

*Red Wine & Blue*

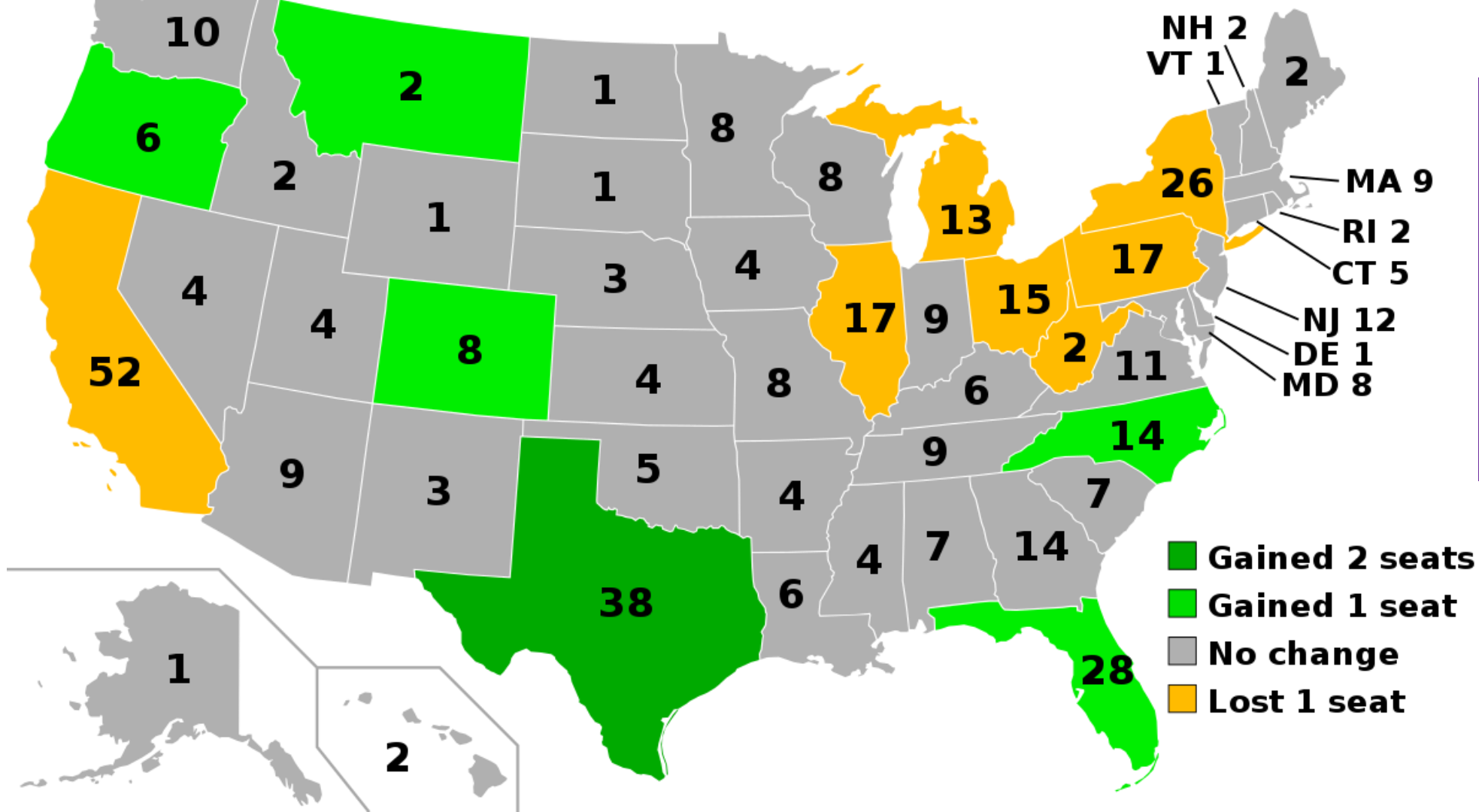


## Maps and Ballots: Why District Maps Matter

- 3 word vocabulary (plus some extras)
- 2 century history (in 1 minute)
- 1 chapter of a 1 state (PA) story
- where we are now; what do we need?
- how you can help

# 1. Reapportionment (or apportionment)

redistribution of the 435 seats in the House of Representatives, done every ten years after the national census (years ending in 0)



PA loses 1 or 2 seats each decade still the 5<sup>th</sup> most populous state & the most populous swing state

## 2. Redistricting: redrawing of voting district lines



US Supreme Court 1964 Reynolds v. Sims:  
**“one person, one vote” requires regular redrawing of district lines.**

States are required to redraw district lines following the national census, **normally in years ended in 1.**

Next ***required*** redistricting by law: 2031.

**States determine congressional and state house and senate district boundaries.**

**In Pennsylvania, the congressional map is enacted as a bill.**

It must pass in both chambers and be signed by the governor.

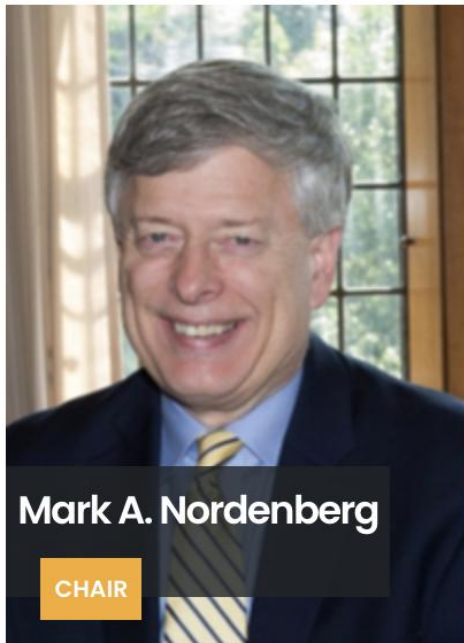
**The only currently recognized requirement:**

**districts must be exactly equal in population.**

## PA House and Senate maps are drawn by the Legislative Reapportionment Commission:

- Majority and minority leaders from both House and Senate.
- The 5<sup>th</sup> member is the chair, appointed by the other members.
- If they can't agree, a majority of the PA Supreme Court appoints the chair, who is then confirmed by a majority vote of the four initial commissioners.

## 2021-22 Legislative Reapportionment Commission



### 3. Gerrymandering: manipulation of electoral maps for political advantage

One of the earliest to take advantage of this was Elbridge Gerry\*, hence the term “the Gerrymander” (1812)

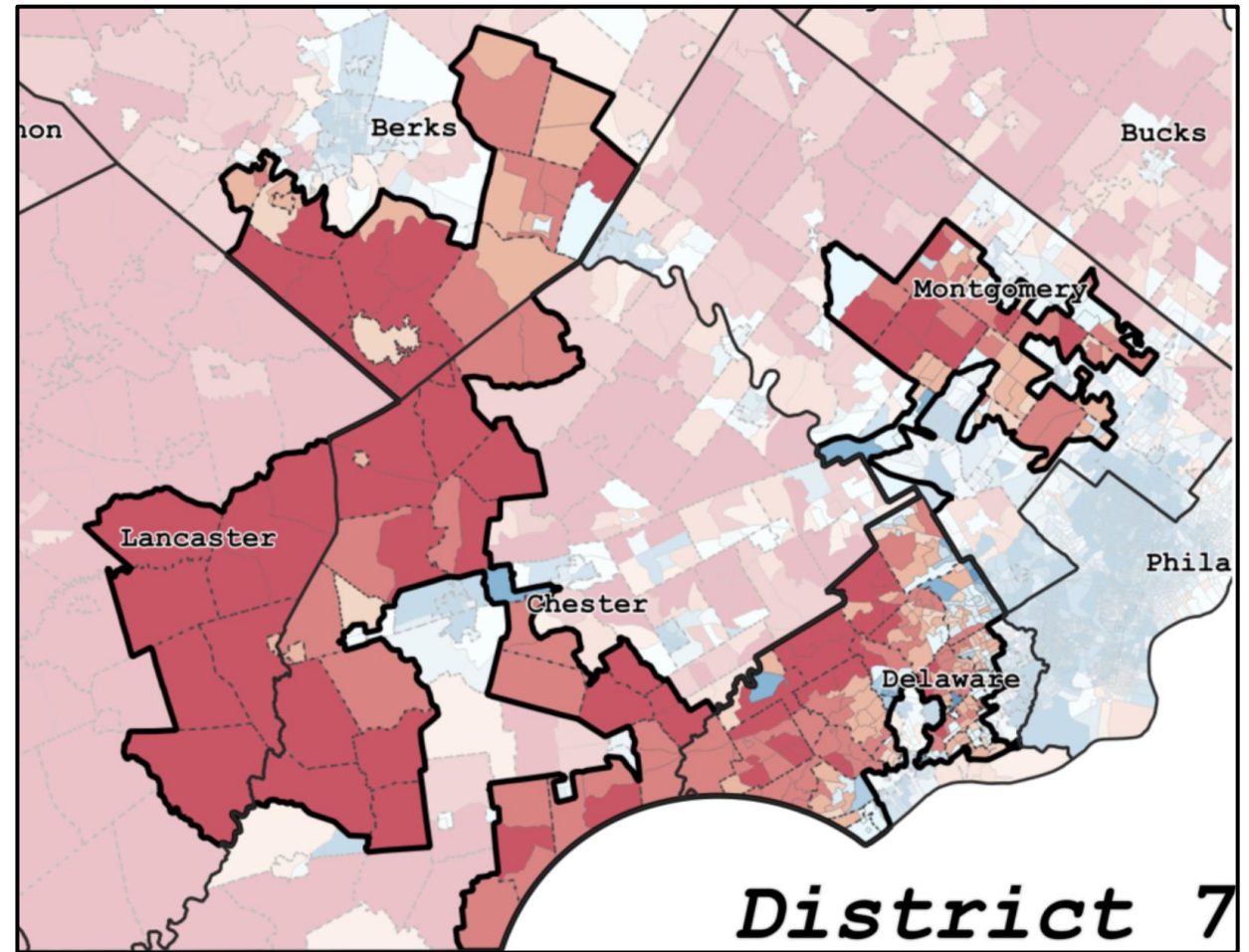
The same people who draw the maps have a vested interest in creating districts that will help them stay in office.

