



Open Redistricting

Advancing Fair Representation by Civic Engagement

Alec Ramsay (alec@openredistricting.net)

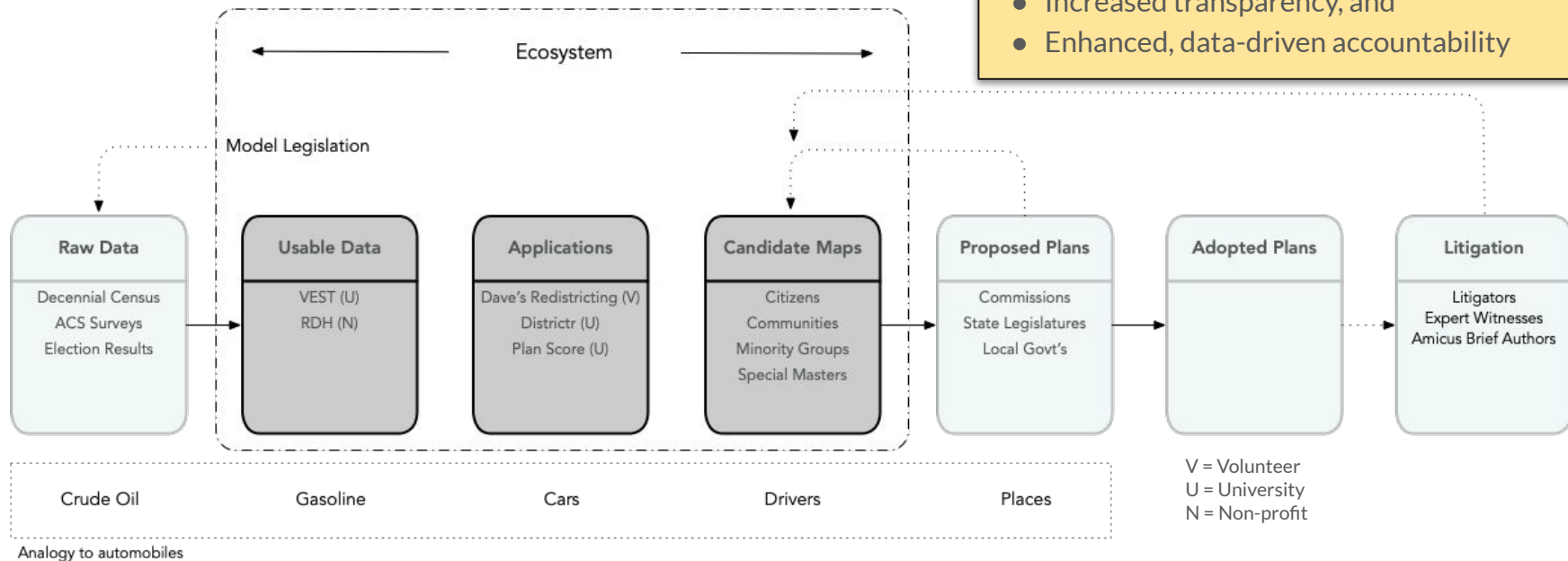
November 2024

The Problem: Gerrymandering

- After 2010, aggressive gerrymandering (REDMAP) to reshape Congress
- Plus one-off attempts by Dem-controlled states to skew their plans (e.g., MD)
- Then SCOTUS made partisan gerrymandering *de facto* legal in 2019
- States can now dress up racial gerrymanders as "just" partisan gerrymanders
- All together weakened a core democratic process & resulted in disproportional representation



The Solution: Open Redistricting



- Like open source software
- Democratizes redistricting tools & data:
- Broad & deep civic engagement across the political spectrum
- Effective advocacy for fair maps, competitive districts, & respect for COI
- Increased transparency, and
- Enhanced, data-driven accountability

