

Fair Districts GA Town Hall

“Gerrymandering is Hazardous to Your Health”



May 16, 2022

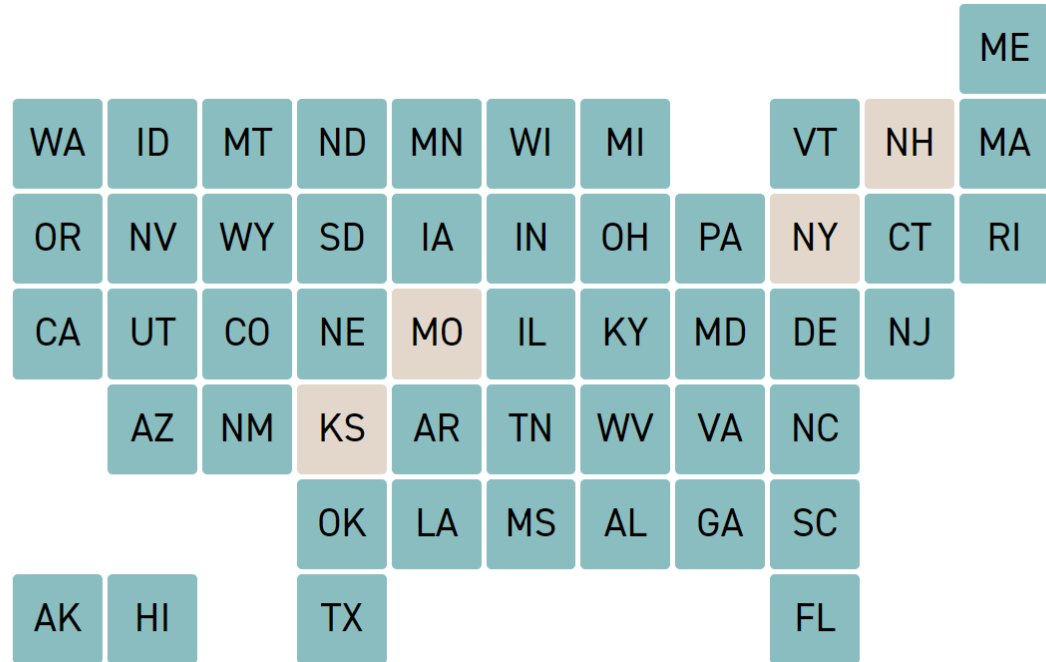
Agenda

- Welcome
- National redistricting update
- “Gerrymandering in Hazardous to Your Health ”
Special Guest: Stacie Schmidt, MD
- Q&A
- Call to action

National Redistricting Status

- 40 of the 44 states with more than one Congressional district have passed final maps (pending KS, MO, NH, NY)
- 46 states have final legislative maps (pending AK, KS, NY, OH)

■ In progress ■ Proposal adopted



Source: Politico

Litigation Over This Decade's New Maps

STATE	PARTISAN GERRYMANDERING	INTENTIONAL RACE DISCRIMINATION	RACIAL GERRYMANDERING (SHAW CLAIMS)	SECTION 2 OF THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT	OTHER RACE-BASED CLAIMS
Alabama		C**	C, L	C, L	
Alaska	L*		L	L	
Arkansas	C	C	C	C, L	C
Florida	C	C			C
Georgia		C, L	C, L	C, L	
Illinois		L	L	L	
Kansas	C				C
Kentucky	C, L				
Louisiana				C, L	
Maryland	C, L				
Michigan	L		L	L	C, L
Nevada	L				
New Hampshire	L				
New Jersey	C				
New Mexico	C				
New York	C, L				
North Carolina	C, L				C, L
North Dakota			L	L	
Ohio	C, L	C		C	C
Pennsylvania	L	L	L	L	L
South Carolina		C, L	C, L		
Tennessee	L				
Texas		C, L	C, L	C, L	
Utah	C				
Washington			L	L	

*"L" refers to legislative maps.