New technologies allow far greater precision in manipulating maps and controlling outcomes.

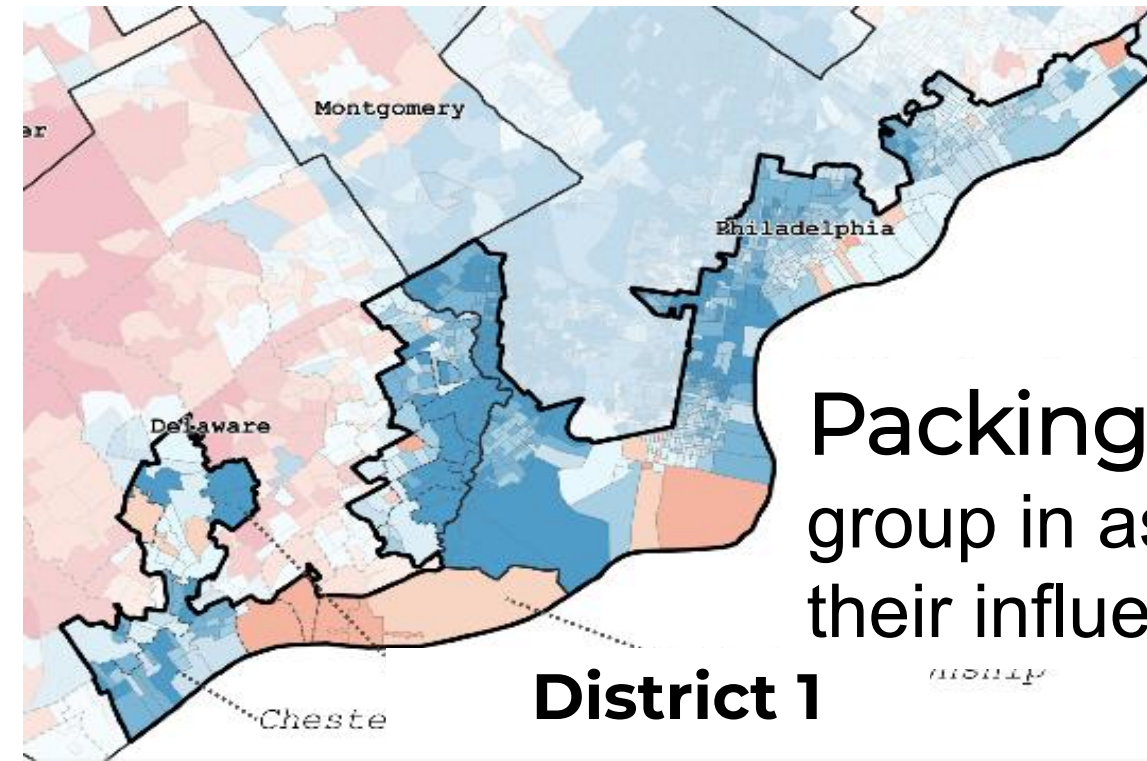
Who started this? Elbridge Gerry was a member of the Democratic Republican Party



**Cracking:** splitting a population and spreading its members among several districts where they become an irrelevant minority



**Packing:** concentrating voters of one party or group in as few districts as possible to reduce their influence in the remaining districts



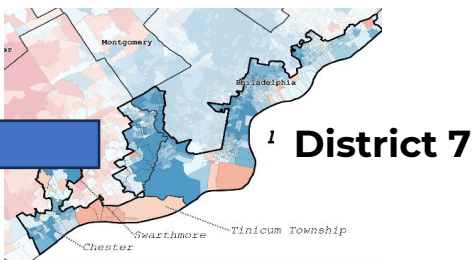
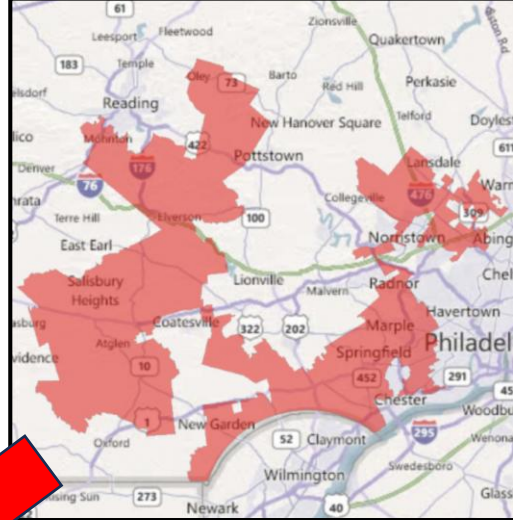
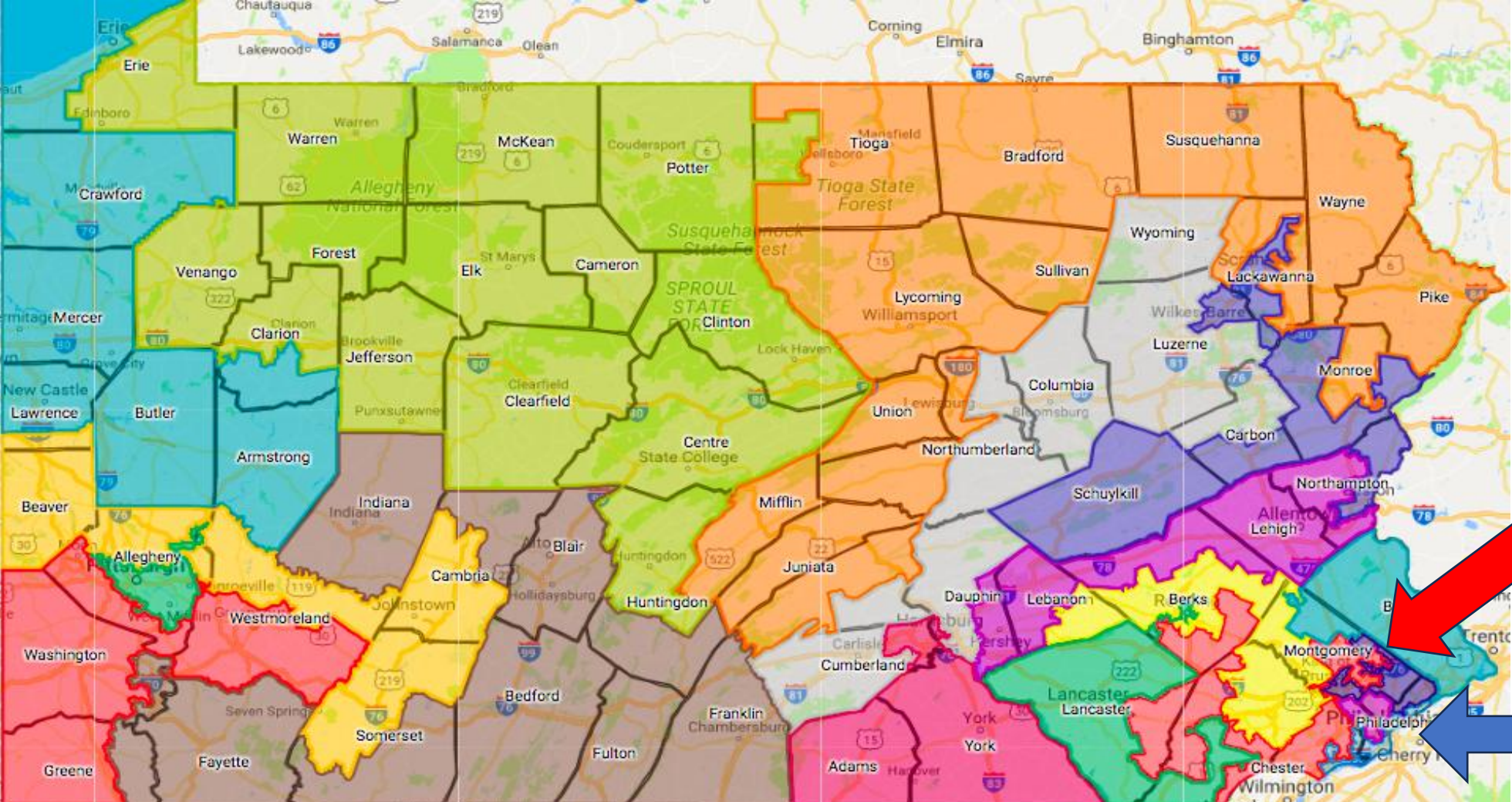
**District 1**

