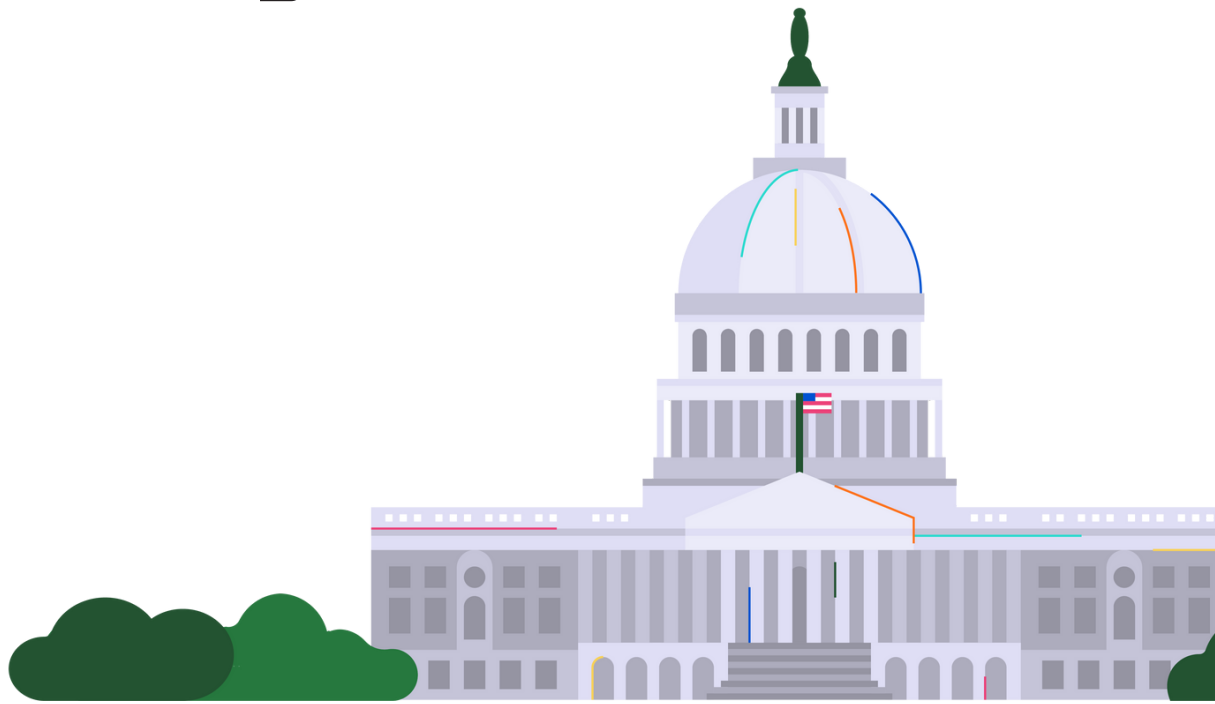




# Single-Winner Districts and the Failures of Redistricting



## Introduction

The 118th Congress kicked off in a spectacularly chaotic fashion. First, there was a prolonged fight over the [speakership](#) in which the House was held hostage for days by a small faction of one party seeking attention and an unclear list of demands. Then, almost immediately after Kevin McCarthy eked out a victory, Congress allowed the U.S. to hit its [debt ceiling](#), prompting the Treasury to suspend retirement fund investments in order to prevent default. Meanwhile, news broke that the newly elected [Rep. George Santos](#) effectively scammed his way into the House of Representatives, making a mockery of the way we elect our leaders.

All this chaos in Congress rightly receives a lot of attention, and yet only focusing on the crazy happenings themselves can miss the underlying causes of it all. To understand the new Congress and the current and future dysfunction on Capitol Hill, we need to look beyond the individual personalities in play and beyond the 2022 midterms that elected them. **At the heart of the dysfunction in Congress is America's redistricting process and the fundamentally broken way we elect representatives.**

Last year's once-in-a-decade congressional redistricting process was a disaster. There were drawn-out fights over map proposals and cynical attempts at gerrymandering more nakedly self-serving and partisan than ever. There were disregarded deadlines, leaving voters unsure of who their choices were and candidates unsure of where to campaign, sometimes until just days before their primary election. Additionally, communities of color, already underrepresented in the legislative process, had their votes diluted further just as the Supreme Court appears poised to strike down the last remaining protections for minority representation in the Voting Rights Act.

