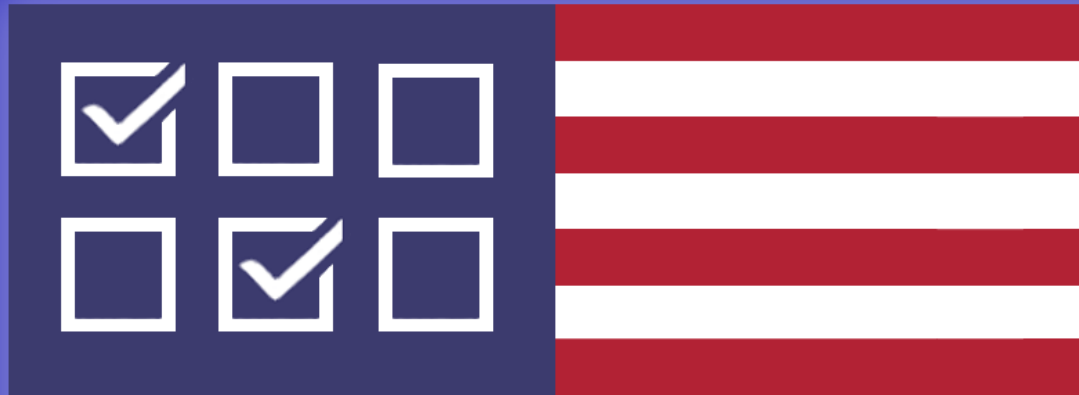


Gerrymandering 2025

The Threat to Our Democracy



**REFORM
ELECTIONS
NOW**

Breaking the partisan gridlock

Gerrymandering is as old as the Republic

- Gerrymandering is the drawing of political boundaries to specifically favor the dominant party and marginalize everyone else.
- Gerrymandering is as old as the Republic. The process was named after Elbridge Gerry, Governor of Massachusetts and 5th Vice President, who drew this district near Boston to look like a salamander- hence Gerry Mander.
- Yet even before Gerry, there were famous instances of "Gerrymandering."
- The most notable occurred when Patrick Henry- "Give me Liberty or Give me death," created a Gerrymander to keep James Madison, who wanted to add the Bill of Rights to the Constitution, out of Congress.
- Henry created a district of anti-Federalists in which he placed Madison's home. Then, he recruited James Monroe to run against Madison.
- Fortunately for the U.S. and the Bill of Rights, Madison won the election by 336 votes. This was the only Congressional election in which two future Presidents ran against each other.



Gerrymandering: The Lethal Weapon of 2025

- People live with like minded people, which is why we have so few competitive elections, but Gerrymandering makes the situation much worse.
- Gerrymandering is the drawing of political boundaries to favor the dominant party and marginalize everyone else.
- Historically, states have drawn Congressional and Legislative districts every 10 years after the census, reallocating seats based on changes in population.
- However, this year, Republican states, prodded by President Trump, are conducting or threatening to conduct mid-cycle redistricting to gain more seats in the next Congress.
- Some states, that currently have independent commissions may switch back to allowing their legislators to draw districts, so they too can Gerrymander.
- If these efforts succeed, we could be entering a period where politicians from the dominant party in each state, redistrict after every election to maximize their representation and minimize that of their opponents.
- This could lead to a world in which competitive elections virtually disappear.

End of One-Person-One-Vote

Our Democracy is based on the practice of One Person-One Vote, but Gerrymandering can destroy that practice.

In legislative elections in Michigan, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina in 2018, **Democrats won the popular vote, but Republicans won a majority of the seats.**

	Votes		Seats	
	Rep.	Dem.	Rep.	Dem.
• Michigan	1,935,174	2,128,281	58	52
• Wisconsin	1,103,505	1,306,878	63	36
• Pennsylvania	2,075,093	2,568,968	110	93
• North Carolina	1,779,584	1,866,432	65	55

- In Pennsylvania, Democrats won 55.3% to 44.6%, yet Republicans won 17 more seats.
- In North Carolina and Michigan, Democrats won the popular vote by healthy margins but received a minority of the seats.

Gerrymandering enabled Republicans to control legislatures with a minority of the vote.

*We are using 2018 numbers because some 2020 results are not yet posted in an easy way to analyze.

*One
Person
One Vote:
Not In
Wisconsin*

Gerrymandering distorted elections in Wisconsin.

- In State Assembly elections, Democrats won the popular vote 53% to 44.8%, which should have given them a comfortable majority.
- Instead, Republicans won 63 seats while Democrats won only 36.
- Republicans packed Democrats into a small number of districts.
- In 36 wins, Democrats only faced competition in 6, and one was a landslide.
- **Democrat's average margin of victory was 90.2%. Republican's average margin of victory was 28%.**
- Democrats won 31 seats by over 80%. Republicans won 6.
- If one party wins by 28% and the other wins by 90%, it is easy to win the popular vote and lose almost 2/3 of the sets.
- With this type of Gerrymandering, Republicans ensured that there were few meaningful elections.

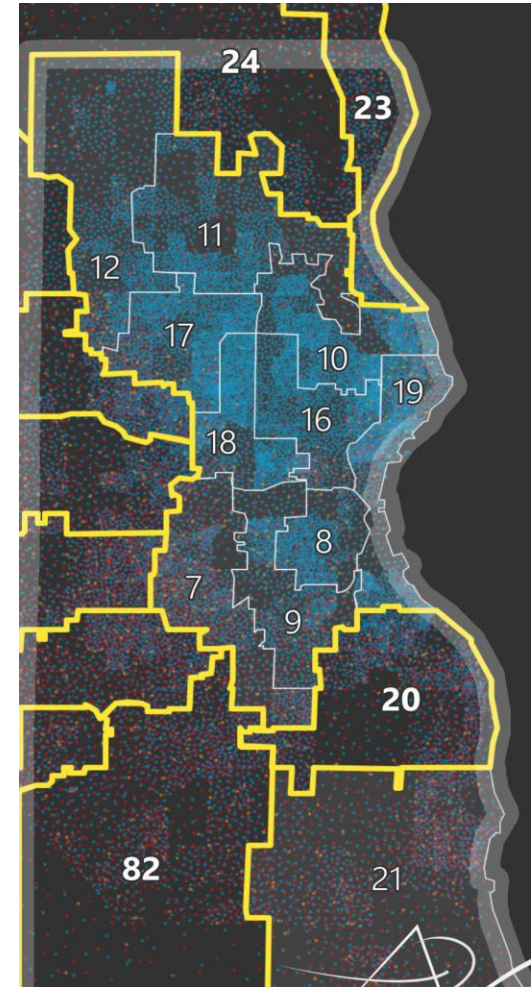
Cracking in Wisconsin

To win almost 2/3 of the seats while the Democrats won 18.3% more votes, Republicans used packing and cracking.

- **Packing is the art of putting all members of the other party in one district.**
- **Cracking is the art of splitting them apart to minimize their representation.**

Republicans cracked the city of Milwaukee into pieces. Democratic residents were cracked into Republican suburban districts 13, 14, 15, 20, 22, 23, 24, 82, 83, and 84. Republicans won 9 of these 10 seats. *

By cracking Milwaukee into 10 districts, Republicans ignored the rules of maintaining county and other political subdivisions that are supposed to apply in drawing districts.