# PA Gerrymandering Story

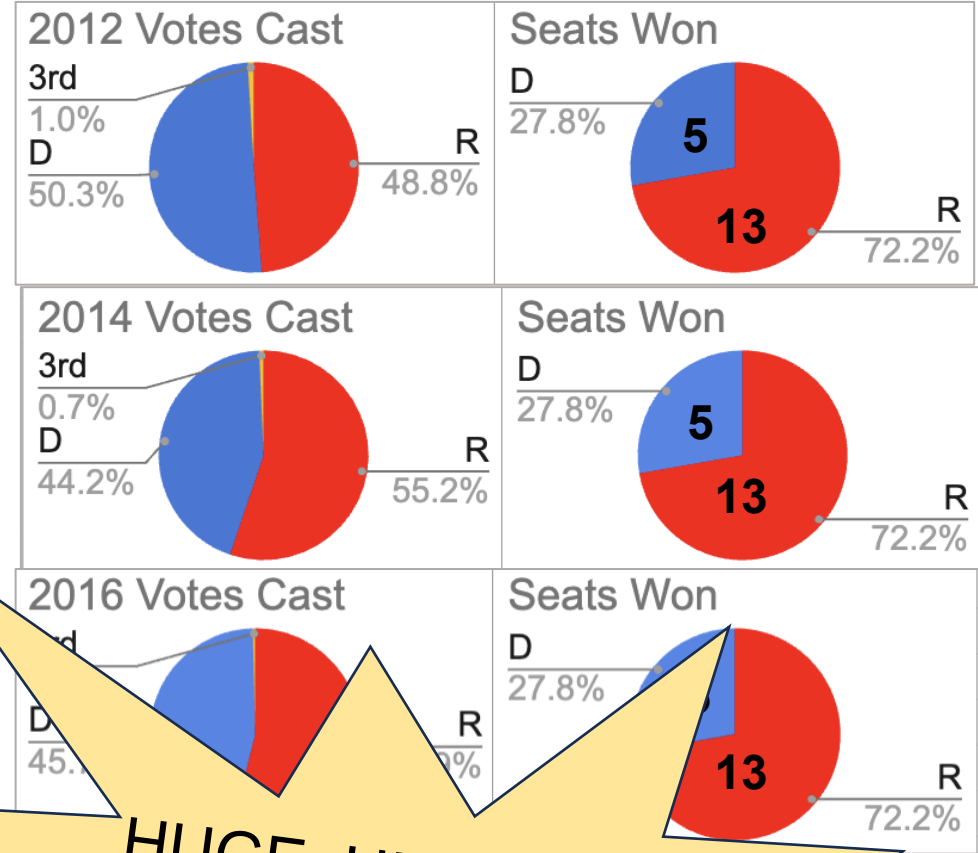
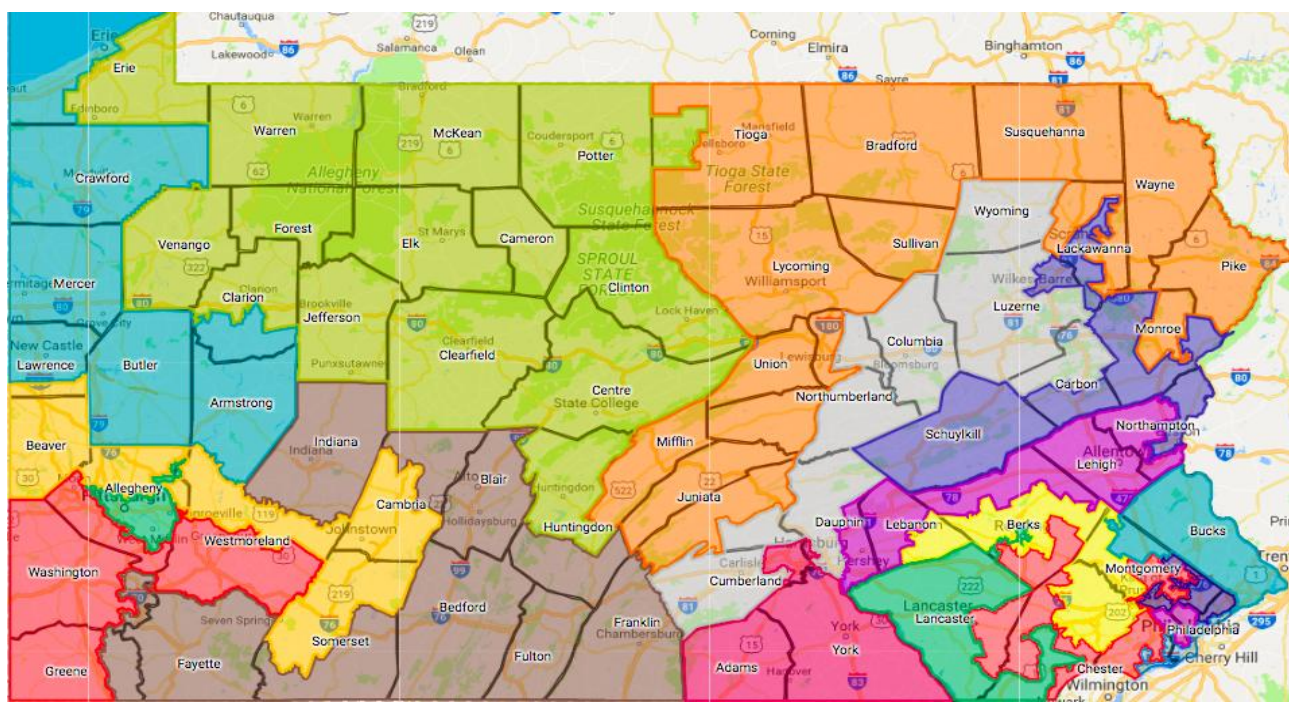
## One Chapter

### PA 2011 Congressional Map

designed to deliver 13 R, 5 D seats, no matter how voters voted



District 7

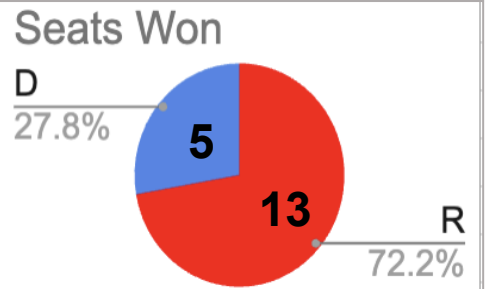
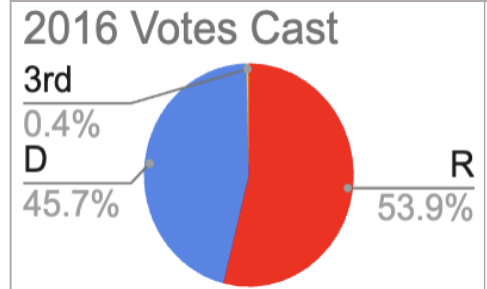
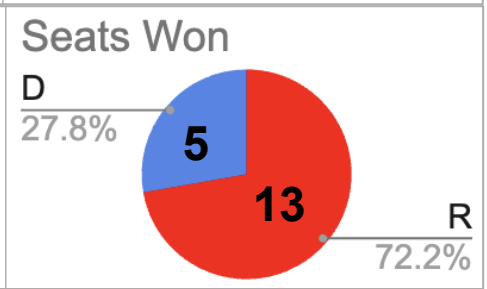
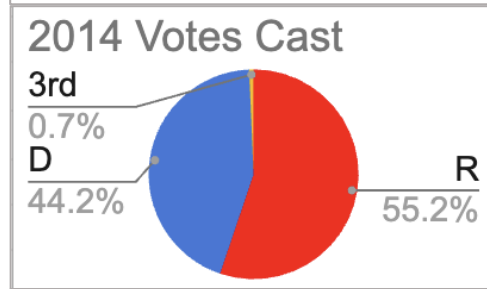
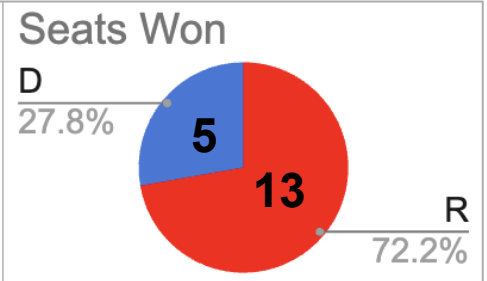
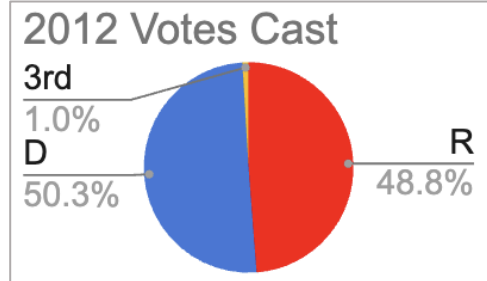
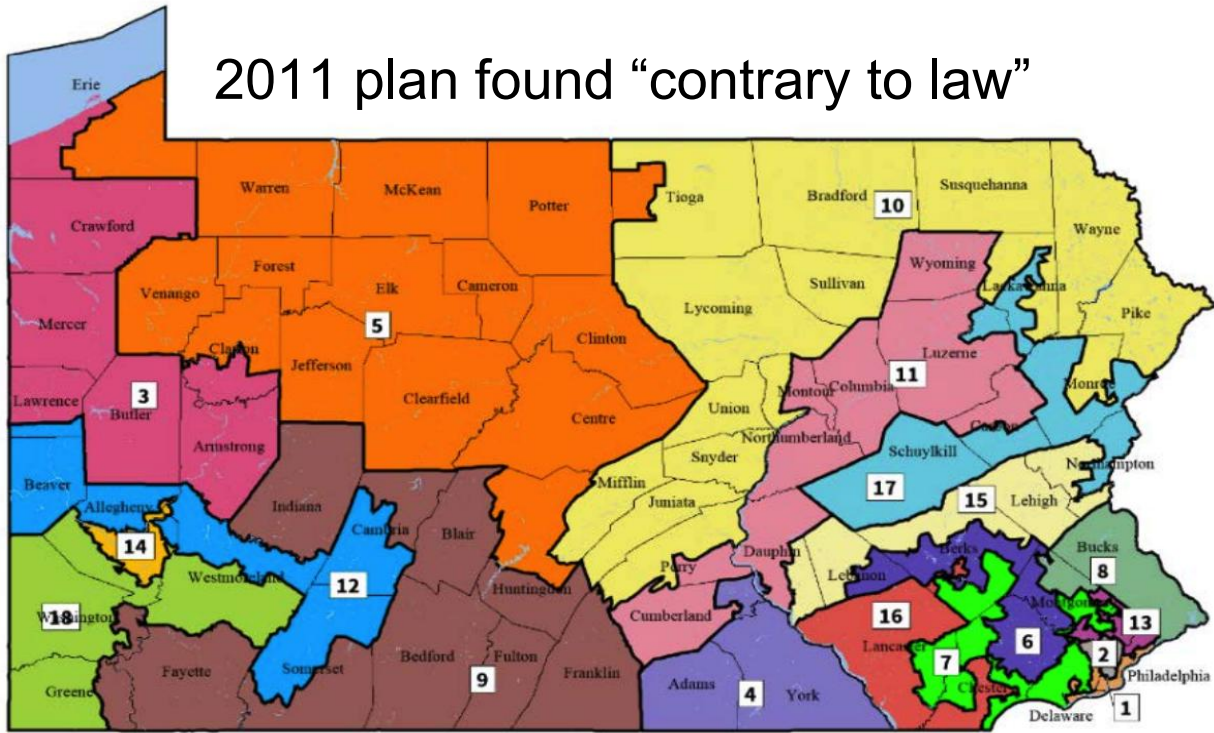