This report will begin by assessing the results of the recent redistricting cycle. Here is what we found:

- **90% of districts were uncompetitive in 2022<sup>1</sup>.** This lack of competitiveness within those districts marginalized minority party voices within those districts and gave each major party an enormous number of “safe” districts where voters could be taken for granted and largely ignored.
- **35 races were uncontested.** 16 districts had only one candidate and 19 others had only one major party candidate on the ballot. While this number is fairly typical when compared to previous years, it is still unacceptable for such a sizable chunk of voters to have virtually no change in who represents them.
- **Independent commissions can only do so much.** States that used independent redistricting commissions saw only modest improvements in competitiveness and partisan fairness compared to those with maps drawn by state legislatures. While independent commissions are well-intentioned and one of the best approaches to fair districting within the single-winner district system, they are insufficient to fix the uncompetitive, unrepresentative nature of most congressional districts.

<sup>1</sup> Elections in 42 districts (10% of the House) ended with a margin of five percent or less.

These are the results we can expect from the broken way we elect members of Congress. The winner-take-all system used in the U.S. – where there is only one representative per district – naturally lends itself to the problems of uncompetitiveness and unfairness, as well as to the chaos we’re seeing on Capitol Hill.

Defenders of democracy on the right, left, and everywhere in between need to grapple with this important truth: **The way we elect Congress is fundamentally broken and in need of reform.** Winner-take-all elections necessarily cause problems that can't be fixed within the winner-take-all system.

## So What’s the Alternative?

Most democracies use some form of proportional representation to elect their legislature. In this kind of system, a party’s share of votes in an election determines how many seats it holds in the legislature. Instead of single-winner districts, each district has multiple representatives (likely between 3-5), with winners elected in proportion to their party’s amount of support. If a party wins 40% of the vote, it wins roughly 40% of the seats; if it wins 60% of the vote, it receives roughly 60% of the seats. And so on.

**We could pass a bill tomorrow to use multi-winner districts with proportional representation, a model used by the overwhelming majority of democracies around the world.**

Proportional representation guarantees partisan fairness, makes gerrymandering pointless, and creates competition in every district. It ensures that every voter has a voice, regardless of what district they live in. It allows new parties to form, ending the binary “doom loop” destroying our politics. Further, it sidelines extreme anti-democratic forces, which can no longer translate a minority of votes into outsized political power.

It should be no wonder that proportional systems are the preference of some of the [healthiest and most stable democracies](#) in the world, or that more than 200 political scientists, historians, and legal scholars [recently urged Congress](#) to adopt proportional representation in the U.S.

**Nothing in the Constitution says we have to elect Congress the way we currently do.** Article I, Section IV gives Congress the power to determine how to conduct congressional elections. We could pass a bill tomorrow to use multi-winner districts with proportional representation, a model used by the overwhelming majority of democracies around the world.

To break the cycle of political dysfunction in Congress, we need to understand the ways our current system allows and encourages it. The 118th Congress, with its difficulty electing a speaker and paying its bills, is only a new low in a line of broken representative institutions in the U.S. The chaos and discord in our country can still get worse. Unless we

believe that America's political problems will simply go away on their own, we need to take a clear look at the electoral system that got us to this point and consider what we can do to reform it.

This report has three parts.

- The first part displays our findings on the recent redistricting cycle and the 2022 midterms.
- The second breaks down the ways that single-winner plurality elections are the root cause of many of the greatest dysfunctions in the United States today.
- And the final part makes the case for proportional representation, the solution to dysfunctional redistricting and, we believe, the future of democracy in America.

## Part I: Findings from the 2020 redistricting cycle

The decade from 2010 to 2020 elevated the profile of the redistricting process in the public consciousness, and with it, the problem of gerrymandering. Some states adopted new anti-gerrymandering laws, some state courts declared gerrymandering unconstitutional, and redistricting became a matter of heightened public awareness and concern. The new census and its requirement to redistrict every state would test whether all that attention and energy could deliver us the fair maps that people demanded, or whether the system was beyond reform.

The result? Beginning with delayed census results and proceeding slowly and fitfully, the 2021-2022 redistricting cycle was a disaster – an ugly mix of conflict, outrage, and (of course) lawsuits. At one point, a group of Missouri politicians held [a prayer vigil](#) in favor of more extreme gerrymandering of their state. The Supreme Court weighed in several times (via its “shadow docket”), with clear signals of its intent to act again in the coming term. Each time, it undermined the concept of political equality.

The long, strange trip to final maps concluded on June 28, 2022, when the Supreme Court reinstated a district map for Louisiana that lower courts found in violation of the Voting Rights Act. The new district maps break up communities, dilute the votes of already underrepresented minority groups, and leave more Americans than ever effectively voiceless in the general election.

### Competition

An election without competition is just a coronation. But that is what took place in the overwhelming majority of congressional districts in 2022. Only 42 House races (10% of Congress) ended with a margin of five percentage points or less, meaning that by the standard numerical definition of competitiveness, **90% of districts were uncompetitive 2022.**

About 9 In 10 Americans live in a district where the outcome is all but determined before the general election.