**"C" refers to congressional maps.

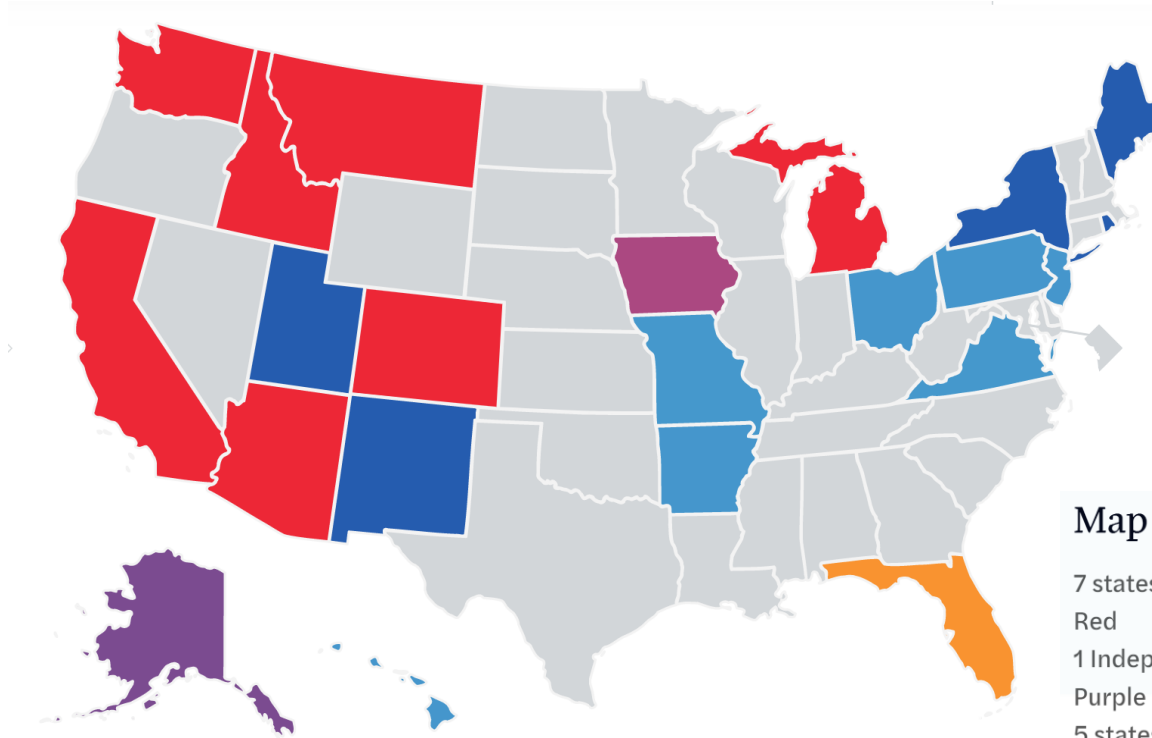
Note: Accurate as of 5/12/22.

Source: Brennan Center

- There are 70 cases filed on maps in 25 states alleging racial and/or partisan gerrymanders
- State courts ordered redrawing in 6 states before the 2022 election (AK, KS, MD, NY, NC and OH)
- 51 cases are pending



Redistricting Commissions



Source: Common Cause

Map Key

- 7 states with Independent Citizen Commission (Partisan Balance) | Red
- 1 Independent Citizen Commission (Partisan Imbalance) | Dark Purple
- 5 states with Advisory Commission (No Elected Officials) | Dark Blue
- 1 states with strict Constitutional Standards | Orange
- 7 states with Politician Commission | Light Blue
- 1 Nonpartisan Legislative Staff | Light Purple

Independent Commissions: Did they work?

- This redistricting cycle was the first for most commissions
- The average grade of a politician-made congressional map is a D, whereas that of a commission-made map is B+
- All four of the states with A graded congressional maps have commissions (AZ, CO, MI, VA)
- The commissions with political participation were rated lower and many are mired in litigation (Graded F included OH, NY, OR)
- Bottom line, true independent commissions were much more successful, higher graded on fairness, transparency, opportunities for public input



Colorado Independent Redistricting Commissions



Gerrymandering Undermines Our Democracy

- Every vote doesn't count equally.
- Incumbents do not need to listen to all constituents.
- It leads to extreme partisanship and lack of bipartisan problem-solving.
- Counties and municipalities are split, making it harder for leaders to represent the district.
- Issues with majority of public support are not addressed such as common-sense gun control, reproductive rights, climate, Medicaid expansion