# League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania v PA General Assembly 2017-2018 led by the Public Interest Law Center

filed in state - not federal court  
based on PA Article 1 protection  
of free and equal elections

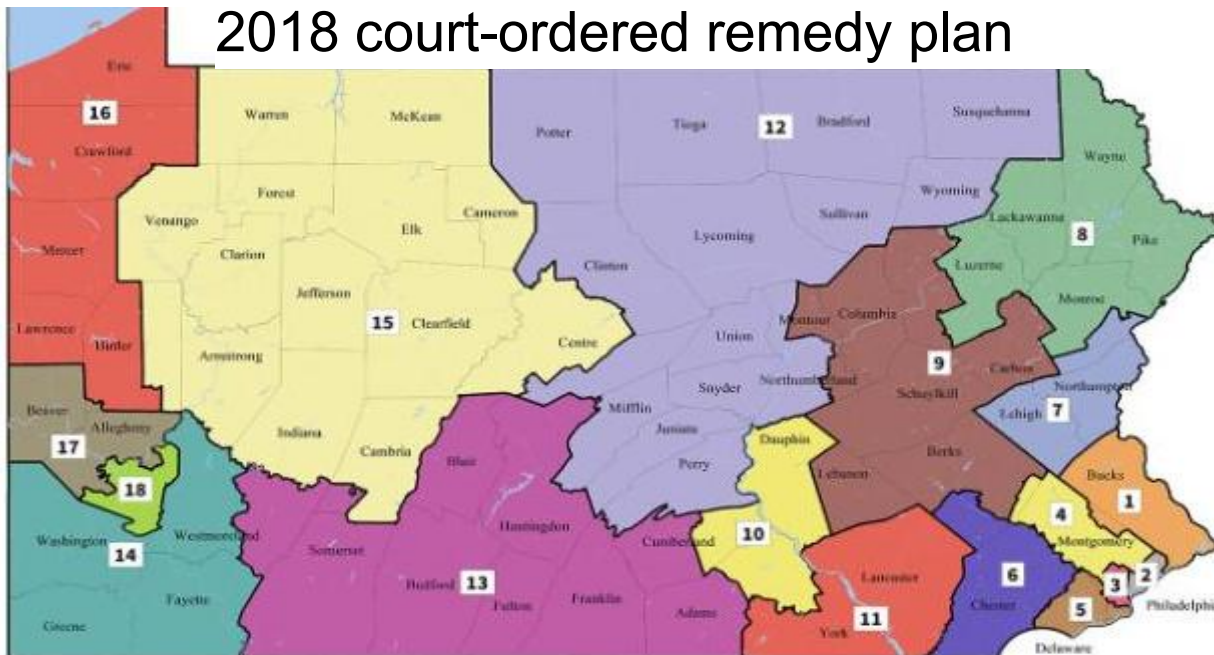
**HUGE, HISTORIC WIN**  
 1<sup>st</sup> successful partisan  
 gerrymandering case, based on a  
 state constitution, resulting in a new  
 congressional map

# 2011 plan found "contrary to law"

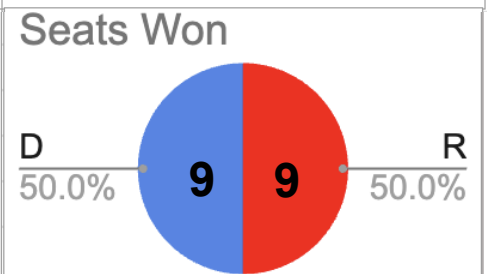
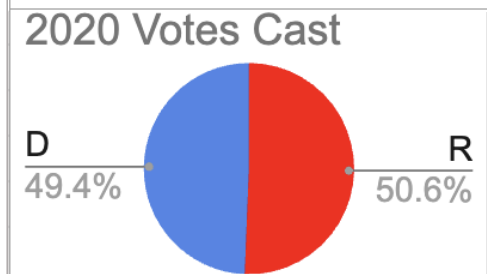
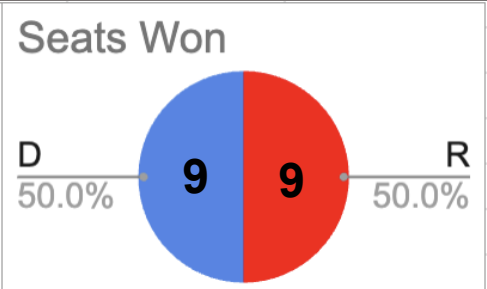
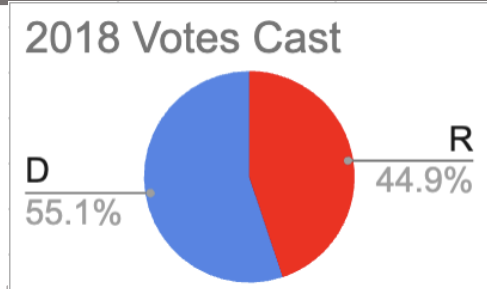


Locked-in  
13 R-5 D  
outcome

# 2018 court-ordered remedy plan



Remedy  
districts  
providing  
free and  
equal  
elections



As of 2017:

How did Pa. Score in national rating of women in elected office? Only Mississippi was worse

2019: 116<sup>th</sup> Congress

1<sup>st</sup> PA woman since 2014

1<sup>st</sup> time ever for more than 2 at one time

2021: 117<sup>th</sup> Congress

Add a fifth woman

1<sup>st</sup> PA woman of color



**MAPS MATTER!**

# Where are we now? New maps were drawn in 2021-22

A legislative failure yielded one of the most balanced, responsive congressional maps this decade.

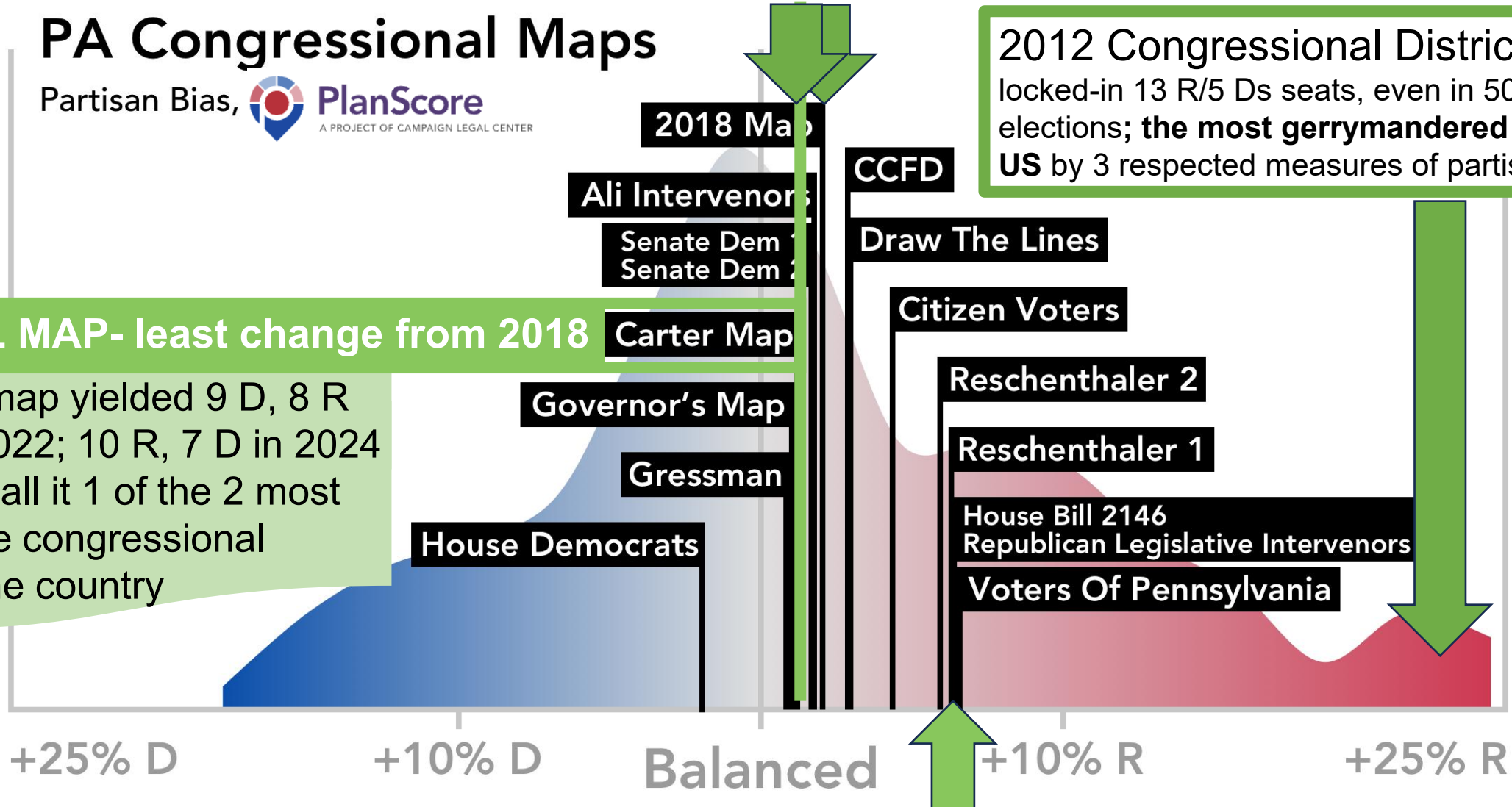
## PA Congressional Maps

Partisan Bias,  **PlanScore**  
A PROJECT OF CAMPAIGN LEGAL CENTER

2012 Congressional District Plan: locked-in 13 R/5 Ds seats, even in 50-50 elections; the most gerrymandered in the US by 3 respected measures of partisan bias