Some races were unexpectedly close on Election Day, and others were thought to be competitive but turned out to not be close. In the latter cases, these districts had some of the benefits of competitiveness (both parties investing money and effort in the district, local media attention, etc.,) even though they ended up with a wider than anticipated margin.

Yet these are relatively rare exceptions to the rule of uncompetitiveness in 2022. Ultimately, election forecast organizations were broadly in agreement ahead of the election that the overwhelming majority of districts were safe for both parties to largely ignore.

On Election Day:

- [The Cook Political Report](#) considered 36 districts (8.3% of Congress) to be true toss-ups, with only another 28 (6.4%) classified as “lean” districts.
- [Sabato’s Crystal Ball](#) considered 34 districts (7.8%) to be toss-ups and another 43 (9.9%) as lean districts.
- [And Inside Elections](#) called 19 districts (4.4%) toss-ups, with another 40 (9.2%) categorized as tilting or leaning in favor of one party or the other.

The type of representative who represents an uncompetitive district tends to be different from the type who represents a competitive one. In uncompetitive districts, races are decided in primaries, where candidates are often motivated to prove their intense partisanship. Once they get through their primary, they have little motivation to reach out to voters beyond their party.

Some district maps were intentional gerrymanders that attempted to benefit one party or the other. Although, blaming gerrymandering for the lack of competitiveness does not come close to the real root of the problem. Plenty of uncompetitive maps were adopted by independent commissions and did not seek to protect incumbents. As we explain below, the way maps are drawn has little to do with how competitive they are.

That points to a deeper problem than gerrymandering: **Republicans and Democrats live in different places.** People simply do not live in evenly divided communities where every election will be a close contest. Mapdrawers cannot create single-winner districts that ensure competitiveness, nor should they, or else districts would have extreme nonsensical shapes and would arbitrarily divide communities of interest from each other, among many other problems. As a consequence, single-winner districts, which prioritize geography over all else, cannot provide more than a few dozen competitive races each cycle.

For this reason, America’s two parties act like two nations in a border dispute. All the conflict is concentrated on a thin strip of land – each party knows it would be a waste of time and resources to encroach on the other’s main territory. Republicans have little incentive to appeal to anyone living in Democratic territory, and vice versa. The only voters who make a real difference are those who happen to live in the approximately 9% of districts that are competitive.

## Uncontested Elections

Worse than an election with little meaningful choice is an election with no choice at all. That was the reality in [35 districts](#) (8% of the House), where only one of the major parties had candidates on the ballot in November 2022. 16 of these districts did not even have minor party candidates, leaving voters truly without options.

Of course, voters who are satisfied with their incumbent representative’s performance

may not mind their lack of options on their ballot. But in no district is everyone uniformly supportive of the same party and candidate. And with no real contest, incumbents are not motivated to win over people of their district who do not already support them.

35 is a fairly typical number of essentially uncontested races compared to previous years, but that does not make it less problematic. In a democratic system, voters are supposed to have a choice for who represents them. In much of the United States, that is simply not the case.

1 in 10 Americans had only one major party candidate on their ballot In 2022.



In state legislatures, this problem was significantly worse in 2022. About [70% of Oklahoma's state legislature](#) and [64% of Massachusetts' legislature](#) were uncontested last fall. **According to [Ballotpedia](#), 41% of all the state legislative seats up for election last fall were uncontested.** And in 23 of the 88 state legislatures that held elections in 2022, more than half of the seats were uncontested, guaranteeing control of the chamber to one party or the other before any ballots were cast.

These numbers paint a startling picture of democracy in America. In many places across the country, voters' ability to choose their representatives is a myth.

## The Impact of Independent Commissions

One of the strongest efforts to combat gerrymandering has been the establishment of independent redistricting commissions that takes the map-making process out of the hands of state legislatures. Ideally, they consist of an equal number of Republicans and Democrats from a pool of citizens who cannot be politicians themselves, as well as one or more independent members. The commissions then follow a series of criteria in evaluating proposed district plans, like whether the districts are compact, contiguous, and consistent with existing political boundaries.

The goal of independent commissions - to take partisanship out of redistricting and prioritize fair and neutral standards - is extremely noble. For more than a decade, those advocating for commissions have been on the front lines battling gerrymandering and striving for political equality. And there are positive results that commissions can point to. But in a winner-take-all system, commissions can only do so much.

On the one hand, maps drawn by independent commissions are less likely to be extremely skewed in favor of one party. States with independent commissions have a significantly lower efficiency gap<sup>2</sup> than those where the legislature drew the maps.<sup>3</sup> States with commissions also fare slightly better in terms of competitiveness, although this measure

<sup>2</sup> The efficiency gap measures the difference in how efficient votes are for Democrats as opposed to Republicans, and is one common measure of how much a district map favors one party over the other. See this helpful explainer from the [Brennan Center](#).  
<sup>3</sup> The median absolute value of the efficiency gap for the five states that drew more than two districts with an independent commission is 2.8%, while that value for the 24 states where the legislature drew more than two districts is 10.6%. One commission state (California) has an efficiency gap greater than 8%, compared to 15 of the legislative states.

varies a lot and can disappear entirely depending on what counts as an independent commission.

