge Drozd orders a settlement conference for the parties to negotiate a remedy to the unlawful redistricting plan.

March 28, 2018: MALDEF attorneys and plaintiffs in the case meet with Kern County attorneys at a settlement conference before U.S. Magistrate Judge Jennifer L. Thurston in Bakersfield. After hours of negotiations, the parties reach a tentative agreement on a new plan that would draw a second Latino-majority district, pending approval by the Board of Supervisors.

March 30, 2018: Kern County Board of Supervisors votes to approve the new districting plan creating a second Latino-majority district, to be implemented for the 2018 elections. Magistrate Judge Thurston accepts the settlement at an afternoon hearing.