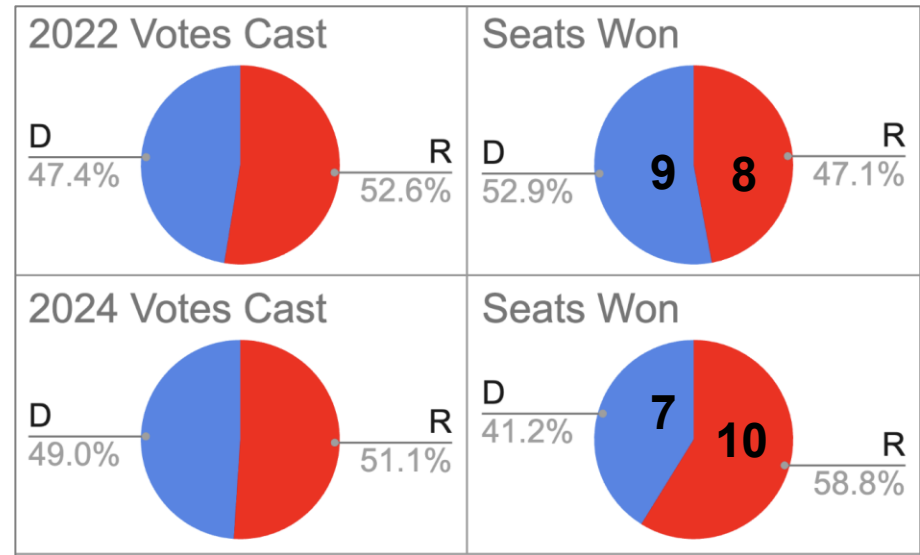
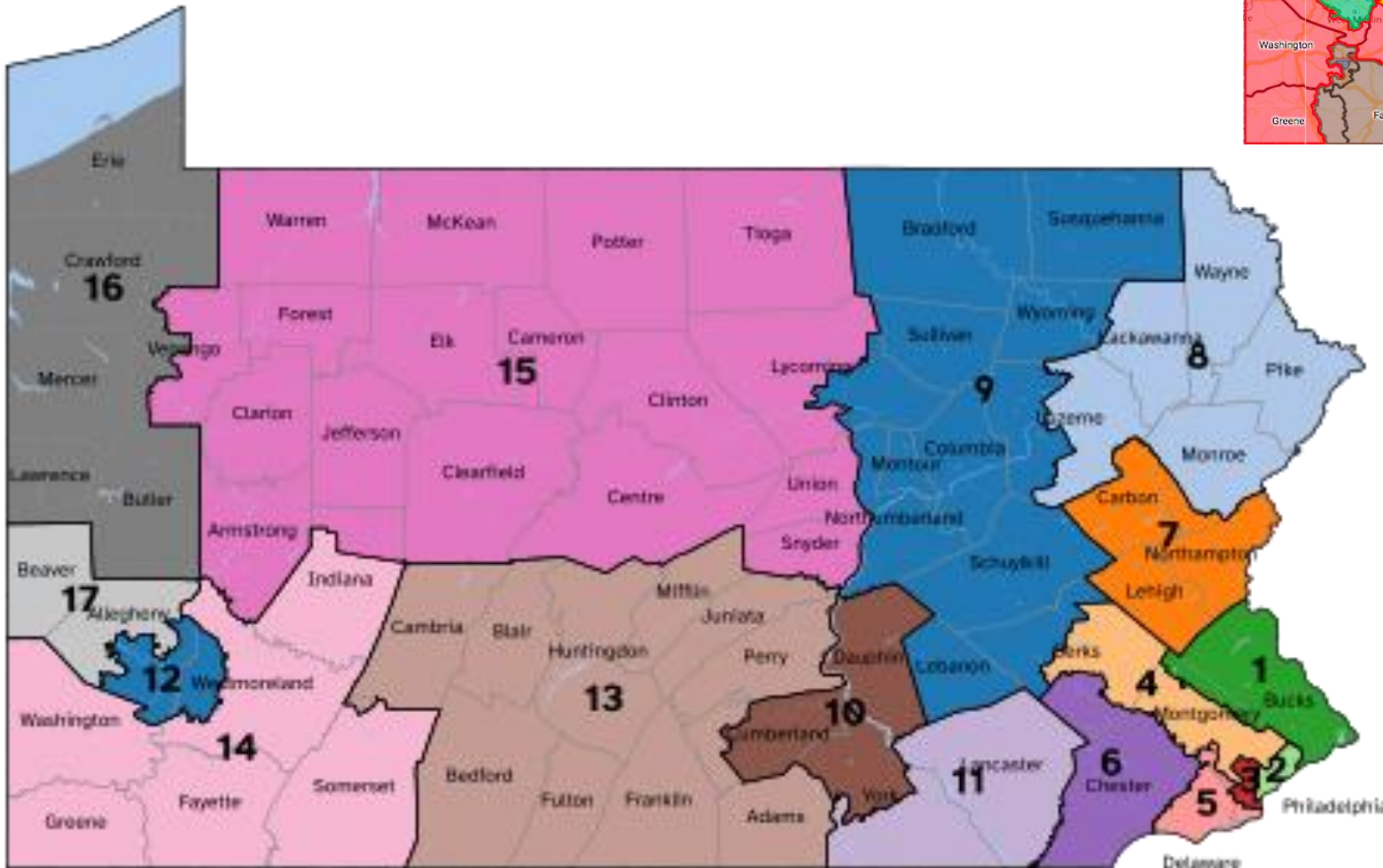
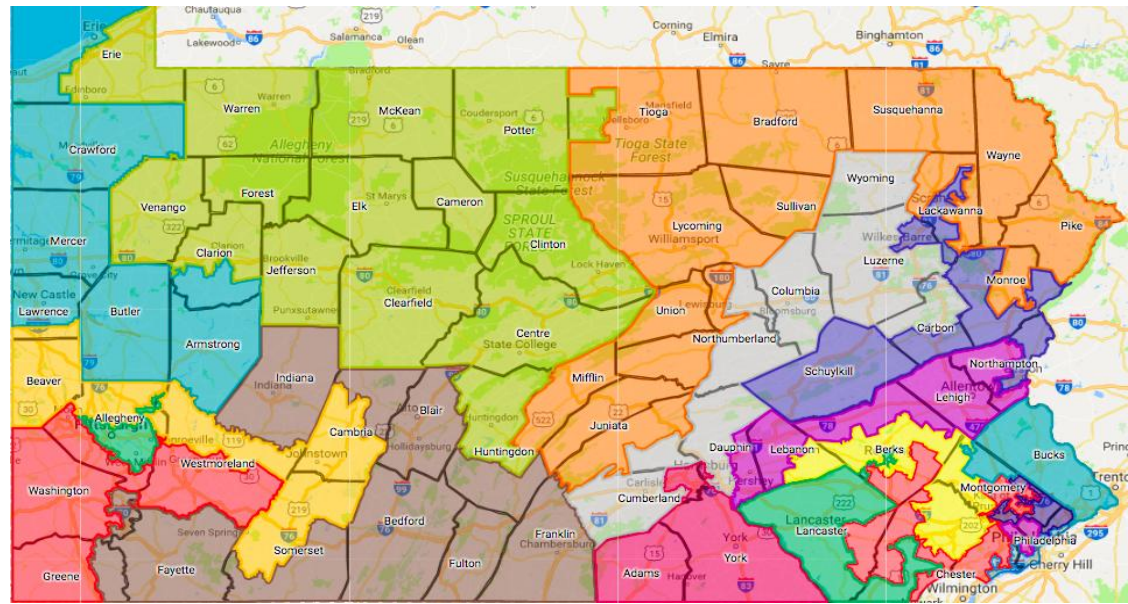
**FINAL MAP- least change from 2018**

The final map yielded 9 D, 8 R seats in 2022; 10 R, 7 D in 2024  
Analysts call it 1 of the 2 most responsive congressional maps in the country



Plan passed by PA legislature and vetoed by Governor Wolf

PA currently has one of the most balanced, responsive, congressional district plans in the country. BUT there's nothing in law to protect that.









# PA House and Senate?

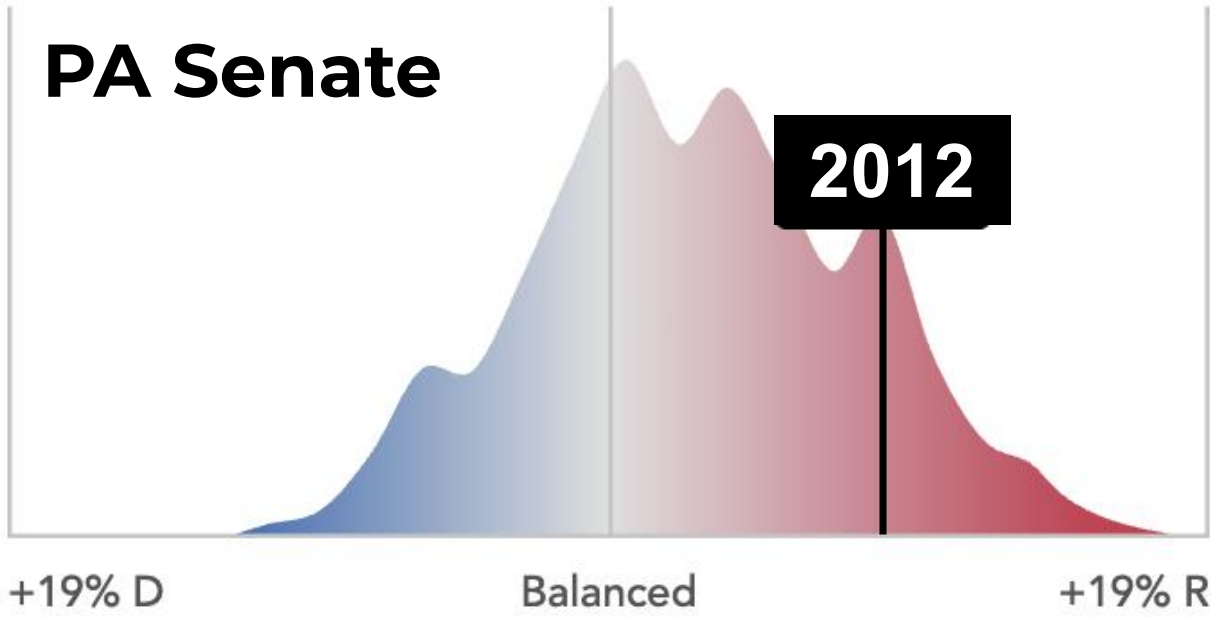
In the 2021 redistricting, public input and attention made a HUGE difference.