Commissions are not created equal, and some forms of commissions are just as bad as their respective legislatures when it comes to adopting fair district maps. The above statistics on fairness and competition only come from seven states: Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Michigan, Montana, and Washington. But New Jersey also uses a commission, and its map is heavily skewed in favor of Democrats and includes no highly competitive swing districts. That may be because New Jersey's commission is not truly independent – members of the commission are allowed to be politicians themselves. Seven states use similar processes that masquerade as independent, including politician commissions, back-up commissions (which step in when the legislature fails to agree on maps), and advisory commissions (which don't have ultimate authority). On average, these states do **even worse** than those where the legislature draws the lines itself.<sup>4</sup>

Likewise, New York would normally be considered an independent commission state, but during the recent redistricting cycle, its process simply failed. The legislature attempted to exploit a loophole in the state's redistricting law to draw its own severe gerrymander, which was later replaced by a court-ordered map drawn by a special master. A similar failure occurred in Virginia, negating a hard won victory for a politician commission that passed in 2020. In the end, courts wound up drawing the maps in both states.

But even when commissions are truly independent, they do not always increase confidence in the process. Consider Arizona: The maps it used beginning in 2012 favored Democrats; in fact, it was the only state that year where Republicans earned more votes than Democrats and yet Democrats won more seats. That skew led to Republicans in Arizona attempting to overturn the commission's map any way they could: They twice attempted to remove the chair of the commission (both attempts were blocked in state court), and twice filed lawsuits that made it all the way to the US Supreme Court.

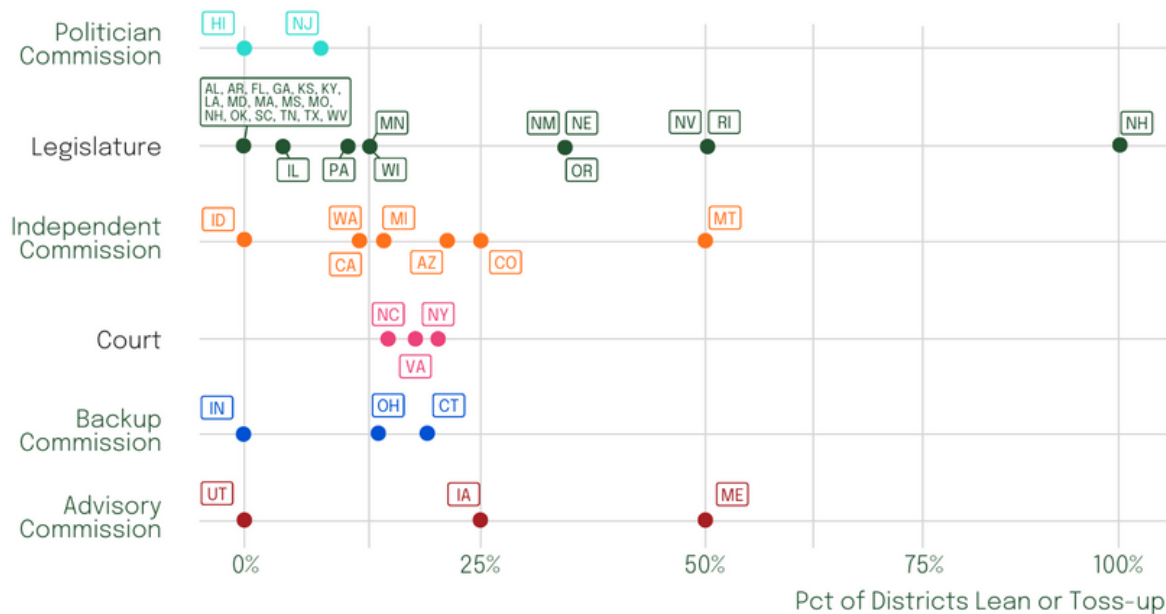
Independent commissions, at their best, can provide only marginal benefits. Consider what is probably the greatest recent success story for independent redistricting: Michigan. A remarkable all-volunteer effort took an egregiously gerrymandered state and helped institute an independent redistricting process that ultimately led to the adoption of a map with a low efficiency gap and three times the average number of competitive districts. But even with that impressive showing, most of the state's 13 districts are still completely locked up for one of the two parties. [Only two Michigan districts were competitive on Election Day.](#) The map does not guarantee that a party winning a majority of the state vote will win a majority of the seats. And Michigan is a **best case scenario** for independent redistricting commissions, because every other commission-instituted map is far less competitive.