Stacie Schmidt, MD



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Open camera or QR reader and
scan code to access this article
and other resources online



[Redistricting 2022 Tracker: New Congressional Maps by State \(politico.com\)](#)

Gerrymandering and Political Determinants of Health

Quratulain Syed, MD¹ Stacie Schmidt, MD,^{2,3} Rhea E. Powell, MD, MPH,⁴ Tracey L. Henry, MD, MPH, MS,²
Nancy Connolly, MD, MPH,⁵ Jennifer B Cowart, MD,⁶ and Celeste Newby, MD, PhD⁷

AS CLINICIANS STRIVE TO NARROW health-based inequities for their patients and explore drivers of poor health-related outcomes among income, race, and gender-based minority communities, we must become familiar with the elephant in the room—political determinants of health (PDOH). PDOH “involve the systematic process of structuring relationships, distributing resources, and administering power, operating simultaneously in ways that mutually

population, guarantee that elected representatives represent an equal number of people, and ensure that districts reflect communities with similar values. Political parties in power often use this opportunity to redraw electoral district lines to benefit politicians and their parties rather than constituents. This practice is called gerrymandering, named after Governor Elbridge Gerry’s redrawing of a district map into a salamander-like shape in 1812.

Gerrymandering is Hazardous to Health

Stacie Schmidt, MD

May 16, 2022

A little about me



- Proud mom of two
- Baseball, piano, ukelele and ice skating (whew!)
- Primary Care doctor in Atlanta since 2010
- Work in an academic center teaching residents and overseeing care delivery
- Direct patient panel, working closely with patients who are uninsured or underinsured
- See intimately how the places we eat, play, live and work impact health

Disclaimer

- Presenting factual and referenced data from reputable sources (CDC, Medical Journals, Scientific Studies)
- Any views represented here are strictly my own
- Any stated views are NOT representative of institutions or organizations for which I am a member of, or employed by

Overview

- Explain the impacts of gerrymandering on health policy in our state, including:
 - Environmental hazards
 - Medicaid eligibility
 - Funding of public health agencies and emergency response
- Impact of gerrymandering on voter well-being cannot be ignored

Political Determinants of Health (PDOH)

- Political Determinants of Health refer to the systematic process of structuring relationships, distributing resources, and administering power
- PDOH work in mutual ways to reinforce or influence each other, and to shape opportunities within communities (e.g. school zoning)
- PDOH include:
 - Voting
 - Government participation
 - Policy making
- Widely influences other determinants of health in the United States

Reference: Daniel D. Health inequities: a look at the political determinants of health during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Am J Health Stud* 2020;35:77–82.

Redistricting & the US Census

- States utilize census data to redesign state legislative and congressional district line
- These maps reflect changes in their constituencies
- This redistricting is required every ten years, to:
 - Account for population changes
 - Ensure that elected legislators represent an equal number of people
 - Ensure that districts reflect similar beliefs of their communities