Gerrymandering in Texas

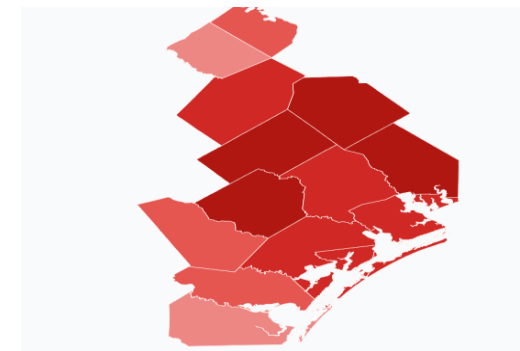
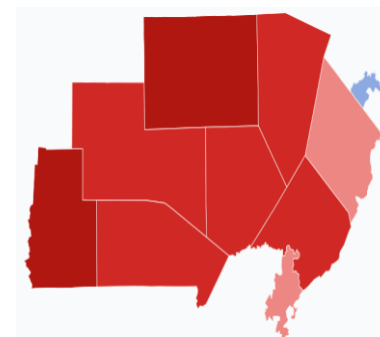
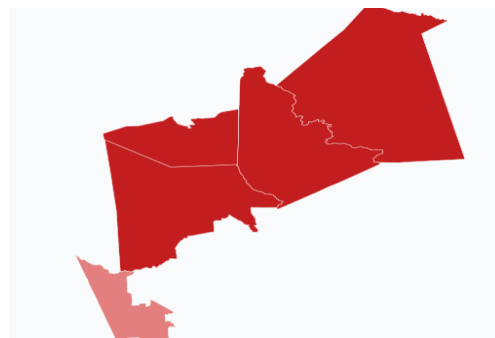
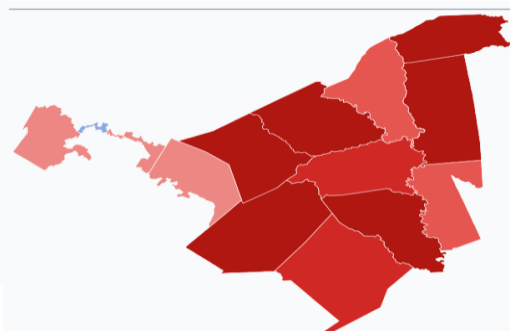
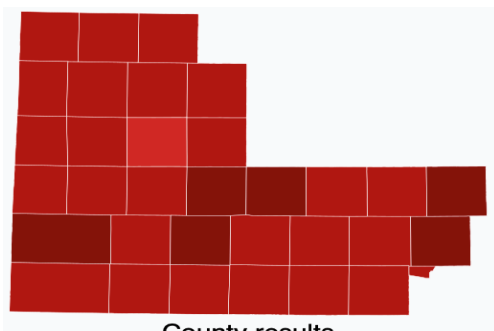
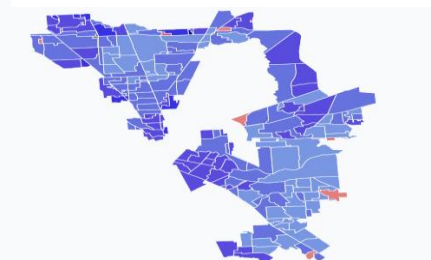
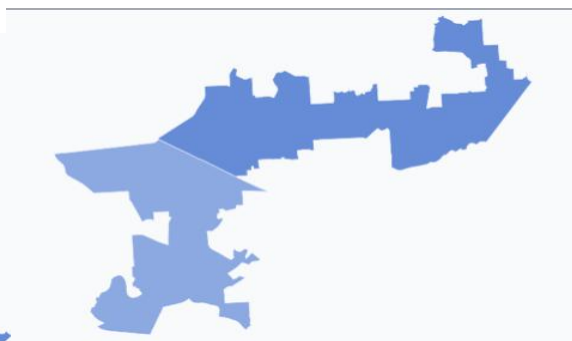
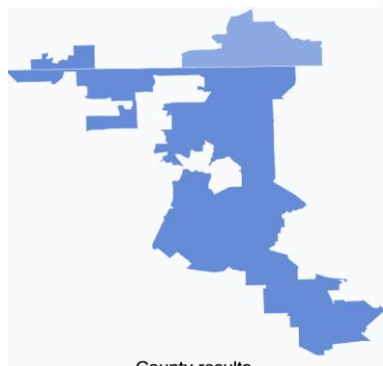
In the 2020 Congressional elections, the average margin in Texas was 27.4 percentage points.

- In 36 districts, 4 had margins under 5, 10 had margins under 10, and 15 had margins under 15 percentage points.
- This was not enough for Republicans, who worried about Democrats gaining ground, so after the 2020 census, when Texas gained 2 seats, Republicans gerrymandered.
- In 2022, margins jumped from 27.4 to 43.6 percentage points.
- Competitive elections dropped from 15 to 3, while elections with no competition went from 0 to 6.
- With Gerrymandering, the Republicans in Texas made elections uncompetitive.

Congress Texas 2020		Congress Texas 2022	
District	Margin	District	Margin
1	45.2%	1	100.0%
2	12.8%	2	31.5%
3	12.2%	3	24.9%
4	52.6%	4	36.9%
5	26.1%	5	29.8%
6	8.8%	6	32.8%
7	3.3%	7	24.4%
8	47.0%	8	36.4%
9	53.8%	9	100.0%
10	7.1%	10	29.4%
11	61.4%	11	100.0%
12	30.7%	12	27.0%
13	60.9%	13	100.0%
14	23.3%	14	37.4%
15	2.9%	15	14.2%
16	29.4%	16	19.0%
17	14.9%	17	32.8%
18	47.8%	18	39.0%
19	51.9%	19	80.7%
20	31.6%	20	100.0%
21	6.6%	21	25.3%
22	6.9%	22	24.2%
23	4.0%	23	24.6%
24	1.3%	24	30.6%
25	13.8%	25	99.4%
26	23.4%	26	26.4%
27	28.1%	27	32.0%
28	19.3%	28	5.4%
29	43.7%	29	30.4%
30	59.1%	30	84.9%
31	9.1%	31	29.0%
32	6.0%	32	23.4%
33	41.7%	33	37.4%
34	13.6%	34	2.6%
35	35.4%	35	34.8%
36	49.4%	36	38.8%
		37	58.0%
		38	24.3%
Average	27.4%		43.6%

Republicans Drew These Districts in Texas

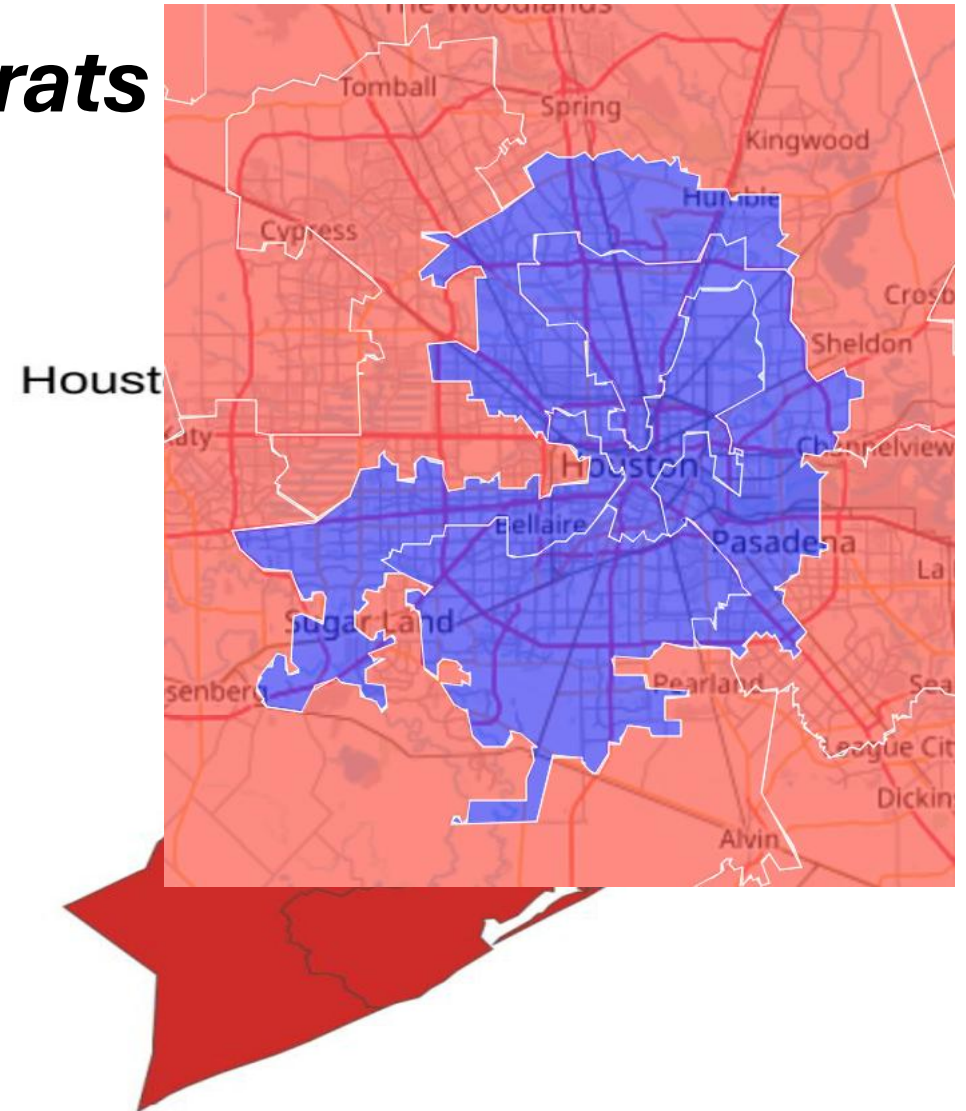
Political districts are supposed to be compact, contiguous, and preserve political boundaries. Do these districts follow the rules, Which of these districts are Republican, and which are Democratic?