<sup>4</sup> The median efficiency gap in these seven states is 14.4%, compared to 10.6% in the legislative states. Political scientists have recommended a cutoff of 8% for identifying a likely extreme partisan gerrymander.



The below table shows how independent commissions make little difference when it comes to drawing competitive districts:

**Percentage of competitive districts by commission type**



Competitive districts are rarest in states drawn by Republican legislatures. But independent commissions actually performed worse than Democratic legislatures, where the number of competitive districts slightly **increased** this year.

It shouldn't be surprising that independent commissions can do little to dramatically improve competitiveness. The core problem with drawing competitive districts is not only that some politicians want to draw unfair districts that benefit their party - it's that Republicans and Democrats live in different places, and that is simply not conducive to creating competitive districts when there are other criteria to balance as well. Expecting independent commissions to produce competitive elections is asking too much in a system that is naturally predisposed to favor one side or the other.

**Maps drawn by independent commissions are inadequate to fix the problems posed by winner-take-all districts, which place a hard ceiling on how competitive and fair our congressional elections can be.** Even a map drawn with the greatest of intentions by a fair-minded saint would lock most voters in uncompetitive districts and continue to push us further down the doom loop of hyper-partisan polarization.

## Summary

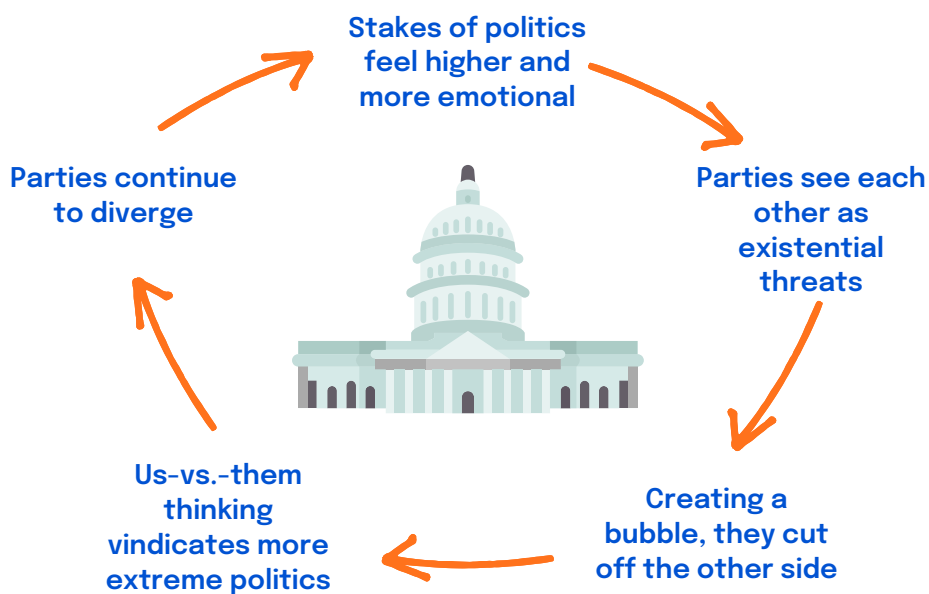
Both parties aggressively gerrymander. Some states carve up communities and disempower minority voters in the interests of all-out partisan warfare. State-based attempts to reform the redistricting process are band-aids on bullet wounds.

The redistricting wars have taken America's precarious political situation and made it worse. While political elites focus on short-term wins and jockey for position, voters see their power minimized all the more and feel like pawns in someone else's game. All in a system that claims to be democratic.

It can be easy to blame proximate actors for all the chaos and cynical partisanship, and there is plenty of blame to go around - parties, politicians, and courts all play a role. But the chaos of the 2020 redistricting cycle is the logical conclusion of a set of incentives that trace back to one law: the requirement that states elect exclusively from winner-take-all districts. It is a system made perfect for dysfunction.

## Part II: Single-winner districts

An election with a single winner is quintessentially winner-take-all: one candidate wins the seat; all others go home empty-handed. That may be what we are used to, but the zero-sum, all-or-nothing nature of winner-take-all contests is a formula for distorted and divisive politics. In today's nationalized and polarized politics, it makes gerrymandering easy and effective, drives us toward a rigid two-party system, makes competition scarce, and creates a toxic doom loop of escalating us-versus-them partisanship.



Single-winner districts make partisan gerrymandering easy and effective.

During the 2010 redistricting cycle, Republicans strategically targeted the redistricting process in closely divided states like Michigan, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and others. They realized that if they carved up the districts effectively, they could win more seats, even if they lost the overall vote.

Their plan worked. In 2012, even though more votes were cast for Democrats overall, Republicans were able to keep their House majority.

With the Republican seat share exaggerated in these and many other states, it just didn't matter that they lost support among the voters. The districts ensured they would win, even if they lost.

