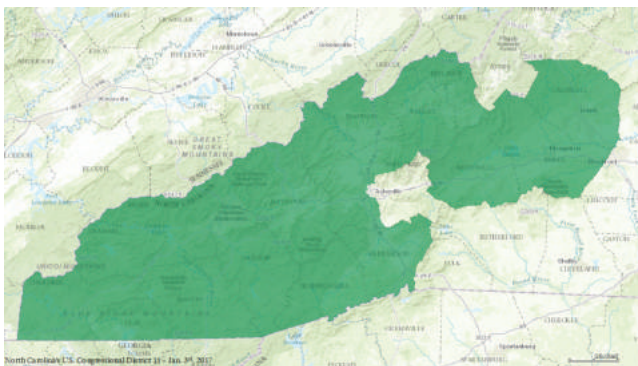
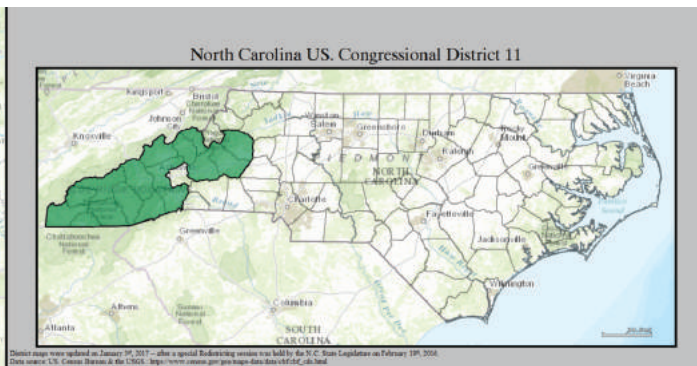


What is Gerrymandering?

Legislative maps are redrawn every 10 years (following each census) to reflect population changes. Without fair redistricting rules state legislatures, which typically control district maps, can “gerrymander” boundaries: ignoring geography, good sense and the will of the voters to draw boundary lines that give them a reliable electoral advantage. This is the case with North Carolina’s 11th district, which Republicans carefully redrew in 2011 with the aid of “big data” and powerful computers. By shifting many Democratic neighborhoods in Asheville to the 10th district, Republicans transformed a contested district into a reliable Republican stronghold.



North Carolina's 11th District



Source: Wikipedia

How Does Gerrymandering Work? ¹

State legislatures often apply two tried-and-true methods to gerrymandering:

“Cracking” redistributes clusters of opposition voters to other districts to deny the opposition Party an electoral majority.

“Packing” concentrates opposition voters into one or more districts, limiting their wins to as few districts as possible.

Does Gerrymandering Affect Our Democracy? ³⁻⁴

Justice Kagan wrote in her dissent to the June 2019 Supreme Court decision on partisan gerrymandering, “By drawing districts to maximize the power of some voters and minimize the power of others, a party in office at the right time can entrench itself there for a decade or more, no matter what the voters would prefer...” For Republicans, the “right time” came in the 2010 census year when they swept state and national elections. Since 2010, their use of gerrymanders has been witheringly effective: Democrats won 1.5 million more votes than Republicans in 2012 House races nationwide, but emerged a minority party with only 201 seats to 234. The disproportionate wins continue, largely due to seven heavily gerrymandered states that include North Carolina. As shown below, Republican legislators in North Carolina have become masters of the dark art of partisan gerrymandering:

North Carolina: U.S. House Races

Election Year	Republican % of Vote	U.S. House Seats (%)
2012	49%	9 of 13 (69%)
2014	55%	10 of 13 (77%)
2016	53%	10 of 13 (77%)
2018	50%	10 of 13 (77%)*

*District 9, which the Republicans initially won, was nullified due to irregularities

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The co-chair of North Carolina's Assembly redistricting committee said of his methods:

"I think electing Republicans is better than electing Democrats... So I drew this map to...give a partisan advantage to 10 Republicans and 3 Democrats because I do not believe it's possible to draw a map with 11 Republicans and 2 Democrats."

Can We Stop the Cycle of Gerrymandering? ^{6,7}

Gerrymanders corrupt the bedrock principle of "one person, one vote." Four former North Carolina governors recently wrote that: "...partisan gerrymandering, no matter which party holds the majority, breaks this system." The opinion of Governors Hunt, Martin, Easley and Perdue coincides with polls showing over 70% of Americans support curbs on gerrymanders. Our states are slowly beginning to respond:

- Pennsylvania's Supreme Court declared the congressional map unconstitutional and, when the legislature refused to amend its map, imposed its own in 2018.
- Colorado, Michigan, Missouri and Utah passed redistricting reforms in 2018.

Recognizing that no party can monopolize power forever, many Democrats and Republicans recognize the need for fair and impartial redistricting rules. This realization hasn't dawned on Republican leaders of North Carolina's state Assembly, and now voters must push for reform:



Get informed: read up on gerrymandering, attend a meeting on redistricting reform.



Tell state legislators you want fair redistricting reforms that end gerrymandering.



Vote for Democrats who support fair redistricting reform.

Sources:

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