Where to Find Democrats

Does anyone want to guess where the Democrats live in Houston?

- The blue captures 4 Democratic districts
District #9 looks like a baby in the womb and captures most of the Democrats in the metro area.
- Democrats ran unopposed in #9.
- Republicans won all the surrounding districts.



Gerrymandering Hurts Turnout in Texas

With Gerrymandering reducing competitive elections, turnout in Texas dropped sharply.

- In 2018, turnout was 53.0%. In 2022, after redistricting, it was 45.8%, a decline of 13.5%.
- With all this Gerrymandering, you might have thought Republicans would be satisfied, but President Trump was not.* He urged Texas Governor Abbott to redistrict again and take a “ruthless” approach so Republicans could gain 5 more seats. As a result, Abbott called a special session of the Legislature to redraw the maps.
- If you look at the table on slide 6, you will see there were only 2 competitive elections, districts #28 and #34. Both were won by Democrats. It would be logical to presume the Republicans would redraw these districts by shifting enough Republicans to pick up these two seats. Obtaining the other three takes real creativity in map drawing.
- The attempt in Texas to do a midterm redistricting for partisan reasons only demonstrates how politicized this process has become.

* (“White House Pushes Texas to Redistrict.” “Abbott asks Lawmakers to Redraw Texas’ Congressional Maps in Special Session,” Goodman & Goldmacher N.Y. Times, 7/9/2025.)

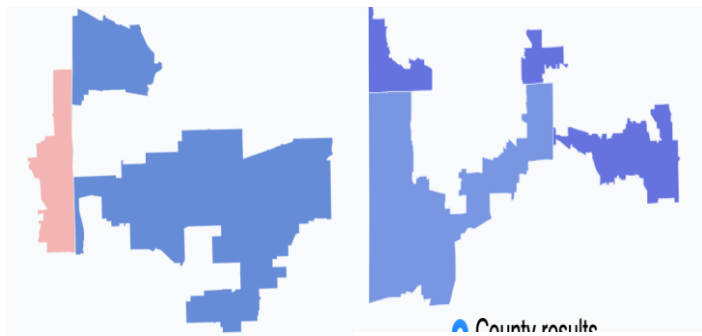
Democrats Drew These in Illinois

While Republicans control more states, and some Democratic states use independent commissions, Democrats are also good at Gerrymandering,

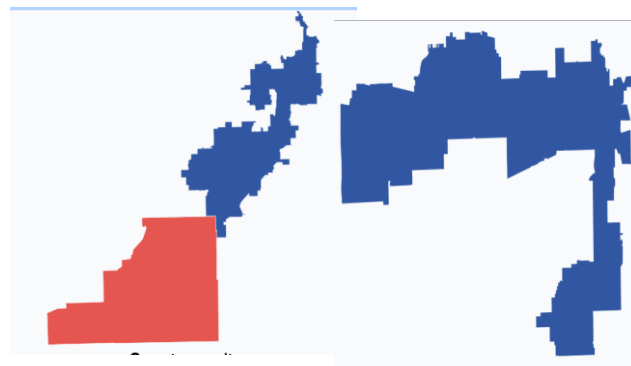
In Illinois, Democrats wanted to create districts for their African American, Latino, and White constituents, while minimizing Republican seats.

Around Chicago, they drew districts for Hispanics, Blacks, and White.

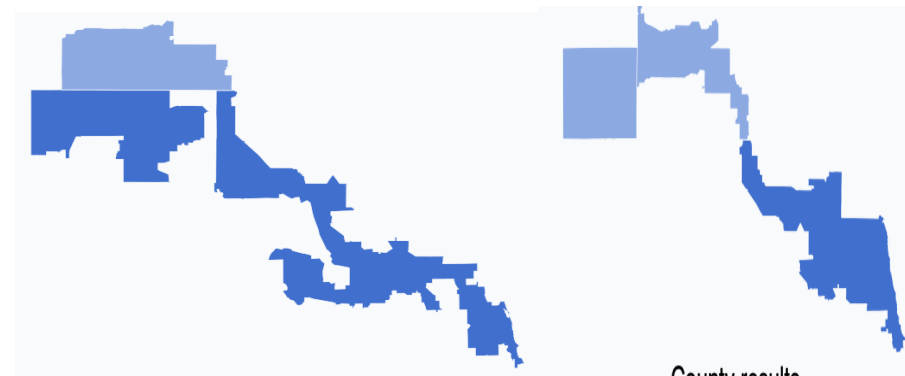
Districts for Hispanics



Districts For Blacks



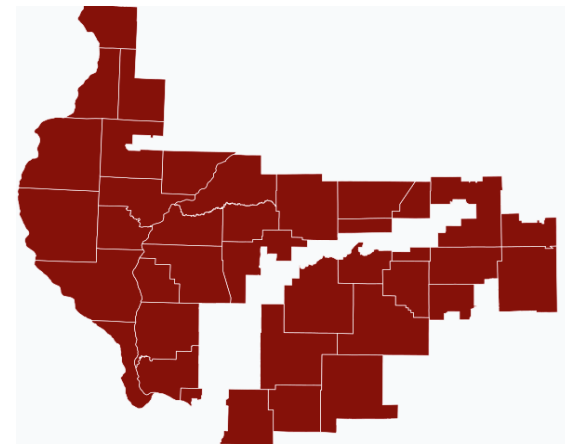
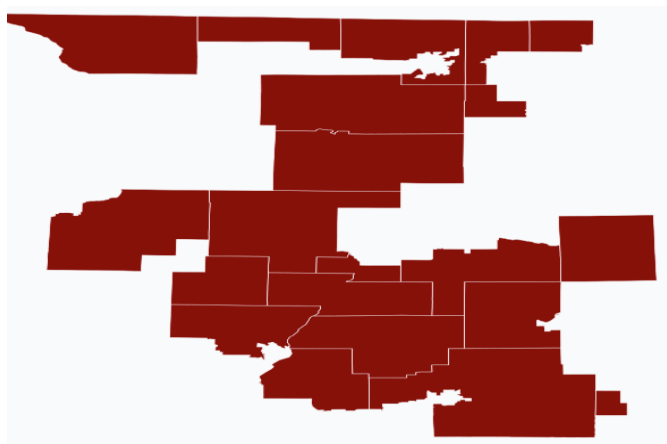
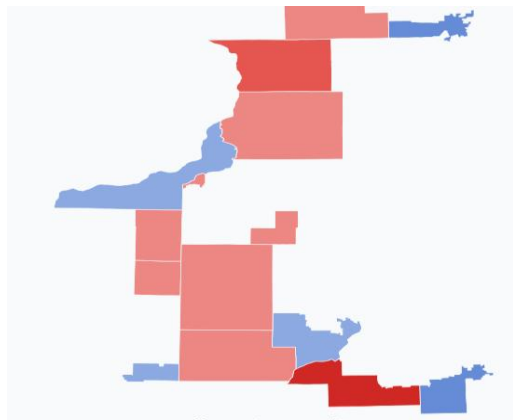
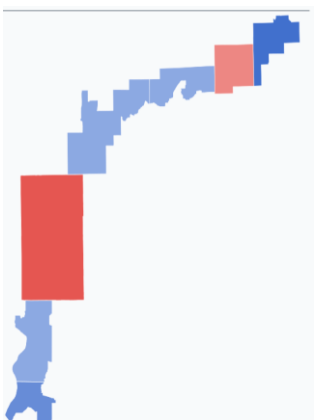
Districts for Whites



Downstate Illinois- Democrats Really Shined

Then, in downstate Illinois, they carved out the two districts on the left for themselves and the two districts on the right in which Republicans could run unopposed.