A network of civic techies, academics, & experts

- [Alec Ramsay](#) – Dave’s Redistricting, researcher; Microsoft 15 years, co-conceived cloud OS (Azure)
- [Dave Bradlee](#) – Dave’s Redistricting; Microsoft 17 years; created Dave’s Redistricting v1 in 2009
- [Terry Crowley](#) – Dave’s Redistricting; Microsoft 20 years, CVP of Office Development (10 years)
- [Michael McDonald](#) – VEST; Professor of Political Science at University of Florida
- [Jonathan Cervas](#) – Court-appointed Special Master; Carnegie Mellon Institute for Strategy & Technology
- [Sean Trende](#) – Court-appointed Special Master; political analyst
- [Moon Duchin](#) – Expert witness; MGGG Redistricting Lab; Professor of Mathematics, Cornell University
- [Nick Stephanopoulos](#) – PlanScore; Professor of Law, Harvard Law School
- [Ruth Greenwood](#) – PlanScore; Director, Election Law Clinic, Harvard Law School
- [Kate Donovan](#) – Director, Redistricting Data Hub



DRA 2020



MGGG =



PlanScore



VEST (UF)



RDH ==



CMU ==



HLS ==



Cornell ==

Candidates for Advisory Board

Broad, Sustained Use

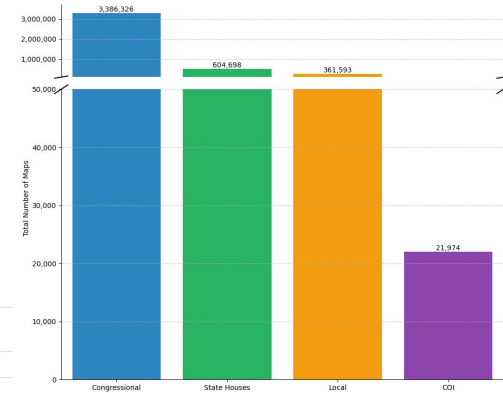
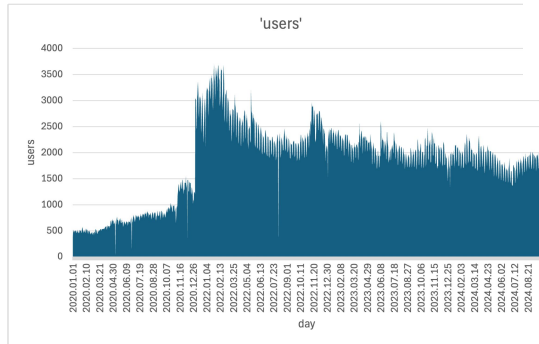
Texas	180,088
New York	179,339
North Carolina	164,821
Michigan	159,752
Georgia	156,526
Ohio	155,274
Pennsylvania	149,204

Maps by state

- 4.4M maps created in Dave's Redistricting by citizens, communities, advocacy groups
- 60K plans evaluated in PlanScore
- 50-state election results for 2016-2020, most by VEST, and
- 20K datasets downloaded from RDH

Maps by type

- 3.4M congressional
- 605K state legislative
- 362K local
- 22K communities of interest
- 4.4M overall



Users & usage

- 24K active users at peak (Nov. '22)
- Still 15K active users
- Averaging 2K uniques per day!



Deep Impact

Tools & data used by:

- Successful litigation — e.g., AL, NC, NY, PA, & WI
- Special masters — e.g., Jonathan Cervas, Bernie Grofman, & Sean Trende in NC, NY, PA, & VA
- State commissions — e.g., public input solicited in AK, AZ, CO, DE, MI, OK, PA, TX, WA, & WI
- Local governments — e.g., public input solicited in Miami-Dade School Board, Navajo County, Porterville (CA), South Pasadena, Spokane County, Seattle, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, San Diego, & New York City
- Citizen advocacy groups — e.g., Fair Districts PA, Fair Districts Ohio
- Minority rights groups — e.g., Power on the Line(s): Making Redistricting Work for Us (LDF, MALDEF, AAJC), Making Native Voters Count in Redistricting (NARF)



Testimonial

Richard H. Pildes – Sudler Family Professor of Constitutional Law @ NYU

“Dave’s Redistricting is an **extraordinary gift to the public** interested in redistricting issues. It has become **so sophisticated** that it’s a **reliable tool** that is now **used in actual court cases**. But it is **widely accessible** for **free** to the public. Anyone can evaluate existing or proposed redistricting maps along numerous dimensions, as well as design their own maps with this **exceptional tool**.”

