

People-Powered Fair Maps

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EVERY VOICE MATTERS, EVERY VOTE COUNTS

Every voice in Minnesota should be heard, and every vote should count equally. We must empower everyday Minnesotans and prevent maps from being drawn unfairly and stripping voters of their vote. Every Minnesotan deserves the **opportunity to participate** in the redistricting process.



EMPOWER VOTERS TO CHOOSE

Elections should be determined by voters, not politicians who draw maps. Voters should pick their elected officials, not the other way around. In our current system, politicians can draw their own district lines to pick their voters and protect themselves. A special redistricting commission would **empower voters and maximize representation** instead.



CHEATERS SHOULDN'T WIN

Relying on politicians to fix the redistricting system is like putting the fox in charge of the henhouse. We need clear and impartial rules. If we **make the process open and honest**, we can protect our fundamental right to vote. We have the opportunity to prevent gerrymandering, create rules that apply evenly to both parties, and send a message that voters come first, not self-interested politicians.

WHAT IS REDISTRICTING? WHAT IS GERRYMANDERING?

Redistricting is the process of redrawing the boundaries of legislative and congressional districts. This process happens every 10 years to adjust for population changes. Currently, legislators must draw new maps like they pass any other legislation. In other states, politicians have engaged in gerrymandering.

Gerrymandering is the manipulation of district boundaries to draw a map that is not representative of the community. Sometimes this is done by unfairly favoring a political party or diluting the vote of racial or ethnic minorities.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS NOW?

In Minnesota, the legislature controls the redistricting process. In theory, a set of district maps would be approved by the Minnesota House of Representatives and the Minnesota Senate, then signed into law by the Governor. But sometimes those parties cannot agree. They might think a map has been gerrymandered or puts their party at a disadvantage.

When those parties cannot agree before their deadline, they rely on a court to draw the maps. Usually a court appoints a panel of retired judges to create a final impartial map.

WHY NOT A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT?

An amendment would not be ratified until the fall of 2020, long after the application process for a redistricting commission needs to open. Therefore, we need a commission created by statute for the upcoming cycle. The legislature could implement both a constitutional amendment and statutes to achieve full reform.

WHY NOT A JUDGES-ONLY MODEL?

A panel of retired judges would not necessarily be as open to the public as a panel that included citizens. Retired judges in Minnesota also are almost exclusively white and male. We want to ensure that the redistricting commission has an opportunity to be at least somewhat representative and reflective of Minnesota's voters. There should also be the opportunity for voters to directly participate in the process by applying to be part of the special commission.

BUT THE MINNESOTA CONSTITUTION REQUIRES THE LEGISLATURE TO DRAW THE MAPS, DOESN'T IT?

Yes, the Minnesota constitution requires that the legislature provide the final approval of the maps. However, Minnesota could create a special commission to provide draft maps to the legislature. The legislature retains the final authority to approve or reject a map. Or Minnesota could pass a constitutional amendment so that the legislature does not have the final authority to draw the maps.

WHAT REFORMS CAN MINNESOTA CONSIDER FOR REDISTRICTING?

People

- Who draws and decides on the maps?

Process

- How are these people chosen?
- How do these people draw and decide on the maps?
- What is the role of the public in the making decisions?

Principles

- What criteria or standards make a map "good" or "fair"?

Suggested Reading

Cato Institute, Cato Handbook for Policymakers (8th ed. 2017), <https://www.cato.org/cato-handbook-policymakers/cato-handbook-policy-makers-8th-edition-2017> (recommending that states "prescribe procedures for redistricting that limit political insiders' discretion in drawing district lines, or entrust the process to those without a vested interest;" "enact transparency measures [...] to allow the public to analyze districting maps under consideration and propose alternative maps;" and "specify objective criteria for redistricting").

Campaign Legal Center, Designing Independent Redistricting Commissions (2018), <https://campaignlegal.org/document/designing-independent-redistricting-commissions> (recommending "structure" and "criteria" for independent redistricting commissions).

Brennan Center for Justice, Democracy: An Election Agenda for Candidates, Activists, and Legislators (2018) <https://www.brennancenter.org/publication/democracy-election-agenda-2018> (recommending "independent redistricting commissions, or add other safeguards to prevent partisan bias in the redistricting process").

Brennan Center for Justice, Creating Strong Rules for Drawing Maps (2019), <https://www.brennancenter.org/publication/creating-strong-rules-drawing-maps> (recommending "clear rules in order of priority" by which to judge maps).

For more information, visit: www.lwvmn.org/fair-district-maps