- Democratic votes in Congressional elections dropped from 57% in 2022 to 52.8% in 2024, meaning they should have lost seats.
- But with their wonderful map drawing skills, Democrats went from a Congressional margin of 13-5 in 2020 to 14-3 in 2024.
- By cramming all the Republicans together, Democrats gained seats while losing votes.
- It is very difficult to see the Democrats drawing more polarized districts in Illinois.



Hijacking in Illinois

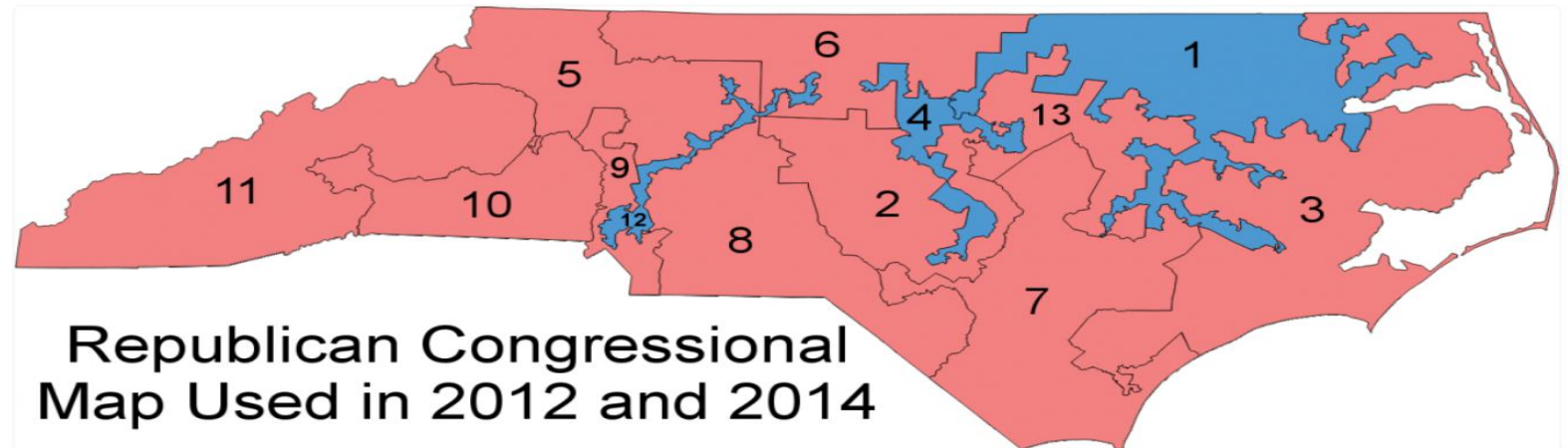
Hijacking is the term for forcing incumbents to run against each other. This happened to Adam Kinzinger in two consecutive election cycles

- In 2010, Kinzinger defeated a Democratic incumbent in district 11.
- In 2012, Democrats eliminated his seat. Kinzinger could run against Jesse Jackson Jr. in a strong Democratic district or against a conservative Republican incumbent. Kinzinger picked the Republican and won.
- In 2020, Kinzinger became the first Republican to support the impeachment of Donald Trump and joined the January 6 commission. Republicans threw him out of their Congressional caucus.
- To thank Kinzinger for his stance against Trump, the Democrats again Gerrymandered him out of his district.
- Kinzinger retired and said, *“Ten years ago, the Democrats in Illinois... threw me in with an incumbent Republican, and they did it again -- But when Democrats do say they want Republican partners ..., and then they specifically target me, it makes you wonder.”***

So here was a moderate Congressman that stood up for moral issues. Republicans censured him, and Democrats hijacked him into retirement.

Republicans in North Carolina can Really Draw Maps

- In 2010, Democrats won 7 of the 13 Congressional seats in North Carolina.
- In 2012, Republicans redistricted. Democrats won the popular vote, 50.6%-48.75%, but Republicans won 9 seats to 4 for the Democrats.
- How do you win twice the seats with less votes? It takes great map drawing skills.
- Look how the map seeks out Democrats.
- One Democrat said of the Gerrymandering in #12, “if you drove down the interstate with the doors open, you would kill half the people in the district.”*



*Atlas Obscura, North Carolina's 12th district.

Gerrymandering in Georgia

In 2024 Georgia State Senate Elections, there was no competition in 33 of the 55 districts. Excluding one district, where one of the candidates died, the average margins were 71.9 percentage points. Only 1 election had margins under 10%. Incumbents ran in 51 of the 55 districts. All were reelected. Gerrymandering clearly works in Georgia.

- Georgia has 14 Congressional districts. Blacks have a near majority in 4, and a much smaller percentage in the rest. In 4 districts, they have less than 12% of the population.
- 3 members of the Georgia congressional delegation rank in the bottom 21 in terms of bipartisanship. None rank in the top 60.*
- If these districts were more balanced would minorities and whites work together to find more moderate representatives?

District	Georgia			
	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian*
1	57.6%	27.5%	7.8%	
2	39.9%	49.0%	5.9%	
3	64.4%	22.6%	6.3%	
4	19.7%	47.5%	19.2%	9.6%
5	31.0%	49.8%	9.9%	5.1%
6	54.8%	18.2%	11.2%	11.6%
7	63.7%	7.7%	2.0%	13.5%
8	57.9%	29.7%	7.2%	
9	60.9%	11.9%	16.1%	6.8%
10	62.5%	23.3%	7.6%	
11	66.7%	11.4%	12.1%	
12	52.1%	36.1%	5.6%	
13	24.6%	49.6%	14.5%	
14	70.0%	11.9%	11.9%	
State Avg.	50.1%	30.6%	10.5%	

*Lugar Center 2023 Rankings

Take the Salt out of the Lake

Districting is supposed to respect county and other political subdivisions, but in Utah, Republicans decided to carve up their largest city.

- In 2018, Utah voters passed a proposition calling for an independent commission to draw districts.
- Since it didn't suit their needs, state legislators removed the law's prohibition on partisan gerrymandering,
- Then, they went after Utah # 4, centered in Salt Lake City.
- From 2012 to 2020, Democrats won twice. To avoid Democrats winning in the future, they cracked Salt Lake City into 4 districts and eliminated the only competitive district in Utah.
- On August 25, 2025, the Courts in Utah ruled this Gerrymandering was illegal and the districts had to be redrawn.



Music City Sings the Blues-Portland Loses Roses

The same patterns occurred in Tennessee and Oregon.

- In 2020, Tennessee had 2 Democratic Congresspersons, one from Nashville and one from Memphis.
- After the 2020 census, the Republicans decided to eliminate the Nashville district by dividing it into three other districts. By cracking Nashville into 3 districts, Republicans reduced the number of Democratic seats from 2 to 1.



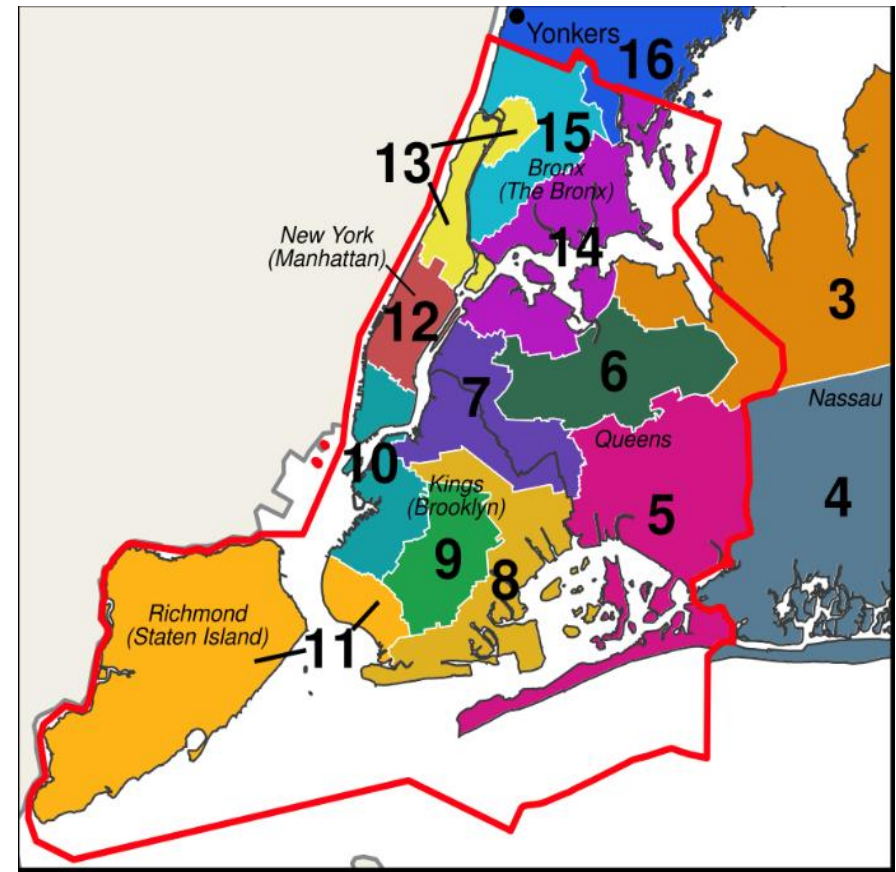
Democrats,, however, play the same games. In 2022, they split Portland and its suburbs into 4 districts to help these districts stay Democratic.