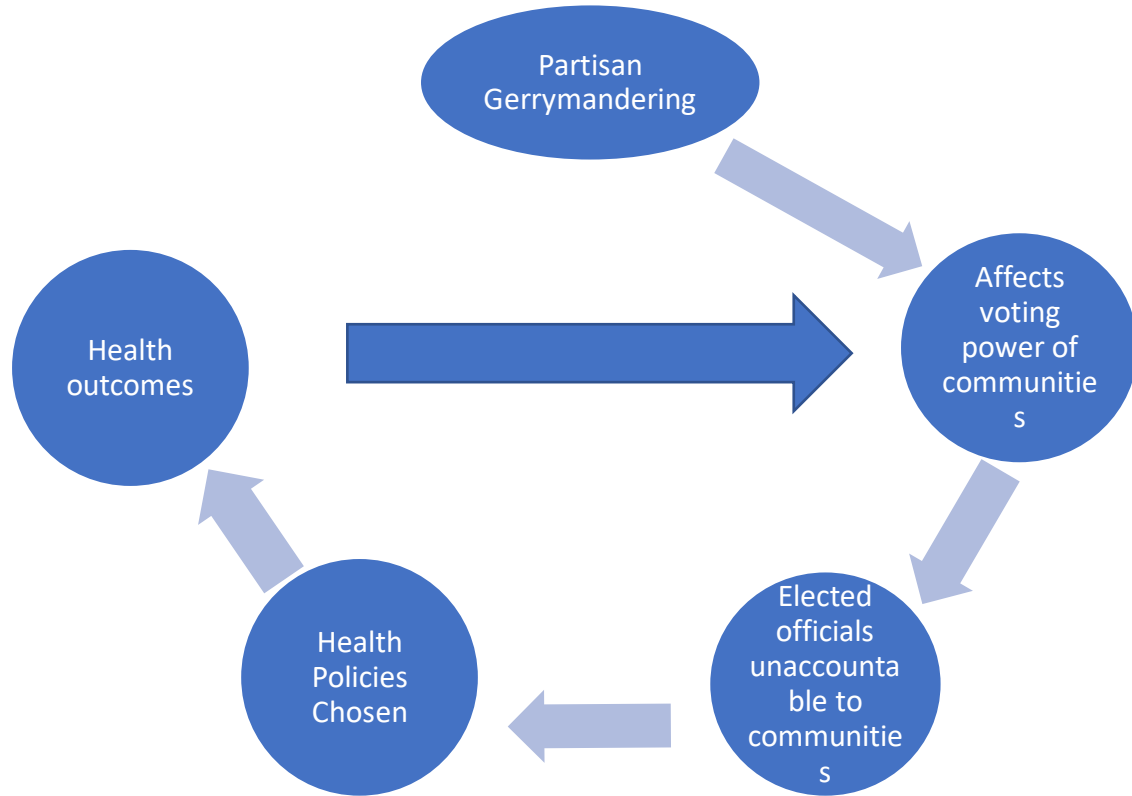
Reference: Gerrymandering and Political Determinants of Health. Population Health Management. Quratulain Syed, MD, Stacie Schmidt, MD, Rhea E. Powell, MD, MPH, Tracey L. Henry, MD, MPH, MS, Nancy Connolly, MD, MPH, Jennifer B Cowart, MD, and Celeste Newby, MD, PhD

Gerrymandering
impacts
redistricting, and
is thus a PDOH

- Partisan gerrymandering constitutes a redistricting process that “packs” and “cracks” voters, to help the party in power stay in power for future voting cycles
- "Packing" crams as many individuals with similar voting preferences into as few districts as possible
- “Cracking” involves splitting people with similar voting preferences into numerous different districts, diluting their vote
- Gerrymandering (cracking/packing) has been practiced by BOTH major political parties

Case Example: How “Cracking “ Affected the Voice of Watts Community

- Watts, a historically Black area in Los Angeles, California, with a sizable Latino population, is one such example
- “Split” into so many districts that residents struggled to get required recovery supplies after a hail storm hit the city in 2003
- Confusion even by council officials led residents to be referred from one district to another
- Lead to no one official feeling ownership for the community as a whole



References:

Gerrymandering and Political Determinants of Health. Population Health Management. Quratulain Syed, MD, Stacie Schmidt, MD, Rhea E. Powell, MD, MPH, Tracey L. Henry, MD, MPH, MS, Nancy Connolly, MD, MPH, Jennifer B Cowart, MD, and Celeste Newby, MD, PhD

<https://publichealthreviews.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40985-020-00133-6>

Take Home Message(s)

1. Extreme Partisan Gerrymandering dilutes the voice and will of the people
2. Results in elected officials who do not feel accountable to needs of the community as a whole
3. Leads to policy decisions based on ideology of the representative, rather than will of the people

What is extreme gerrymandering?

- We frequently associate gerrymandering with the creation of super-safe districts; however, creating districts too safe makes extreme gerrymandering difficult
- Rather, **extreme gerrymandering** must **disperse its supporters across districts** in order to win a bigger number of seats (within the state legislature)
- In fact, extreme gerrymanders occur NOT in deeply red or deeply blue states but rather **in battleground states**

Reference: <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/what-extreme-gerrymandering>

Within the State Legislature, Every Seat Matters

- Every seat matters!
- Parties with large majorities in the legislature can pass highly partisan bills without losing too many votes
- Parties with narrow majorities need to maintain the approval of their most moderate members in order to pass legislation
- Balance of power is key to preventing large swings in ideology that do not reflect the will of the people

How is extreme gerrymandering uncovered?

