

House panel to look at redistricting plans

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The Louisiana House redistricting committee is scheduled Wednesday to take up differing plans to redraw the chamber's 105 districts based on 2010 U.S. census numbers.

Competing plans are on the committee's agenda: House Bill 1 by House Speaker Jim Tucker, R-Terrytown, and House Bill 35 by House redistricting leader Rick Gallot, D-Ruston.

The big difference between the two is the number of minority legislative districts crafted. Tucker adds two minority districts bringing the number to 29 while Gallot's adds a 30th which would be in Shreveport.

Tucker and Gallot worked behind the scenes all day Tuesday, meeting with lawmakers

seeking adjustments to the proposed new districts.

As discussions began, House Democratic Caucus Chairman Rep. John Bel Edwards said there were three areas of concern in Tucker's House Bill 1: its failure to create a Shreveport minority district; and incumbents thrown into the same districts in northwest and central Louisiana and the New Orleans area.

"It's more partisan because everything the speaker wants to do creates an advantage for Republicans," said Edwards, of Amite.

"The members are kind of on edge," said state Rep. Austin Badon, D-New Orleans. "You seem to have different factions drawing up (district) lines every 10 minutes."