### The results for Republican candidates in the states listed above speak for themselves:

- **Michigan:** 45.6% of the votes, 64.3% of the seats (9 of 14)
- **Pennsylvania:** 48.8% of the votes, 72.2% of the seats (13 of 18)
- **North Carolina:** 48.8% of the votes, 69.2% of the seats (9 of 13)

Democrats pushed for redistricting reform in several states and for federal legislation setting national redistricting standards, and in the absence of those reforms, they also began to gerrymander Democratic states like Illinois and New York to try to counteract Republican gerrymandering. In 2022, had the courts not thrown out some of the gerrymandered maps that benefited Democrats, it is possible that Democrats would have retained control of the House while losing the national popular vote – the inverse of 2012.

We now live in a world where redistricting means aggressively gerrymandering. Anything less would be unilateral disarmament that would hand victory to the opposing party.

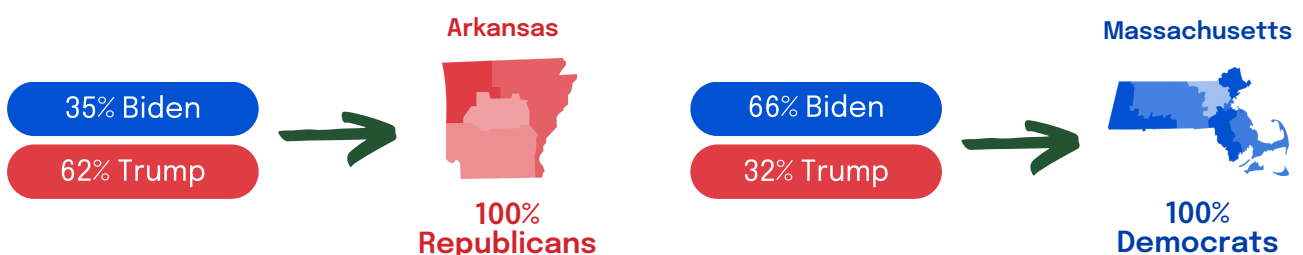
**Single-winner systems are ripe for partisan gerrymandering.** In single-winner systems, all that matters is who has the majority in a particular district. That means that partisans can “pack” their opponents together in one district (which they may win by 80% or more) and then “crack” them among several others (which they may lose by small margins, never making up a large enough percentage of the population to win). That divides communities and dilutes their collective power.

Single-winner districts prevent Democrats living in “red” districts, Republicans living in “blue” districts, and independents and third-party supporters from having any voice at all.

Even the most reasonable single-winner district maps will have few competitive districts, because people are not evenly distributed; they usually live in heavily red (often rural) places or heavily blue (often urban) places. But there are many Republicans living in cities and many Democrats living outside of them – they just have no direct representation because only one person can win in their districts.

Under single-winner districts, in some parts of the country, every seat is safe for one party only. In the 2020 election, a third of the votes cast for president in Massachusetts were for Donald Trump, but each of the state’s nine congressional districts elected a Democrat. Likewise, in Arkansas, a third of the votes cast for president were for Joe Biden, but each of the state’s four districts elected a Republican. In any safe district, there are many voters who favor the minority party, and undoubtedly many who would prefer a different party entirely.

### 2020 General Election Results and Current Congressional Districts



A [sizable majority](#) of Americans say they want options outside of the inflexible two-party system, and the number of Americans registering as political independents is [growing dramatically](#). But the last time a candidate won a seat in the House of Representatives outside of the two major parties was when Independent Bernie Sanders was in the House. The high threshold to win in a single-winner district makes it practically impossible to mount a serious campaign outside of the parties that dominate right now.

## Geographic sorting has exacerbated the problems with single-winner districts.

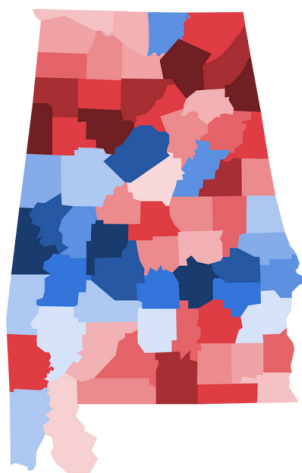
In an earlier era, both Democrats and Republicans could compete more broadly. But the parties have now sorted by region - with Democrats living in cities and dense suburbs and Republicans living in the exurbs and more sparsely populated suburbs. This makes it hard for even the most fair-minded mapmakers to draw districts that are competitive while still being relatively compact and coherent.

Additionally, because Democrats cluster in dense urban areas, cities wind up with a very large number of lopsided districts. Since the translation of votes to seats under single-winner districts is heavily dependent on where voters live, Democrats “waste” a lot of votes by running up the vote margin in cities, while Republicans are more “efficiently” distributed throughout states.