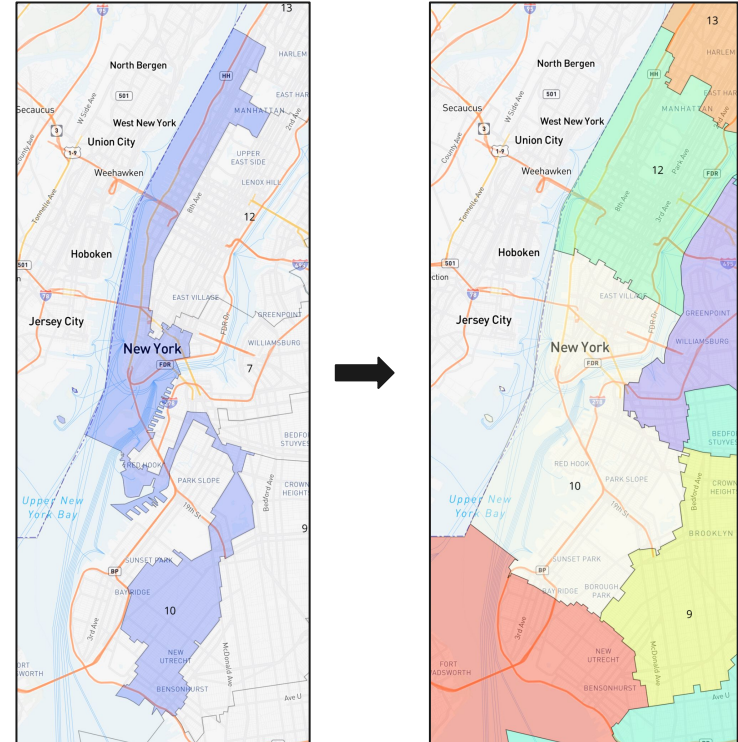
Dave’s Redistricting is powered by free precinct-level election data, especially from VEST

Case Study: New York State

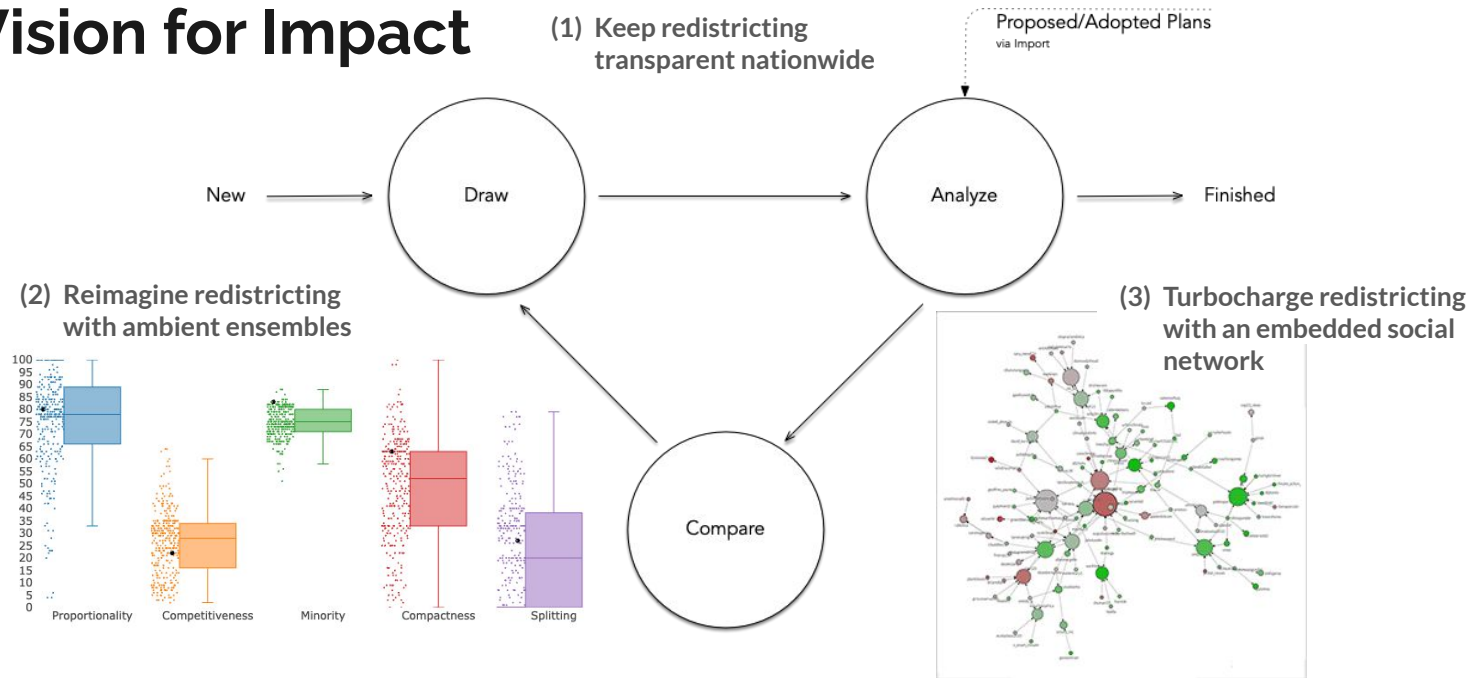
Harkenrider v. Hochul (2022)