## The Legislative Reapportionment Commission

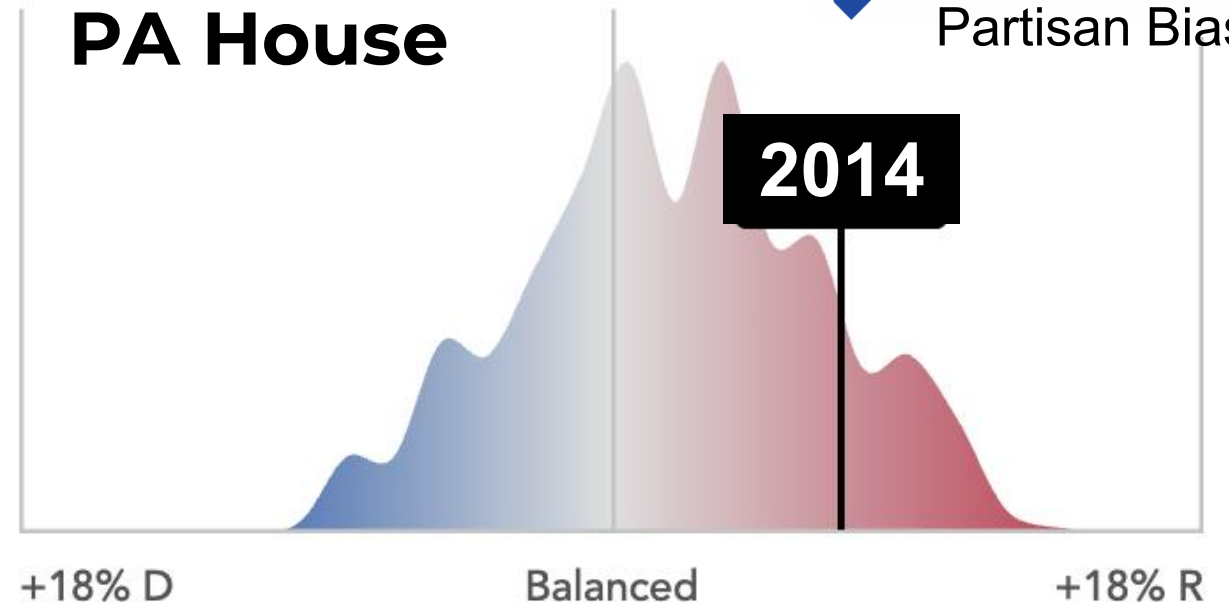
- hosted sixteen public hearings
- invited thirty-six expert witnesses
- heard from 145 citizen-witnesses
- received over 6,000 written testimony submissions
- considered over 100 district plans or parts of plans

 <p><b>Comment on state redistricting</b></p> <p>👤 By EH</p>	 <p><b>LRC Senate Draft - Balanced Metrics and Population</b></p> <p>👤 By MW</p> <p>📄 compactness, incumbents, minority opportunity, population deviation, regional balance, splitting</p>	 <p><b>Revision to LRC-House-Preliminary Map</b></p> <p>👤 By JS</p> <p>📄 #compactness, #harrisburg, #lancaster, #reading, #scranton, #statecollege</p>	 <p><b>PA house</b></p> <p>👤 By DH</p>	 <p><b>Adjustments to Preliminary Map</b></p> <p>👤 By NR</p> <p>📄 finalmap, lancaster city, litz, manheimtownship, prelim. house map, state house map, warwick township</p>	 <p><b>Preliminary LRC Map - Lancaster 50/96/41 Edit</b></p> <p>👤 By ar</p> <p>📄 district 50, district 96, district 97, lancaster, prelim. house map</p>
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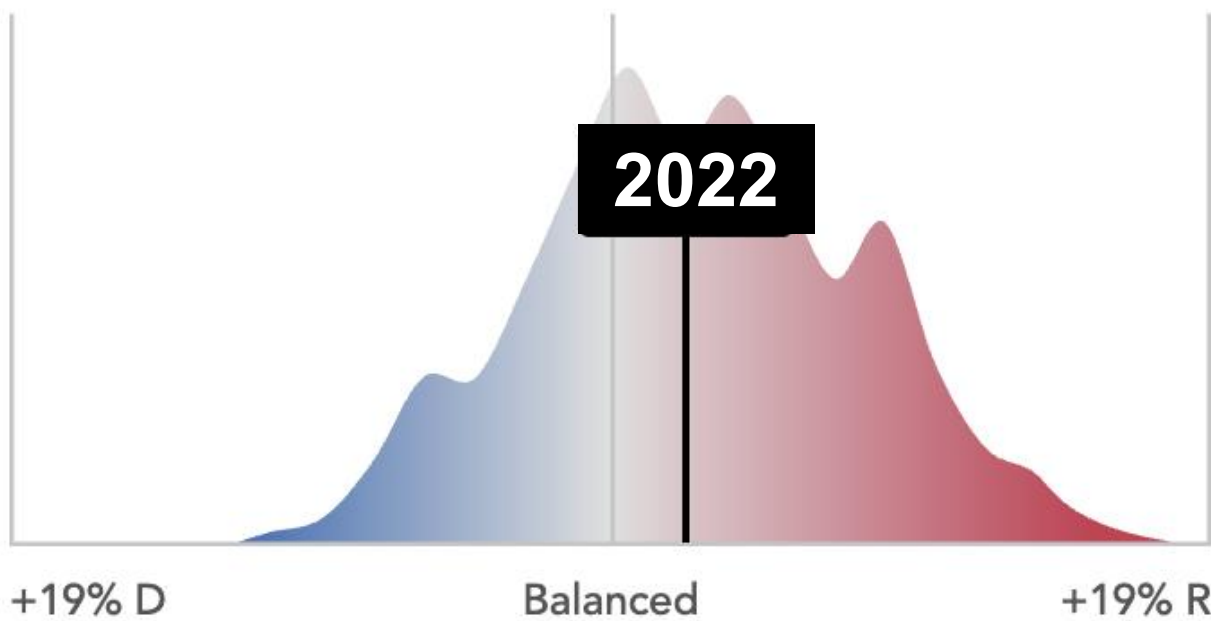
# PA Senate