Every Group has its District

Gerrymandering can also limit competition by putting people with similar ethnic backgrounds in the same districts.

Look at New York City's Congressional districts.

- #7, 13, 14, & 15 have Latino Congresspersons. In 3, Latinos are the largest ethnic group. In the fourth, they are tied.
- #6 is dominated by Asians and has an Asian American Congresswoman.
- #11 covers white areas in and has a white Republican Congresswoman.
- In #5, 8, and 9, Blacks are the largest group, and all three have Black Congresspersons.
- #10 & 12- are white and Democratic, so they have white Congressman.
- City and county lines are supposed to be maintained in drawing districts, but #11, #10, #14, #3, and #16 all overlap counties.



Gerrymandering Gets Rid of Reps Who Don't Toe the Party Line

When parties Gerrymander, the first to go are often party members who do not toe the line. Look what happened to moderate Republicans who voted to impeach Trump in 2022.

- In Ohio, the Chairman of the Republican party said, Anthony Gonzalez had “betrayed his constituents.” Gonzalez was gerrymandered into another Republican district. He had no chance to win and retired..
- In N.Y., Democrats Gerrymandered John Katko into a different district to run against a MAGA Republican. He too retired.
- In Illinois, Democrats Gerrymandered Adam Kinsinger out of his district. He too retired.
- In Michigan, Fred Upton was also gerrymandered into a district to run against another Republican. He retired.
- Katko, Gonzalez, Kinsinger, and Upton ranked as the #3, #14, #34, and #36 most bipartisan members of Congress.* We should want politicians that are willing to work together, but all 4 were Gerrymandered into retirement. Gerrymandering these moderates ensures a lack of bipartisanship.

The reality is simple– party leaders first Gerrymander anyone that opposes their interests.

Gerrymandering also Protects Incumbents

Gerrymandering can be also used to protect incumbents from up-and-coming members of their own party.

- In 2000, a young candidate ran against a long-term incumbent for N.Y.'s 57th Assembly district. The young candidate received 41% of the vote. He was running again in 2002 and had a good chance of winning.
- Democrats decided they did not want the young candidate to run, so they moved his home and a few others into a neighboring district.
- The young candidate was forced to end his campaign.
- The candidate Democrats gerrymandered out of running for State Senate is named Hakeem Jeffries.
- In response to the Gerrymandering, Jeffries stated, ***“Politics can be pretty rough, but that move was gangster!”***

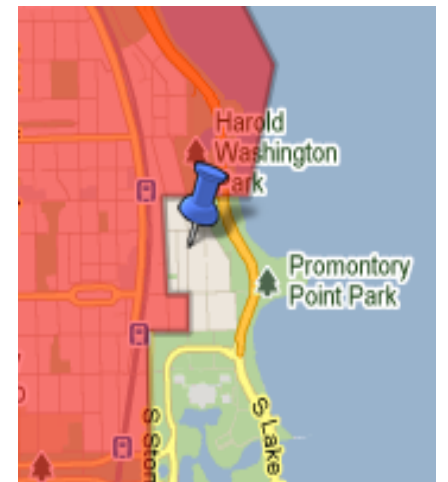


Gerrymandering: Springboard to the Presidency

Also In 2000, a young Democratic State Senator decided to Gerrymander himself to prepare for the future.

- The young State Senator was trounced 2 to 1 by an incumbent Congressman Bobby Rush in a Primary in 2000.
- For 2002, he decided he needed a different election district that could help him build his constituency. He wanted a district that was wealthier so he could attract donors, whiter and more moderate, so he could run as a more middle of the road politician.
- His home was not far from the border of the next district, so he worked to have a few blocks of houses, including his own, moved to the adjoining district.
- The Congressman, who had defeated him, was reelected for the next 20 years, but
- The State Senator was able to build a solid constituency in his new district that helped him win reelection and served to benefit his career.
- His name was Barak Obama.

As you can see from the maps, Obama moved from a largely Black district to a wealthier mixed district along Lake Michigan.



Sex Can Get You Gerrymandered

This is Janele Hyer-Spencer, “a motorcycle riding former beauty queen,* and lawyer, who was a New York State Democratic Assemblywoman from Staten Island until she was defeated in 2011. She then obtained a job with the New York State Education Department.

- Hyer-Spencer was rumored to be having an affair with Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver.
- She was also rumored to be having an affair with Republican minority whip, Dan Burling.
- When it came time for redistricting, Silver decided his party’s top redistricting goal should be to get his sexual rival out of office, because, as he was rumored to have said, “I don’t like sharing my mistress with an F...ing Republican.”
- Silver engineered the drawing of new lines around Burling’s district, so Burling had to run against a popular mayor. Burling retired.**
- Silver then had his mistress all to himself.
- Unfortunately, Silver was later convicted on Federal corruption charges and sent to Otisville Prison. We don’t know how this impacted his sex life.
- Should we be drawing districts to keep a rival away from someone’s mistress rather than to suit the interests of the voters?



*(N.Y. Post 4/16/2016) ** (Two Politicians were sharing the same mistress, Brent Scher, 4/18/2016, The Washington Free Beacon.)

Bespoke Gerrymandering

Gerrymandering can also make you rich.

- Before California moved to a Commission system, Michael Berman, the brother of a Congressman, drew Bespoke districts for his clients.
- He gave his clients exactly the population of voters they wanted. If they were African American, he included African American neighborhoods. Jews received Jewish neighborhoods. Asians Americans got Asian American neighborhoods. Etc.
- In 2000, Democrats paid Berman \$1.3 million, and 30 Congresspersons paid him an additional \$20,000 each to design districts all of them would win– which they did.
- As Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez stated: “\$20,000 is nothing to keep your seat.... If my colleagues are smart, they'll pay.... Those who have refused to pay? God help them.”
*Nothing makes a Congressperson look better than their own Bespoke district.
- If California’s eliminates the Commissions that currently draw districts, there may be a new business opportunity for someone who can draw Bespoke districts.

*(Mother Jones, April Rabkin, Gerrymandering, Sept. 29, 2006

How States Draw Districts

Let us briefly look at how states draw districts and the characteristics those districts are supposed to have.

While every state has its own rules, in 34 states, state legislatures draw their own legislature districts.

- This means that in 34 of 50 states politicians draw their own election districts. Parties carve up election districts to gain as many seats as possible, protect incumbents from primaries, and pack people together, so that there are few competitive elections.** This is like allowing students to set their own grades or workers to set their own salaries. The difference is the impact on the way government functions and the level of polarization in our political system is much more consequential.
- Commissions draw districts in 14 states
- Two use hybrid systems involving both independent commissions and legislatures.

What Districts Should Look Like

Federal Law requires that districts should have about the same population, that States cannot draw districts on the basis of race in a manner that diminishes a minority groups chances of getting its candidate elections. *

State requirements dictate that districts must be: *

- **Compact:** There must be, “a minimum distance between all parts,” of the district.
- **Contiguous:** travel from any point in the district to any other point without crossing its boundary.
- **Preserve of Counties and Other Political**
- **Preserve communities of interest, cores of prior districts, and avoid pairing incumbents against each other.**
- Some states have a requirement that partisan competitiveness should be maintained.