Consider that in 2017, Democrat Doug Jones won a surprising victory against Republican Roy Moore in a Senate special election in Alabama, yet Roy Moore won more votes than Doug Jones in six out of Alabama’s seven congressional districts. Of course, because it was a Senate election, the vote totals in House districts didn’t matter. But had the exact same votes been cast district-by-district, rather than statewide, for Republican and Democratic congressional nominees, Republicans would have won all but one of Alabama’s seats with only 48% - a minority of the vote!

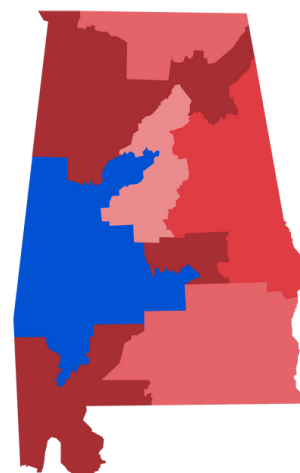
**Actual 2017 Special Election Results**

Jones → 49.97%  
 Moore → 48.34%



**2017 Special Election Results by Congressional District**

Jones → 1/7 Districts  
 Moore → 6/7 Districts



The reason so many of Alabama’s Democratic votes could come from one district was because that district included Birmingham, Tuscaloosa, and Montgomery—three of the state’s five largest cities. Alabama’s new 2022 map – at issue in the Supreme Court case *Merrill v. Milligan* – also packs those cities into a single district.

## Single-winner districts can limit representation for people of color.

The United States has a deplorable history of inequality and oppression at the voting booth. While we strive to become a multiracial democracy, this has not been our history, and it certainly is not the reality today. The Voting Rights Act, passed in 1965, sought to make voting more equal, but court decisions of the last decade have chipped away at its strongest protections. The remaining Section II requires that states draw majority-minority districts where possible – districts where a racial minority group or groups make up a majority of the district – but the Supreme Court appears poised to undo that protection in *Merrill v. Milligan*, which will be decided this year. The era of federal courts as safeguards for minority voting rights appears to be over.

But even if the protections were to remain in place, majority-minority districts do not adequately ensure fair representation. For one thing, some amount of segregation is needed for the law to be effective – a group of people has to live in roughly the same place in order to have a district line drawn around them. A rule that relies on segregation in order to work is a sign of a deeply unhealthy system.

Moreover, it isn’t just cynical gerrymandering that puts majority-minority districts at risk. Independent commissions that genuinely seek to draw fair maps can do the same. Michigan’s independent redistricting commission, in an attempt to make its map more competitive for both major parties, proposed a map in 2022 that reduced the number of Black voters in its 13th District – historically a majority Black part of Detroit. Today, for the first time in nearly seven decades, America’s largest majority Black city does not have a single Black representative in Congress.

Former Michigan representative and vice chair of the Congressional Black Caucus Brenda Lawrence previously represented Detroit and announced her retirement shortly after the redistricting process situated most of her district into the new 12th district. She [told Michigan Radio](#) that having a Black representative for a Black community is crucial to serving its constituents. “There are often issues that directly impact us left off the table,” she said. “If you don’t have the Black representation, you don’t get a voice.”

**There is simply no good way to ensure equal representation as long as the United States uses single-winner districts.** They allow the “packing and cracking” – intentional or not – that isolates a group’s voting power in one district and/or dilutes their voting power across many districts. Even if fair-minded map drawers do their best to balance the need for competitiveness, partisan fairness, and racial representation, single-winner districts force them to balance trade-offs that inevitably end up hurting one priority or the other –

and underrepresented communities too often end up being the ones to get hurt.

Communities of color have always been forced to be on the defensive in the fight for a fair share of political power. It is foolish to continue on with this broken system expecting better results than it can possibly produce. To move our country forward, we need a better way to elect Congress.

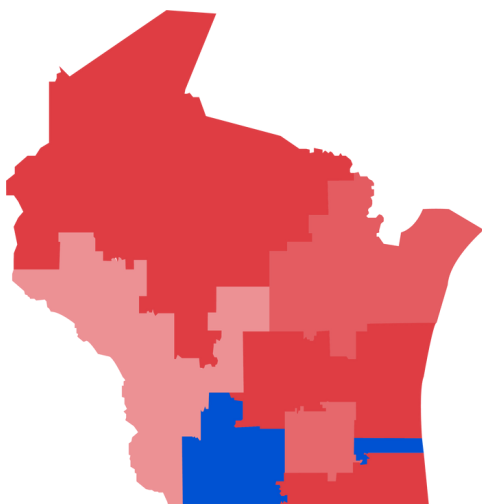
## Part III: The better way: multi-winner districts with proportional representation

Winner-take-all single-winner districts are not inevitable. They're not even normal. They are nowhere in the Constitution. Most large, modern democracies abandoned them decades ago and never looked back. Instead, most democracies use a system that is better for voters, better for governance, and better for candidates and political parties: proportional representation.