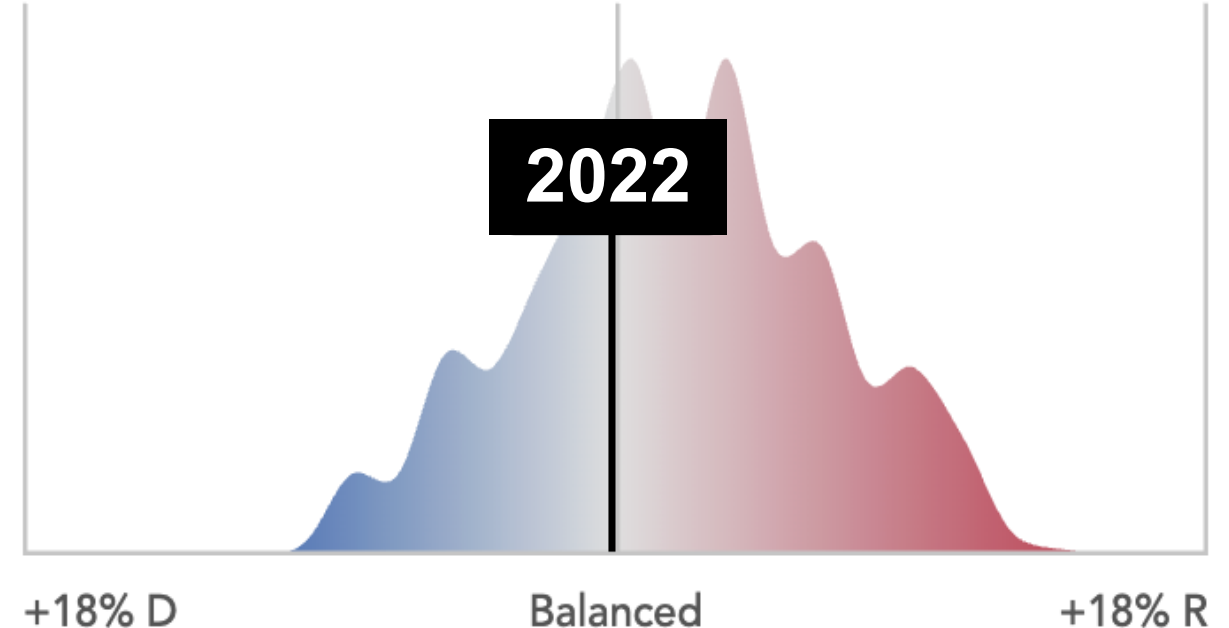
# PA House



**2022**

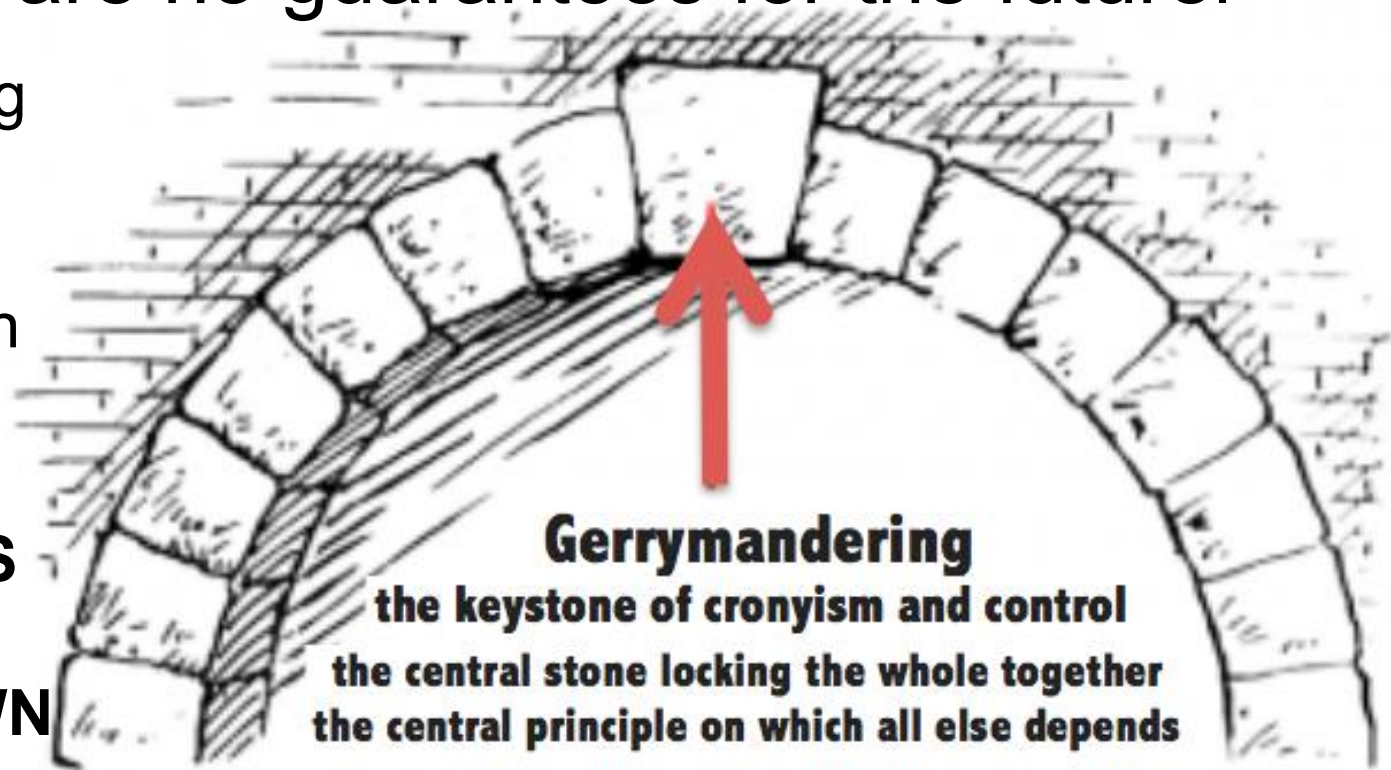


**2022**



Despite better maps, there are no guarantees for the future.

Pennsylvania's process for redistricting house and senate maps gives party leaders more direct control over their own and their colleagues' districts than any other state or country.



**THERE IS NO VOTE ON FINAL MAPS AND NO REQUIRED EXPLANATION FOR WHERE THE LINES ARE DRAWN**

Senate  
Majority  
Leader

Senate  
Minority  
Leader

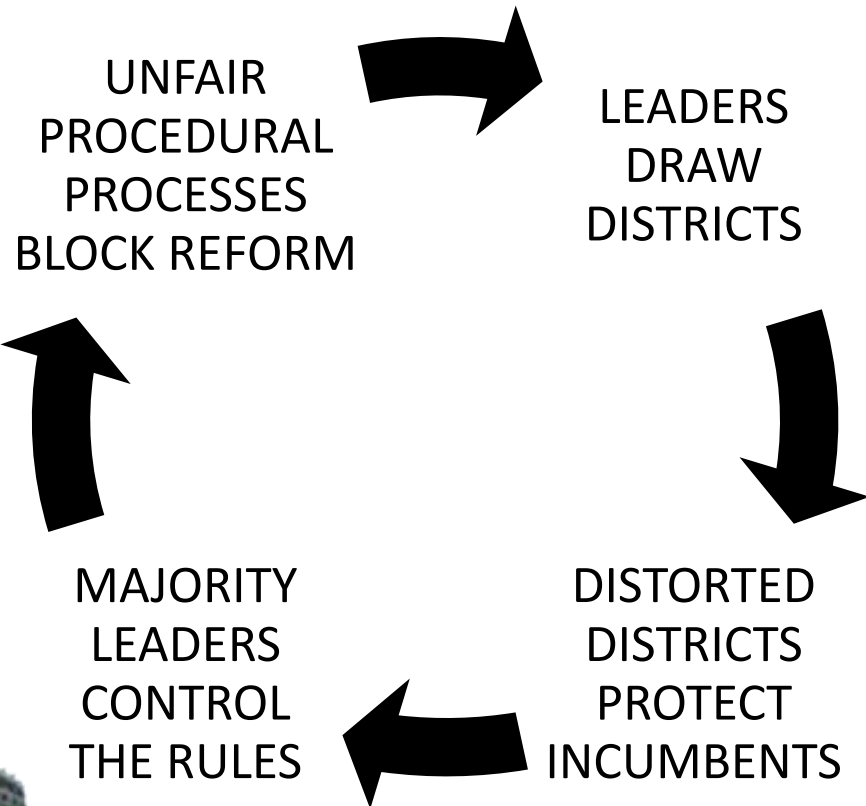


House  
Majority  
Leader

House  
Minority  
Leader

# This matters more than we realized

Gerrymandering puts power in the hands of party leaders, **not voters, or the majority of legislators.**



## Leaders also control

- CAUCUS BUDGET
- CAUCUS PERSONNEL
- LEGISLATIVE AGENDA
- BUDGET NEGOTIATIONS
- FLOW OF MAJOR CAMPAIGN DONATIONS



The will of one leader or one major donor can outweigh the interests of all PA & voices of all other PA legislators.

## 2025 Report for the ABA Task Force for American Democracy

“In most states, the power to redistrict is vested solely in the legislature. **Internationally, the United States is an extreme outlier in this regard, as the only long-term democracy where redistricting is exclusively authorized to be effected by politicians.**”



**Pennsylvania is an even more extreme outlier as just four legislative leaders have direct, almost complete control over their own and their colleagues' districts.**

## 2025 Report for the ABA Task Force for American Democracy

# Recommended Solution:

Independent redistricting commissions made up of citizens who are insulated from professional politics and selected without input from politicians

- **House Bill 31**, Introduced by Representatives Steve Samuelson (D, House District 135, Northampton County) and Mark Gillen (R, House District 128, Berks County)
- **Senate Bill 131**, introduced by Senator Tim Kearney (D, Senate District 26, Delaware County)

Commission  
Independence



Transparent  
Public  
Process

Prioritized Mapping Criteria

**Find this summary and more details at [fairdistrictspa.com/solution](http://fairdistrictspa.com/solution)**

## **Summary of an Amendment to the Pennsylvania Constitution Creating an Independent Redistricting Commission**

252301

The bill amends the PA Constitution by replacing the Legislative Reapportionment Commission with an independent citizens redistricting commission to draw both congressional and state legislative districts with defined transparency and public input and clear, prioritized mapping standards.

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### **COMMISSION INDEPENDENCE:**

Creates an Independent Redistricting Commission that is reasonably representative of the Commonwealth's diversity and free from legislative influence in both the selection of commission members and actions of the commission.

### **TRANSPARENT PUBLIC PROCESS:**

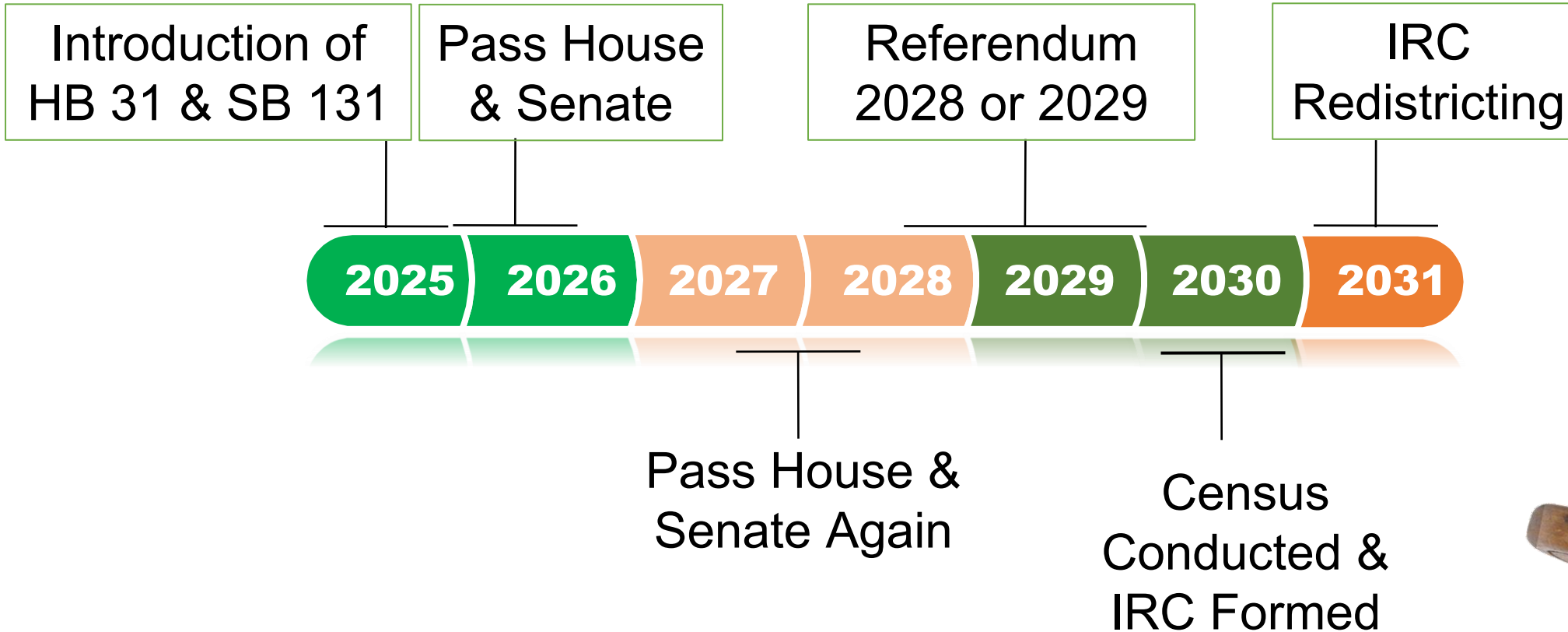
Requires the adoption of a transparent redistricting process that includes public hearings, sharing of information about redistricting proposals, and equal access to all data and information for both the general public and commissioners.