Congressional Plan	Legislature	Special Master
Counties split / # of splits	34 / 56	15 / 25 (smaller better)
Reock / Polsby-Popper compactness	32 / 25	40 / 34 (bigger better)
Competitive districts	3	8

Citizens interacted with Special Master Jonathan Cervas via Dave's Redistricting increasing transparency.



Vision for Impact





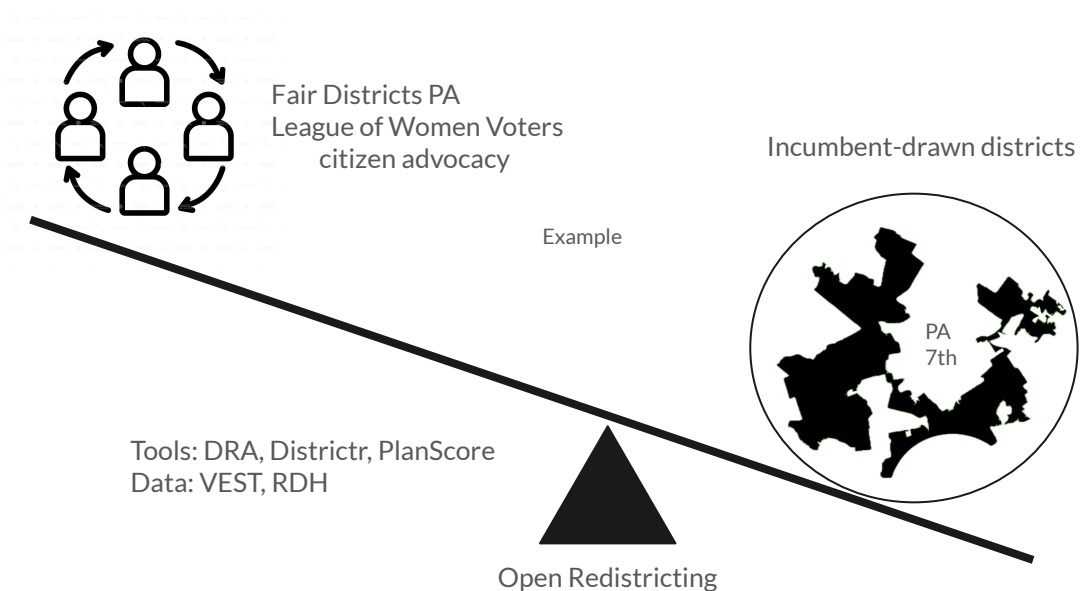
Vision for Impact

1. Keep redistricting transparent nationwide
 - Preserve & expand critical data infrastructure
 - Ensure ongoing viability of key apps
2. Reimagine the core redistricting cycle in the context of ensembles of plans
 - Start new maps from plans with desired metrics & trade-offs; avoid the blank map problem
 - Time-shift basic outlier analysis from post-adoption litigation into the analyze/compare processes
3. Turbocharge redistricting with an embedded social network
 - Connect low-tech advocacy groups with high-tech mapping experts
 - Convert a loose collection of individual users into a strong open redistricting community

The Opportunity: Lasting Institutional Change

- A major, named gift funding
- A prominent university institute

The most highly leveraged gift one can make in fair representation





Call to Action

Your gift will ensure that open redistricting survives & thrives for another decade

- Keeping redistricting transparent nationwide
- Preventing the return to backroom gerrymandering
- Empowering citizens to participate meaningfully
- Taking redistricting to the next level
- Helping ensure fair representation through 2032 & beyond

You can make fair redistricting the norm, not the exception.

Q&A