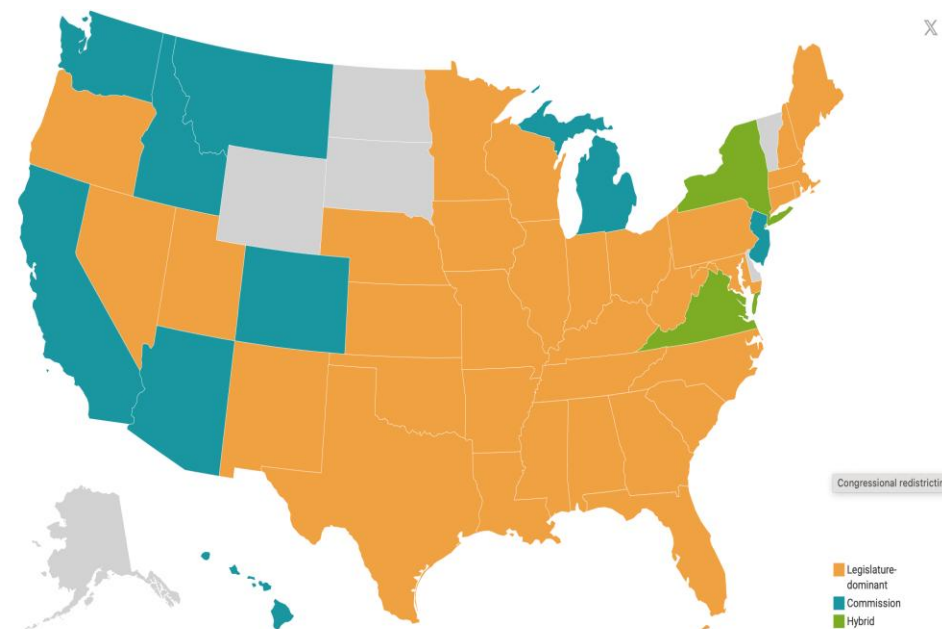
Remember these rules as we look at Gerrymandering in coming sections.

The Form of Redistricting Matters

Let's see how different states approach drawing districts.

- The states in orange have districts drawn by politicians.
- The states in blue have districts drawn by independent commissions.
- The states in green have hybrid systems.
- The states in grey have only one Congressperson, so for Federal purposes, there is no need to draw districts.

The differences in electoral competition between these systems is striking.



Independent Commissions Offer More Close Races

Arizona & Colorado use independent commissions.

- Margins were 19.4 and 17.6 percentage points.
- In 17 races, 4 had margins less than 5 and 11 had margins less than 15 percentage points..

Indiana and Maryland have politicians drawing districts.

- Margins were 29.3 and 37 percentage points
- In 17 races, none were less than 5% and only 2 were less than 15%.

When 11 out of 17 races are competitive, you have an election system. When only 2 of 17 are competitive, you do not.

2024 Congressional Elections			
	Winner Margin	Loser Margin	Difference
Colorado			
1	76.5%	21.0%	55.5%
2	68.1%	26.9%	41.2%
3	50.8%	45.8%	5.0%
4	53.6%	40.0%	13.6%
5	54.7%	40.9%	13.8%
6	53.0%	38.4%	14.6%
7	53.0%	42.2%	10.8%
8	49.0%	48.3%	0.7%
			19.4%
Arizona			
1	51.9%	48.1%	3.8%
2	54.5%	45.5%	9.0%
3	70.9%	26.6%	44.3%
4	52.7%	45.5%	7.2%
5	60.4%	39.6%	20.8%
6	50.0%	47.5%	2.5%
7	63.5%	36.5%	27.0%
8	56.5%	43.5%	13.0%
9	65.3%	34.7%	30.6%
			17.6%

Indiana		
53.4%	44.9%	8.5%
62.7%	34.6%	28.1%
65.0%	31.4%	33.6%
64.6%	30.9%	33.7%
56.0%	38.0%	18.0%
63.9%	31.7%	32.2%
68.3%	29.0%	39.3%
68.0%	29.5%	38.5%
64.5%	32.8%	31.7%
Average		29.3%

Maryland		
59.4%	37.4%	22.0%
58.2%	39.5%	18.7%
54.3%	37.9%	16.4%
88.4%	11.2%	77.2%
67.8%	32.0%	35.8%
53.1%	46.7%	6.4%
80.3%	17.2%	63.1%
76.8%	20.5%	56.3%
Average		37.0%

Independent Commissions Advance Bipartisanship

When districts are drawn by commissions and gerrymandering is eliminated, members of Congress govern in a more bipartisan manner. All the Commission states have better bipartisan rankings than any of the legislatively drawn states.

We totaled the rankings by the Lugar Center and then calculated an average by state.*

Legislatively Drawn States

- | | |
|-------------|-------|
| • Maryland | 305.8 |
| • Indiana | 261.5 |
| • Tennessee | 270.4 |
| • Illinois | 271.3 |
| • Texas | 257.5 |

Commission States

- | | |
|------------|-------|
| Washington | 202.5 |
| New Jersey | 182.9 |
| Michigan | 148.9 |
| Colorado | 148.2 |
| Arizona | 253.8 |

- In Texas, there were two highly competitive districts won by 5.4% and 2.8%. The two Congressmen in these districts ranked 24th and 41st in the bipartisan index. Those in much safer landslide races ranked much higher. If these two are removed, Texas' average percentage rises from 257.5 to 276.8. In all, Texas had 3 of the 70 most bipartisan members and 10 among the 70 most least bipartisan members of Congress.
- Maryland had 5 of the hundred 100 least bipartisan members of Congress and only 1 of the 100 most bipartisan members.

*(Lugar Center Bipartisan Index 2023.)

Independent Nonpartisan Commissions Work Better

The solution to the issue of Gerrymandering is very simple: states should pass laws enacting independent commissions to draw election districts. We do not let children select their own grades or workers to select their own salaries, why should we allow politicians to draw their own districts?

- With independent commissions, there are more competitive elections, more competition, more moderates elected, far more bipartisanship, and fewer political games.
- With fairer non-partisan election districts, turnout is also higher.
 - In 2022, 7 states had turnout over 55%. Three of these (Michigan, Washington, and Colorado) used independent commissions. One, Vermont, had only one representative, and one, Maine, used Ranked choice voting.
 - 6 states had less than 40% turnout. All of these were heavily gerrymandered.

The Voting Rights Act and Gerrymandering

Among the most aggressive Gerrymandering is the drawing of districts related to compliance with the Voting Rights Act of 1965. This may be a third rail, but the subject needs to be considered.

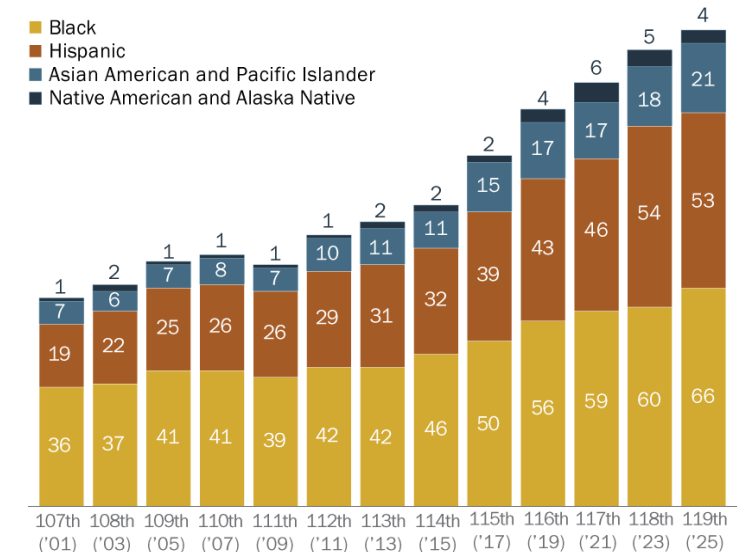
- There are currently 144 minority members in Congress more than double the number in 2001, when there were 63.
- The Voting Rights Act has helped increase minority representation. There are now 67 “majority minority” districts in Congress. (These are districts where a specific minority makes up more than 50% of the voters.) (26 American, 4, Asian American, 37 Hispanic American.)

There is a reasonable question as to whether “majority-minority” districts impact polarization. By packing as many minorities as possible into one district, voters elect minority representatives, but other districts have few minorities, and their representatives have no incentives to consider minority issues.

*Wikipedia

119th Congress has most racial and ethnic diversity in history

Number of non-White U.S. House and Senate members, by race/ethnicity



Note: Excludes nonvoting delegates and commissioners. Figures for the 119th Congress reflect members seated as of Jan. 3, 2025. Categories are single-race only; Hispanics are of any race. Multiracial members are counted in each applicable group. There are no Alaska Native or Pacific Islander members in the 119th Congress.