### **PRIORITIZED MAPPING STANDARDS:**

Provides clearly prioritized, measurable standards to promote equitable representation for counties, municipalities, and communities of interest, with defined limits on population deviation and attention to compactness, contiguity, and geographic boundaries.

# PA Constitutional Amendments *Take a Long Time*

- PA is 1 of 24 states that don't allow citizen initiative and referendum
- 1 of just 10 states that require constitutional amendments pass through **two** consecutive legislative sessions before going on the ballot for a public vote
- 1 of just 4 of those that have 2-year legislative sessions
- In both sessions, amendments must pass 3 months before the next General Election



# Why Does PA Need an Independent Redistricting Commission?



Find links to this report,  
bills and bill summaries at  
[fairdistrictspa.com/solution](http://fairdistrictspa.com/solution)

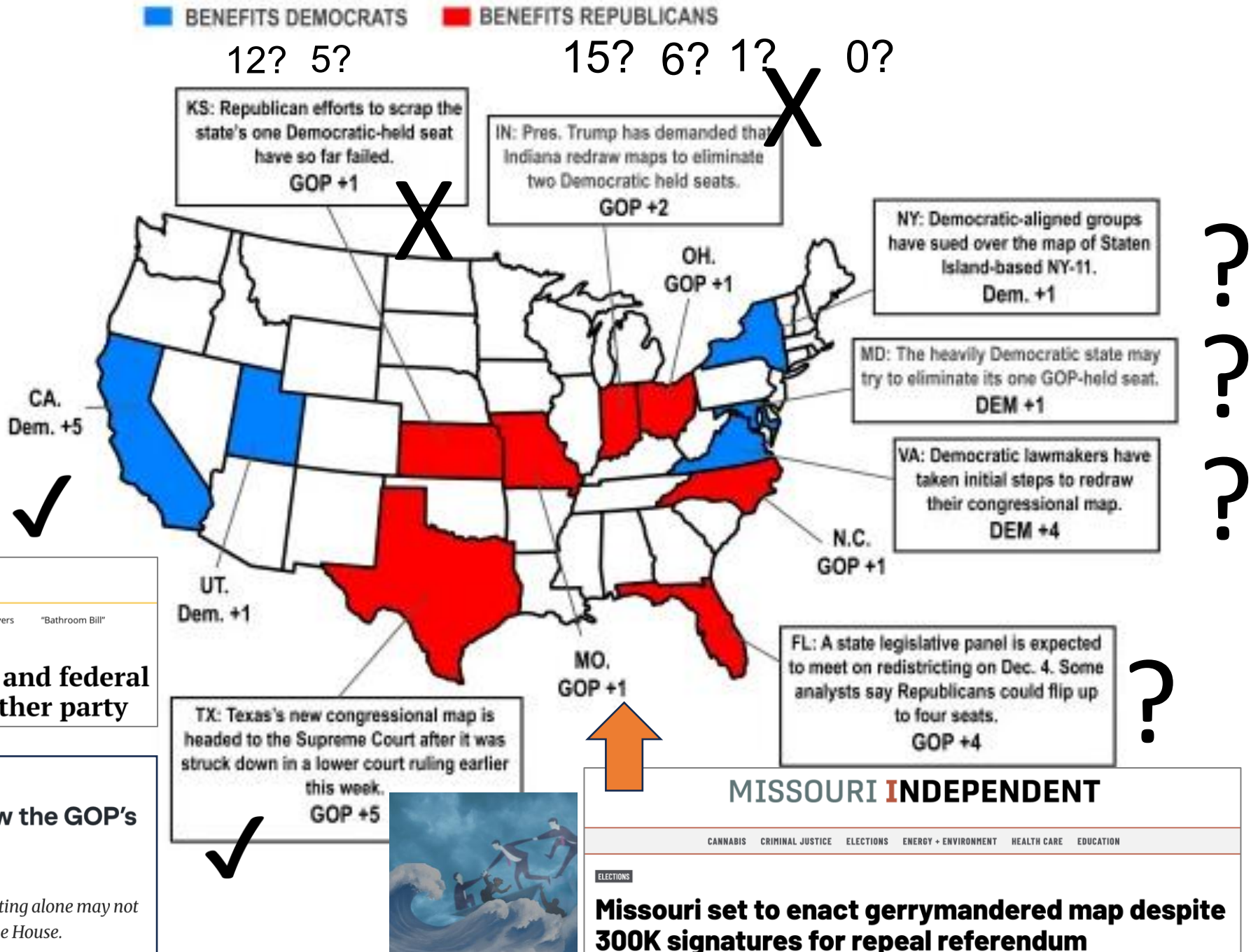
## Here are some questions to consider:

- Why should Pennsylvania change its current redistricting processes?
- Didn't the 2021 redistricting solve things?
- Why would an Independent Redistricting Commission (IRC) be an improvement? (Are all commissions IRCs? What happened in Michigan? Any lessons learned?)
- What would a transparent, public process look like? (Weren't the PA 2021 processes good enough?)
- Doesn't PA already have adequate mapping standards? (What about competitive districts?)
- What does the prison population have to do with redistricting?
- Why does Pennsylvania need to address this NOW

# Nationally:

Who's winning the Congressional redistricting wars?  
Where the maps stand now

New York Daily News  
November 2025



**★ THE TEXAS TRIBUNE**

DONATE    2026 Elections    Property Taxes    Texas A&M    School Takeovers    "Bathroom Bill"

2026 TEXAS ELECTIONS

**Texas Democrats fill every state and federal race on 2026 ballot, a first for either party**

**MS NOW**

**Chris Hayes: 'Dummymandering': How the GOP's redistricting push could backfire**

*Based on what we saw at the polls on Tuesday, redistricting alone may not be enough for the Republican Party to keep control of the House.*



# Cannon: The answer to authoritarianism isn't gerrymandering



*Virginia earned national respect in 2020 by rejecting partisan map manipulation. If we reverse course now, we send a clear signal that reform lasts only until it becomes inconvenient.*

## **The moral case**

Gerrymandering disenfranchises voters. It replaces real voter accountability with prearranged results.

A race to the bottom is not a defense strategy for democracy.

Once each side justifies its conduct by pointing to the worst behavior elsewhere, reform becomes conditional and principles become temporary. **That is how democratic norms decay.**

## **The practical case**

The real vulnerabilities in our democratic system lie elsewhere.

Gerrymandering does not address any of those real vulnerabilities.

If the concern is authoritarian interference, the response must be institutional strengthening — not partisan rigging of maps.

## **Political opportunism in a moment of crisis**

When maps are redrawn in ways that conveniently align with specific politicians' ambitions, voters are right to be skeptical.

That is not a fairness argument. It is a power argument.

**You do not defend democracy by bending it. You do not fight fire with fire. You fight fire with water. Strengthen the rules. Protect the guardrails. Hold the line.**

- No one knows who will control the PA House or Senate; no one knows who will sit in the Governor's office or hold the PA Supreme Court majority.
- No one knows who will have the final say in determining future voting districts in Pennsylvania.
- What we DO know is that when one party uses redistricting to hold control, the partisan divide grows deeper and voters' distrust increases.

**The future of democracy runs through Pennsylvania.**

**PA can be a pawn in a national gerrymandering game, or reclaim our place as a leader for government, of, by and for the people.**

# Ways to Support the Work for PA Redistricting Reform

1. Sign the petition in support of an independent redistricting commission.  
**Text SignFDPA to 942-53 to sign the petition.**
2. Contact your legislators to ask them to support an independent redistricting commission. **Find legislators, cosponsor status and contact info at [fairdistrictspa.com/take-action/contact-your-legislator](https://fairdistrictspa.com/take-action/contact-your-legislator).**
3. Follow us on social media and share, like, comment. Look for Fair Districts PA on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Bluesky, TikTok and Facebook. **Find local page info at [fairdistrictspa.com/local-groups](https://fairdistrictspa.com/local-groups).**
4. Hold a postcard party and send postcards in support of reform to your legislators. Check [fairdistrictspa.com/updates/postcards-send-a-card-host-a-party](https://fairdistrictspa.com/updates/postcards-send-a-card-host-a-party).
5. **Check candidate positions at Vote411 and [fairdistrictspa.com/take-action/know-before-you-vote-1](https://fairdistrictspa.com/take-action/know-before-you-vote-1)**

[www.FairDistrictsPA.com](https://www.FairDistrictsPA.com)  
Text SignFDPA to 942-53



Join us on the capitol steps on Wednesday, June 3, to ask for a vote on redistricting reform House Bill 31 & Senate Bill 131.