Fair Benchmark Analysis:
Proposed Congressional Maps

Fair Districts GA &

Princeton Gerrymandering Project

Fair Districts GA has reviewed two proposed Congressional maps. The first map was released September 27, 2021 by Senate Committee Chair John Kennedy and Lt. Gov. Geoff Duncan (Senate proposal). The second was released October 21, 2021 by the Democratic Caucus of the Georgia Legislature (Democrat proposal). This is our view as of October 29, 2021 and may change as we continue reviewing these proposals.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Both the Senate and Democrat's proposed maps lean too far towards their respective parties. Our benchmarks indicate that the best choice for partisan balance is 8 Republican and 6 Democratic districts. The Senate map is designed as 9R-5D while the Democratic map is designed as 7R-7D. The Democratic map gets the nod for competitiveness with 1 district, while the Senate map provides none. The Democratic map provides more opportunities for minority representation with 10 districts that are either Black majority, minority-coalition majority, or minority influence districts. The Senate map provides only 8. Interestingly, neither map maintains the current total of 4 Black majority districts (Senate provides 3, Democrats provide 2).

Partisan Balance & Competitiveness

FDGA SUMMARY

The partisan gap in Georgia has narrowed over the past decade. This is reflected by Congressional election results in which 2 seats were flipped by Democrats, resulting in our current delegation of 8 Republicans and 6 Democrats. Princeton Gerrymandering Project's (PGP) benchmark for Congress shows that either 8R-6D or 9R-5D is within the acceptable range. This benchmark was created from a 1-million map simulation based on the 2020 census and 3 statewide elections: 2018 Governor, 2020 President, and 2021 Senate runoff elections.

SENATE PROPOSAL SUMMARY

With 5 Democratic and 9 Republican-leaning districts, the proposed map is a choice that favors Republicans while falling within the acceptable statistical range. It suffers from lack of competitiveness and still leans unfairly to Republicans considering likely vote-share vs. seat-share outcomes.

Specifics:

- PGP benchmark shows the partisan gap narrowing by 1 district from 2011. Our current delegation is 6 Democrats and 8 Republicans. The proposed map does not reflect a narrowing of the gap.

What is a Fair Map?

Working with Fair Districts GA, the Princeton Gerrymandering Project conducted a state-of-the art analysis using 2020 census data to create benchmarks/ fairness tests that can be used to evaluate proposed maps drawn by the Georgia General Assembly. To be considered fair, proposed district maps for the State Senate should comply with the following criteria.

Respect voters' political preferences

- Reflect the natural political preferences of voters distributed across the state

- Allow for competition

Reflect Georgia's diversity

- Provide sufficient majority-minority opportunity districts and comply with the Voting Rights Act

- Preserve minority influence districts

Honor communities of interest

- Only district projected to flip in proposed map is GA06, which is projected as a safe Republican district with 55% based on 2018-20-21 elections.

- The proposed map is uncompetitive. No districts fall within the 46.5%-53.5% competitive range. GA07 in particular has moved from a very competitive district to a very safe district, while GA06 has become less competitive. GA02 remains outside the competitive range.

What the Benchmarks Say:	2020 Election	Senate Proposal
Partisan Lean	8R/6D	9R/5D GA06 Flips 55%D -> 54%R
Competitive Districts: 46.5%-53.5%	0-3	0 GA07 Safer 54% D -> 62% D

Princeton Gerrymandering Project has a common methodology for all maps nationwide that includes additional partisan fairness metrics. The Senate's proposed map confers a clear advantage to Republicans according to these metrics. Princeton gives the map a "C", only average compared to other states but still showing a partisan advantage.

Democrat Proposal Summary

With 7 districts each for Democrats and Republicans, the proposed map attempts to reflect a nearly equal swing state. However this map fails to reflect the natural distribution of Georgia's voters in which Democrats are more concentrated than Republicans in urban area. This map does provide one competitive district, GA06, in line with PGP's benchmark.

What the Benchmarks Say:	2020 Election	Democrat Proposal
Partisan Lean	8R/6D	7R/7D New GA10 D Merges old GA10 into GA 09 & 14
Competitive Districts: 46.5%-53.5%	0-3	1 GA06 54% D -> 54% D GA07 53% D -> 58% D

Specifics:

- PGP benchmark shows the partisan gap narrowing to either 9R-5D or 8-6D. At 7R-7D, the proposed map leans too much towards Democrats.

- Proposed map projects GA06 moving into a competitive range (was 54%, now 53%). GA07 becomes a safer district (was 53%, now 58%).

Princeton's scorecard gives the map a "B", indicating a slight Democratic advantage.

Minority Representation

FDGA Summary

Census data shows that all the growth in Georgia's population is among minorities. Fair maps should provide increased opportunities for minority representation. The current Congressional map provides minorities 9 districts in which to elect candidates of their choice: 4 Black majority districts, 1 minority coalition district (minorities as a group over 50% of voting age population), and 4 minority influence districts (minorities 37% - 50%).

Senate Proposal Summary

The map has a total of 9 districts that provide minority representation, similar to the current map. It has one less Black majority district. Deeper analysis of voting patterns among minority groups is required to determine if this change does in fact dilute Blacks' voting power.

Specifics:

- The proposed map has only 3 Black majority districts due to changes in GA02, expanded to balance population. GA02 is still a district with a coalition of minorities as the majority. This has the potential to dilute voting power of the Black communities in CD02, but deeper analysis is required.

- Proposed map retains GA07 and GA02 as minority-coalition districts, in line with PGP benchmark.

- Proposed map has 4 minority influence districts. GA06 decreases from 42% to 36% minority VAP, and GA03 is a new minority influence district.

Minority Representation	FDGA/PGP Benchmark	Existing Map	Senate Proposed
Black Majority	4	4	3 GA02 51% -> 47%
Minority Coalition (excludes Black-only majority, above)	1	1	2 GA02 Black majority -> coalition
Minority Influence 37% - 50%	N/A	4	4 GA06 42% -> 36% Adds GA03 Retains GA01, 08, 12

Democrat Proposal Summary

The Democratic map provides more opportunities for minority representation with 10 districts that are either Black majority, minority-coalition majority, or minority influence districts.

Specifics:

- The proposed map has only 2 Black majority districts due to changes in GA02 and GA05, changed to balance population. These become districts with a coalition of minorities as the majority. This has the potential to dilute voting power of the Black communities in GA02 and GA05.

- Proposed map increases minority-coalition districts to 4, in line with PGP benchmark. It adds GA02, GA05 and GA10 to existing GA07.

- Proposed map retains the 4 minority influence districts in the current map.

Minority Representation	FDGA/PGP Benchmark	Existing Map	Democrat Proposed
Black Majority	4	4	2 GA02 51% -> 49% GA05 52% -> 47%
Minority Coalition (excludes Black-only majority, above)	1	1	4 GA02 & GA05 move from Black majority to coalition. Adds GA10, retains GA07
Minority Influence 37% - 50%	N/A	4	4 Retains GA01, 06, 08, 12

Honor communities of interest:

CITY SPLITS

Reducing split cities is desirable for providing more cohesive representation. The Senate proposed map unites Athens and Columbus into their respective districts. The Democratic map unites Athens but leaves Columbus split between 2 districts.