Source: Congressional Research Service, CQ Roll Call, Brookings Institution.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Do Majority-Minority Districts Help?

- In 2024, African American “majority-minority” districts had an average victory margin of 51.5 percentage points. In some states, the packing of minorities into one district has led to landslide elections and potentially deprived minorities from influencing other elections.
 - Average Percentage Point Margins

	State Margins	Majority-Minority Margins
• New Jersey	19.3%	52.2%
• Michigan	22.9%	47.1%
• Ohio	26.7%	57.8%
- If minorities were slightly more broadly distributed, they might have been able to influence other districts as well.
- Professor Rene R. Rocha of the University of Iowa argues that the packing of minorities into a small number of majority minority districts aids the election of Republicans to Congress. Moreover, removing typically liberal minorities from the constituencies of white members of Congress generates less incentive for non-minority representatives to support liberal legislation. She argues that setting a 40% instead of a 50% cap for minority districts would better serve the interests of these minorities.

Chutzpah in Texas in 2025

The events in 2025 are taking gerrymandering to new heights. The technical word for what politicians are doing is ***Chutzpah***.

- Instead of waiting the 10 years, for the new census, states are redrawing districts they drew 4 years ago to gain more seats in Congress and a larger majority in their legislatures. This has only happened once before.
- Governor Greg Abbott of Texas convened a special session of the state legislature to consider further redistricting.
- President Trump said Republicans could pick up another 5 seats in Texas.*
- Republican's, however, did not go the easiest route, picking on the Democrats that looked most vulnerable. Instead, they appeared to select specific Democrats they did not like.
- Al Green and Greg Caser were the two least bipartisan members of Congress with Lugar rankings of 396 and 429. **Julie Johnson was a new Congresswoman who was the first openly lesbian member of Congress from a southern state. They became the targets.
- In addition, Republicans decided to shift at least one district in the Rio Grande Valley, where 2 moderate Democrats were elected.

New Plans in Texas

- In Houston, Democrats were shoved into #18 and Republicans were removed from #8,14,and 36, so District 9, represented by Al Green, went from +48D to +9 R.
- In Central Texas, Democrats were shoved into #37 and 20, while Republicans were removed from #11,17, and 27, so District 35, represented by Greg Caser would go from +40D to +7R.
- In North Texas, Republicans were removed from 4,5,6,12,13, and 25, so Republicans could target Julie Johnson in #32, which went from +22D to +17R.
- In the Rio Grande Valley, where Trump did very well and both Congresspersons are extremely bipartisan, Republicans added votes to Henry Cuellar and took votes away from Vincente Gonzolez to give them a likely 4th seat.
- Republicans are getting rid of 3 Democrats they did not like and putting at least one other seat in play.

District	Old Rating	New Rating
TX-09	Solid Democratic	Solid Republican
TX-28	Lean Democratic	Tilt Democratic
TX-32	Solid Democratic	Solid Republican
TX-34	Tilt Democratic	Toss-up
TX-35	Solid Democratic	Likely Republican

Texas Gerrymandering By District

North Texas

District	Incumbent	Party	Baseline		2024 Presidential Margin	
			Old Map	New Map	Old Map	New Map
TX-01	Nathaniel Moran	R	R+50	R+49	R+51	R+49
TX-03	Keith Self	R	R+22	R+25	R+20	R+23
TX-04	Pat Fallon	R	R+32	R+26	R+33	R+25
TX-05	Lance Gooden	R	R+26	R+21	R+27	R+22
TX-06	Jake Ellzey	R	R+28	R+25	R+29	R+23
TX-12	Craig Goldman	R	R+23	R+23	R+23	R+24
TX-13	Ronny Jackson	R	R+50	R+47	R+48	R+46
TX-19	Jodey Arrington	R	R+51	R+51	R+52	R+52
TX-24	Beth Van Duyne	R	R+18	R+21	R+16	R+16
TX-25	Roger Williams	R	R+35	R+21	R+36	R+24
TX-26	Brandon Gill	R	R+25	R+26	R+23	R+24
TX-30	Jasmine Crockett	D	D+52	D+54	D+47	D+47
TX-32	Julie Johnson	D	D+22	R+17	D+24	R+18
TX-33	Marc Veasey	D	D+40	D+41	D+34	D+33

Central Texas

District	Incumbent	Party	Baseline		2024 Presidential Margin	
			Old Map	New Map	Old Map	New Map
TX-10	Michael McCaul	R	R+24	R+21	R+25	R+23
TX-11	August Pfluger	R	R+46	R+34	R+45	R+34
TX-17	Pete Sessions	R	R+29	R+21	R+29	R+22
TX-20	Joaquin Castro	D	D+29	D+38	D+21	D+28
TX-21	Chip Roy	R	R+24	R+23	R+24	R+22
TX-27	Michael Cloud	R	R+26	R+21	R+30	R+21
TX-31	John Carter	R	R+26	R+24	R+23	R+22
TX-35	Greg Casar	D	D+40	R+7	D+34	R+10
TX-37	Lloyd Doggett	D	D+48	D+60	D+49	D+56

Rio Grande

District	Incumbent	Party	Baseline		2024 Presidential Margin	
			Old Map	New Map	Old Map	New Map
TX-15	Monica De La Cruz	R	R+2	R+2	R+18	R+18
TX-16	Veronica Escobar	D	D+31	D+31	D+16	D+16
TX-23	Tony Gonzales	R	R+9	R+11	R+16	R+15
TX-28	Henry Cuellar	D	D+8	D+16	R+7	R+10
TX-34	Vicente Gonzalez	D	D+16	D+1	R+4	R+10

Houston

District	Incumbent	Party	Baseline		2024 Presidential Margin	
			Old Map	New Map	Old Map	New Map
TX-02	Dan Crenshaw	R	R+28	R+27	R+24	R+23
TX-07	Lizzie Fletcher	D	D+18	D+25	D+21	D+23
TX-08	Morgan Luttrell	R	R+34	R+25	R+34	R+28
TX-09	Al Green	D	D+48	R+11	D+44	R+20
TX-14	Randy Weber	R	R+32	R+25	R+34	R+24
TX-18	VACANT	D	D+39	D+61	D+40	D+55
TX-22	Troy Nehls	R	R+19	R+25	R+20	R+22
TX-29	Sylvia Garcia	D	D+37	D+40	D+20	D+30
TX-36	Brian Babin	R	R+36	R+23	R+37	R+25
TX-38	Wesley Hunt	R	R+23	R+26	R+21	R+21

Chutzpah Could Grow

- **Texas is not the only state working on redistricting in 2025.**
- In Florida, Gov. Ron DeSantis, said the state should consider overhauling its districts between censuses. The GOP governor claimed Florida's map is currently "malapportioned" due to its population surge and that there's "ample justification" for a mid-decade redistricting effort.*
- Indiana, Missouri, and Florida have suggested they might redistrict. On August 29, 2025, Missouri announced it would redistrict to eliminate one or both of its Democratic districts. **
- If Texas, Missouri, and Florida succeed in mid-term redistricting, it is likely to set off a cascade from the other 34 states that use legislators to draw boundaries. *
- If legislators are not happy with the results of a previous election, if a few members of the party out of power win close elections, or if there are some bipartisan members elected who do not want to follow the orders of party leaders, we are likely to face redistricting after every election.
- The impact of this will be to further reduce competitive elections, to allow the party in control to expand their power, and to effectively destroy the concept of one-person-one vote.

Democrats Threaten Tit for Tat

- In response, Democrats are vowing to eliminate nonpartisan commissions and return to gerrymandering. Governors in Illinois, New York, and California have already threatened to take up mid-cycle redistricting.
- In a fundraising letter on Aug. 3, 2025, California Governor Gavin Newsom stated, “So Trump calls Greg Abbott in Texas and says I need you to redraw your Congressional maps to find five House seats. Abbott quickly obliges. California is not going to sit back and watch this happen. We're not going to play by the old rules if it means risking the very survival of our democracy.”
- This could be the start of a war in which states throw out the rules, eliminate nonpartisan commissions, and gerrymander against the other party.
- **If this process gains momentum, our democracy will be permanently impaired.**

Tit for Tat May Not Work

There is only one problem with the Democrat's threat- it won't work.

