



2013 Citizen of the Year Honoree

Ellen Freidin

*Campaign Chairwoman,
FairDistricts Now, Inc.
FairDistrictsFlorida.org*



A game changer in Florida's 2012 elections, Ellen Freidin was campaign chair of FairDistricts Now, Inc., the organization behind the successful effort to amend the Florida constitution to require more compact legislative and congressional districts. Amendments 5 and 6 were adopted by 63 percent of Florida voters in 2010. The mandates required that lines be drawn without regard to incumbency, political party or other partisan considerations, and that the new districts be contiguous and compact as possible. Similar reform efforts had failed in the past, but Freidin entered into the campaign with broad editorial support and bipartisan backing – successfully recruiting Floridians and national figures from both political parties to ensure that the campaign was not characterized as partisan. As a result of the twin amendments, there were historically high numbers of competitive House races in Florida and the congressional delegation and legislature more closely reflect the preferences of Floridians.

A Miami lawyer and champion of equality for women in the law, Freidin was the first female attorney to be appointed by the Florida Bar to the Eleventh Circuit Judicial Nominating Commission – and the first woman to chair that group. She served with distinction on Florida's Constitutional Revision Commission, where she spearheaded the successful effort to secure equal rights for women in the Florida Constitution. Freidin was selected as a Bob Graham Center Citizen of the Year award honoree for her distinguished legal career and commitment to electoral fairness.
