

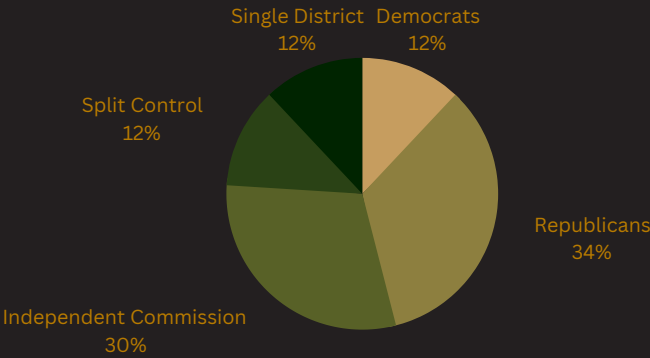
BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD:

preventing **GERRYMANDERING** in the United States



Issue

Gerrymandering is a practice adapted by politicians to change district lines in order to influence the votes in a given district, leading to outcomes in the favor of certain parties. The following graph shows who has control over redistricting in each state.²



Redistricting based on race is illegal under the Constitution, but that does not stop politicians from drawing lines with racial intentions disguised as political reasons.¹

Less competitive elections - voters do not feel that their vote matters if the majority of the district is already predetermined leading to low voter turn-outs.

Unfair representation - proincumbent gerrymandering ensures officials are re-elected and these officials are not representative of the majority of the population,

Promotes extremism¹¹ - politicians have no reason to work with individuals from the minority party, so the policies pushed forward do not adhere to their problems/needs of all citizens.

Effects

How is gerrymandering done?

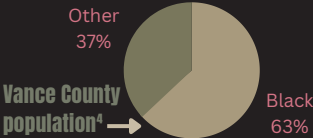
Packing - grouping individuals of the victim party into one single district to prevent them from affecting the results of other districts.⁶

Cracking - the remaining voters of the victim party are spread across different districts causing their vote to always be below 50% .⁶

History

1800s

One of the earliest and biggest cases in NC was seen towards the end of the Century. Vance County was created to group all Black voters in one county, thus disparaging their voting power. In 1890, 31% of the NC population was Black.⁴



1900s

Following the formation of Vance County, there was an increase in elected Black officials in the area due to the high Black voters. To counter this effect, the Grandfather Clause was enacted. Under this, people would only be eligible to vote if they passed a literacy test or omit the test if they or a direct ancestor could vote before 1867 (before racial discrimination for voting was prohibited).⁴

This targeted Black voters because they did not have the same access to education to pass the literacy test, and passing the test was not a factor for White voters.

In 1965, the Voter Rights Act was passed, which protected the voting rights African American citizens and even led to the first Black person elected to Congress- Shirley Chisholm.¹⁰

Today

In 2017, the Supreme Court concluded that the NC districts drawn after the 2010 census was based on race.¹⁰

In 2022, the disenfranchisement law was found unconstitutional: "unlocking the votes of over 55,000 North Carolinians with Felony Convictions"¹⁰



Voter Turnout



8% of Republican voters are African American or Latino¹



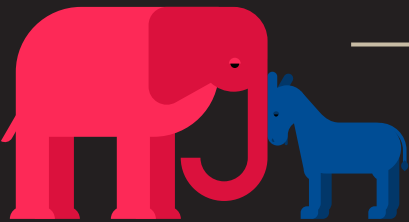
33% of Democrat voters are African American or Latino¹

"Research shows that social pressure, or the drive to gain praise and avoid punishment, significantly increases voter turnout."¹ This decreases voter turnout for elections and there have been recent cases that argue that this is form of voter disenfranchisement; unconstitutional (*Benisek v. Lamone*).¹

Gerrymandering also affects the principle "**one man, one vote**" - each person's vote holds the same weight in an election.¹¹

Myth

Gerrymandering causes polarization



While gerrymandering does lead to political discourse, it is not the reason that the U.S. has become more polarized in the past few years.

The United States Senate cannot be gerrymandered, however, it is just as polarized as the House.⁹ Gerrymandering is a political tactic used by ALL parties to target individual voter's rights rather than parties as a whole.

Truth

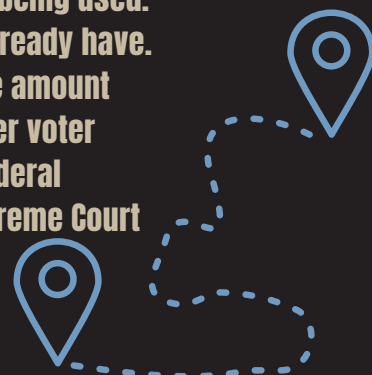
Potential Solution

Alternative drawing methods - There are other non-partisan methods to draw districts to limit/prevent partisan gerrymandering, such as the *Define-Combine Procedure*⁸. This method would not need any bipartisan support or third-party involvement. This method also does not need an "empirical standard for partisan gerrymandering". This method utilizes both parties in creating a map. One party would be the "definer" and the other party would be the "combiner".⁸

"1. Party A defines a set of 2N contiguous, equally populated districts. To avoid confusion with the following stage, we refer to these units as subdistricts.

2. Party B creates the final map of N districts by combining pairs of 2 contiguous subdistricts"⁸

DCP allows for smooth redistricting processes that do not require much inter-party communication while still reflecting the "will of the voters".⁸ The method has been tested and proven to be effective across all states.⁸ Moreover, this method is an innovative approach to the method already being used. It does not require any new resources, but instead a new approach with the resource we already have. It would limit any partisan influence and provide less biased maps, which would reduce the amount gerrymandering cases in the U.S. and lead to more fair and competitive elections with higher voter turn-outs, and less infringement of voter rights. This method should be mandated by the Federal government for each state to adapt, so that gerrymandering can be minimized, and the Supreme Court will have to deal with fewer cases.



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