- Republicans currently have 219 seats to 212 for the Democrats.
- Republicans control all branches of government in 23 states (trifecta). Democrats control all branches in 15. The Republican states have 221 electoral votes. The Democratic states have 193.
- Democrats have 42 Congresspersons in Republican states. Republicans have 29 Congresspersons in Democratic states, meaning Republicans have more opportunities to redistrict Democrats.
- In addition, many Democratic states have commissions that voters need to eliminate before redistricting can start. Some voters may not go along.
- With a 7-seat disadvantage and 13 more seats at risk, plus the need to first get voter approval to eliminate Commissions, the numbers and the clock are both against the Democrats.

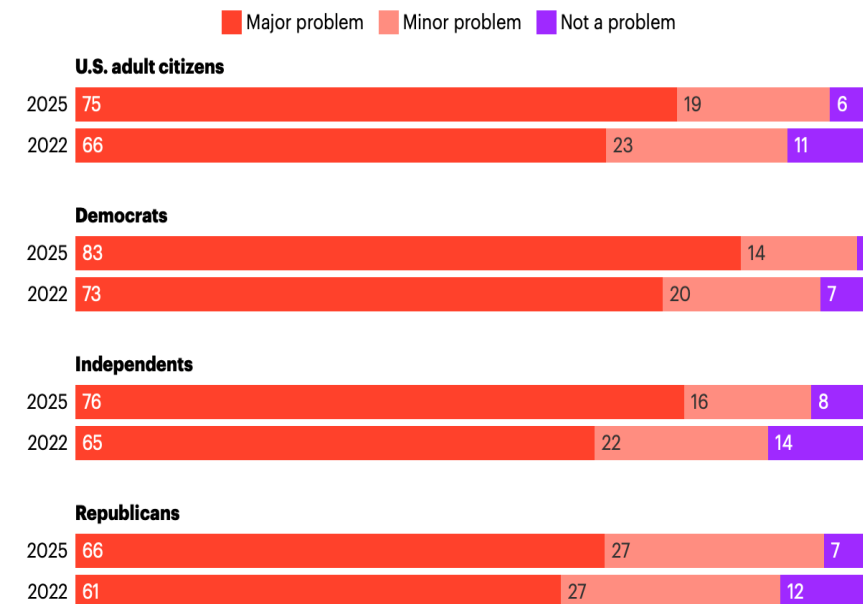
Mid-Cycle Gerrymandering Could Backfire

All may not be lost for the Democrats. The current Republican push for mid-cycle redistricting is likely to help it gain a few more seats, and perhaps even control the House of Representatives. However, these Gerrymandering steps could backfire on Republicans.

- According to a YouGov poll from August 8, 2025, Americans overwhelmingly see Gerrymandering as a major problem. 75% of Americans, 83% of Democrats, 76% of Independents, and even 66% of Republicans say it is a major problem. Only 6% of Americans say it is not a problem.
- Americans do not like what the parties are doing.

Americans overwhelmingly see gerrymandering as a **major problem** — more so than in 2022

How big of a problem do you think it is when states draw legislative districts that intentionally favor one party? (%)



YouGov

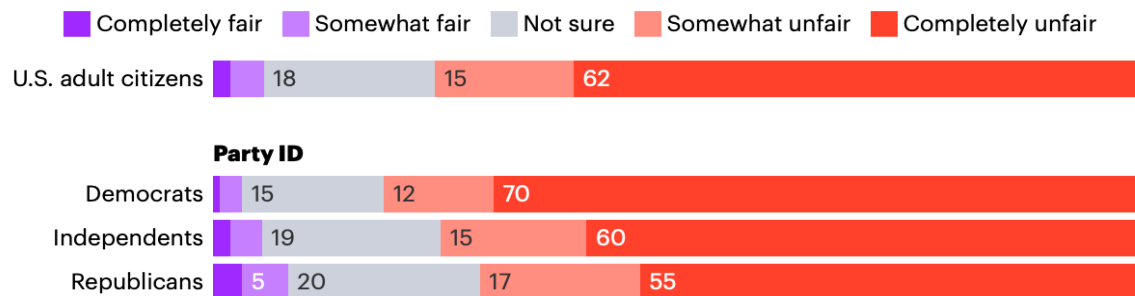
August 1 - 4, 2025 | February 5 - 8, 2022

Americans Want Legislative Commissions

- 67% of Americans want legislative districts that do not give an advantage to either party.
- Most Americans also say it is unfair for a state to Gerrymander its Congressional districts.
- More Americans want legislative districts drawn by an Independent commission than by their state legislature.

Most Americans say it's **unfair** for a state to gerrymander its U.S. House districts

Do you think it is fair or unfair for a state to redraw their districts for the U.S. House of Representatives to favor one party in elections? (%)

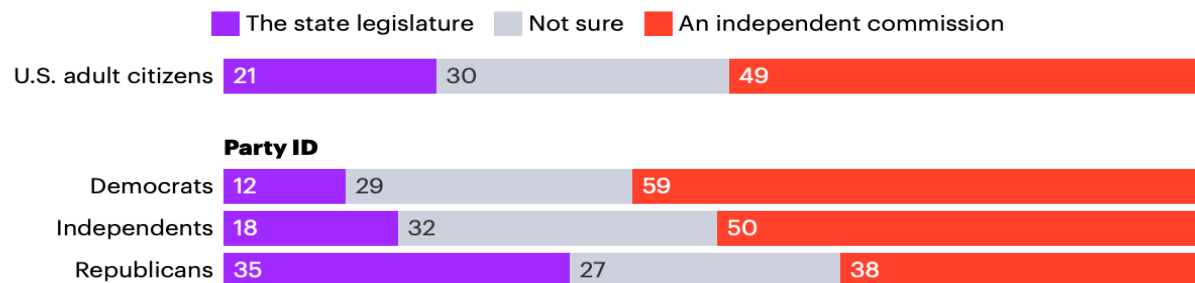


YouGov

August 1 - 4, 2025

More Americans want legislative districts drawn by an **independent commission** than by their **state legislature**

Which of these best describes who you think should draw legislative districts in your state? (%)



YouGov

August 1 - 4, 2025

Gerrymandering Could Boomerang on Republicans

- While Gerrymandering helps the party in power, it is inherently unpopular. Americans think it is a major problem, districts should be drawn by Commissions, and states should not Gerrymander its U.S. House districts.
- Voters want competitive elections and more moderates who speak to them.
- Independents are increasing as a percentage of the voting population. They are strongly against Gerrymandering and in favor of Independent Commissions.
- We believe the actions of President Trump, Governor Abbott and others will create a significant backlash that could turn people against the Republicans.
- If Democrats focus on tit-for-tat, they will lose. Ending their own independent commissions is a path to failure, even if it might gain them a vote or two in the short term.
- However, Democrats now have an issue that has broad-based support. If they continue to fight against Gerrymandering, they may have a real issue in coming elections that can significantly improve both their favorability and the prospects in coming elections.

Gerrymandering Could Help Democrats

- Democrats have been underwater on immigration, crime, and the economy. The party has a very low approval/disapproval rating.
- Only 29% of independents approve of the party. Democrats need an issue to gain more independents.
- We believe many independents will be upset about these political games. For decades, Gerrymandering has had a strong negative impact on our political system. Republican overreach could provide the impetus turning independents against Republicans and for to creating pressure for states to create districts drawn by independent commissions instead of state legislatures.
- In addition, there is a real possibility that some of Trump's policies may not work out as well as Republicans hope, especially with the economy.
- If the economy is not thriving, fighting against Gerrymandering could be a real issue in coming elections that could improve Democrat's favorability and prospects.

Fight Gerrymandering Now

We must act now.

- When I originally wrote this presentation, I said that people had time to act on this subject because the next redistricting cycle would not arise until 2032, after the 2030 census.
- This is no longer the case. With all the noise about mid-cycle redistricting, people need to start acting now to stop Gerrymandering. If they do not, competitive elections could virtually disappear.
- Citizens should speak out about the new threat from mid-decade redistricting. The actions in Texas and the promise of actions in other states could be disastrous for our democracy. The disaster will be further enhanced if states, like Illinois, California, and New York, follow with a tit-for-tat. Gerrymandering is bad. Gerrymandering after every election will be a disaster.
- We need independent commissions, and we need redistricting only once every 10 years.

Peter Siris
Sep. 8, 2025