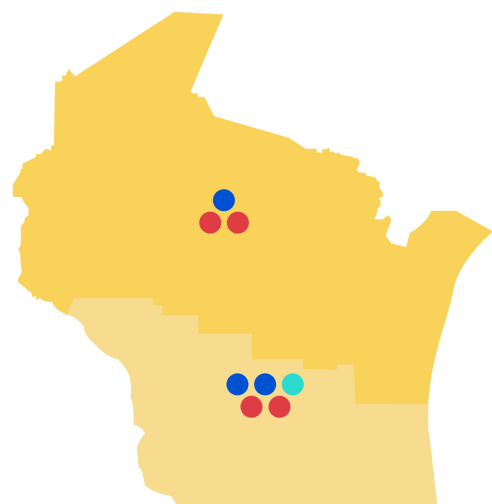
### What is Proportional Representation?

Put simply, proportional representation is an electoral system where a political party's share of votes in an election determines how many seats it holds in the legislature. Proportional representation means that instead of each district electing one representative, a state divides into larger regions that each elect several winners. Voters can support multiple candidates, and each party wins seats in proportion to its share of the votes cast. For instance, if a region elects three representatives and the vote is 65% for Republicans and 35% for Democrats, it would elect two Republicans and one Democrat. The map below shows how it could work in Wisconsin, for example, where instead of eight gerrymandered and uncompetitive districts, the state's delegation could come from a northern region electing three winners and a southern region electing five winners.

**Single-winner districts: biased in favor of one party, gerrymandered, polarizing**



**Proportional representation: fair, collaborative, truly representative**



Proportional representation truly puts the power back in the hands of voters. Every election is competitive, every result fairly tracks with the votes cast, and every political party wins seats not by manipulating district lines, but by earning votes.



## Proportional Representation is Within Reach

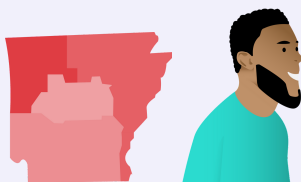
**Proportional representation for the House of Representatives does not require a constitutional amendment.** The Constitution does not require single-winner districts or any particular way of voting. In fact, some states did not use districts as recently as 1968, when the modern law requiring districts went into effect. In America's earliest congressional elections, smaller states often elected their representatives statewide. These earlier elections always used a winner-take-all rule, allowing the majority of the state to elect every single winner, but bills to require proportional representation in multi-winner districts have been introduced since 1868.

One current legislative model is the [Fair Representation Act \(FRA\)](#), which has been introduced by Representative Don Beyer (D-VA-8) each cycle since 2017. That bill would require multi-winner districts, each electing between three and five winners with a candidate-based form of proportional representation. The FRA's most recent introduction has eight cosponsors representing seven different states.

With proportional representation, we can still vote for candidates directly and have local representatives, while not needing to change the Constitution. This solution is practical and realistic, and it would go a long way toward pulling our politics out of its doom loop of polarization and dysfunction, sidelining the anti-democratic forces threatening our democracy, and offering America's diverse electorate full and fair representation in the House of Representatives.

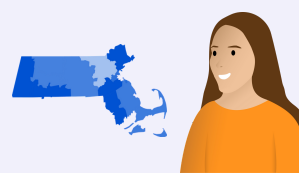
### Current System

#### Arkansas



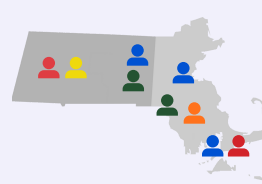
John is an IT professional in Little Rock. He leans **Democrat**, but has no representation in Congress, and little hope to change that reality.

#### Massachusetts



Mary owns a small business in Springfield. She is a **Republican**, but like John, has no real chance of electing somebody who represents her.

### Proportional Representation



Both John and Mary would now live in larger districts, which would elect multiple candidates to Congress. They would both be able to support candidates who represent them and have a viable chance to win.

## Conclusion

Systemic problems demand systemic solutions. The failings of this redistricting process are unique to the single-winner districts we use to elect Congress. It simply does not make sense to continue on with the same system knowing that we will get the same dysfunctional results.

**When people demand fair districts, what they want are districts that do what proportional representation does:** ensure that a political party's share of votes in an election determines how many seats it holds in the legislature. Such a system is used by a majority of advanced democracies and is a constitutional and historically-precedented solution to adopt here.

Single-winner congressional districts are the building blocks of a perfectly dysfunctional system. This redistricting cycle should be the last time we subject Americans to their failures. To fairly represent all Americans in the legislative body that is intended to do just that, we need to adopt proportional representation.