- Statistical analysis:
 - Computer simulations create hundreds and thousands of random maps
 - Helps point to situations where something is likely amiss
- Courts can also look to other types of evidence:
 - Legislative materials
 - Floor statements by lawmakers
 - Emails
 - Helps determine whether maps have been drawn outside of neutral considerations

Is Georgia participating in extreme gerrymandering?

Political Party Affiliation Among Constituents in Georgia, 2017

State Party Affiliation, 2017

Based on annual state averages of party affiliation from Gallup Daily tracking

	Democrat/Lean Democratic	Republican/Lean Republican	Democratic advantage	N	Classification
	%	%	pct. pts.		
U.S.	45	38	7	180,106	Lean Dem
Missouri	38	45	-7	3,602	Lean Rep
North Dakota	28	56	-28	536	Solid Rep
South Dakota	35	52	-17	579	Solid Rep
Nebraska	35	50	-15	1,437	Solid Rep
Kansas	34	48	-14	1,771	Solid Rep
Virginia	45	38	7	4,893	Lean Dem
North Carolina	44	39	5	5,774	Competitive
South Carolina	37	47	-10	2,821	Solid Rep
Georgia	42	40	2	5,458	Competitive

Reference: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/226643/2017-party-affiliation-state.aspx>

Georgia State Legislature Composition

Georgia General Assembly

Structure

Seats	236 voting members 56 senators 180 representatives
State Senate political groups	Republican (34) Democratic (22)
House of Representatives political groups	Republican (103) Democratic (76) Vacant (1)



Gerrymandering: Impacts on Environmental Hazards

Environmental Hazards in Flint, Michigan

- Flint's community voted against a ballot proposal for a state-appointed manager to handle municipal services in 2012
- The gerrymandered state legislature overrode this vote, giving the manager control of municipal services
- The manager subsequently directed the community's water supply to flow from the contaminated Flint River
- Waterborne lead poisoning caused the deaths of 12 people, as well as increased rates of fetal death & low birthweight in children

Reference: Gerrymandering the States. Chapter 6: The Policy and Social Consequences of State Legislative Gerrymandering

Gerrymandering Impacts Environmental Health of Marginalized Communities

- Research in 1987 and ~2007 noted that 60% of African Americans reside near an unregulated toxic waste facility
- Kramar et al
 - Analyzed minority demographics in connection to superfund sites
 - Geometric complexity of congressional districts (CDs) in proximity to superfund sites across 48 states
 - Congressional district complexity served as proxy for gerrymandering
 - Discovered that race and distance from superfund sites are related
 - As distance from superfund sites increases, race becomes "whiter" and less "African American"
 - Higher link between the percentage of white residents and a greater gerrymandering coefficient
 - Implies that minority groups are effectively "gerrymandered out" of white and low-hazard districts

Reference: A Spatially Informed Analysis of Environmental Justice: Analyzing the Effects of Gerrymandering and the Proximity of Minority Populations to U.S. Superfund Sites. ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE Volume 11, Number 1, 2018. David E. Kramar, Aaron Anderson, Hayley Hilfer, Karen Branden, and John J. Gutrich

Racial Variance to Superfund Sites & Relation to Gerrymandering

- Median income and unemployment may also explain the variance
- However non-Hispanic Black individuals, through systemic historic policies, are overrepresented in at-risk categories (e.g. unemployment and uninsurance)
- Study is unique in that it shows a deliberate effort to marginalize minority / impoverished communities

References:

A Spatially Informed Analysis of Environmental Justice: Analyzing the Effects of Gerrymandering and the Proximity of Minority Populations to U.S. Superfund Sites. ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE Volume 11, Number 1, 2018. David E. Kramar, Aaron Anderson, Hayley Hilfer, Karen Branden, and John J. Gutrich.

The Impact of Medicaid Expansion on Black-White Disparities in Cardiovascular Disease Mortality. Journal of Healthcare for the Poor and Underserved. Brittany L. Brown-Podgorski, PhD, MPH Elizabeth A. Jacobs, MD, MAPP Catherine Cubbin, PhD.



Gerrymandering Impacts Access to Healthcare

Reference for picture used:
<https://news.gallup.com/poll/389609/black-adults-harder-time-finding-doctor-race.aspx>

Access to Health Insurance through Medicaid

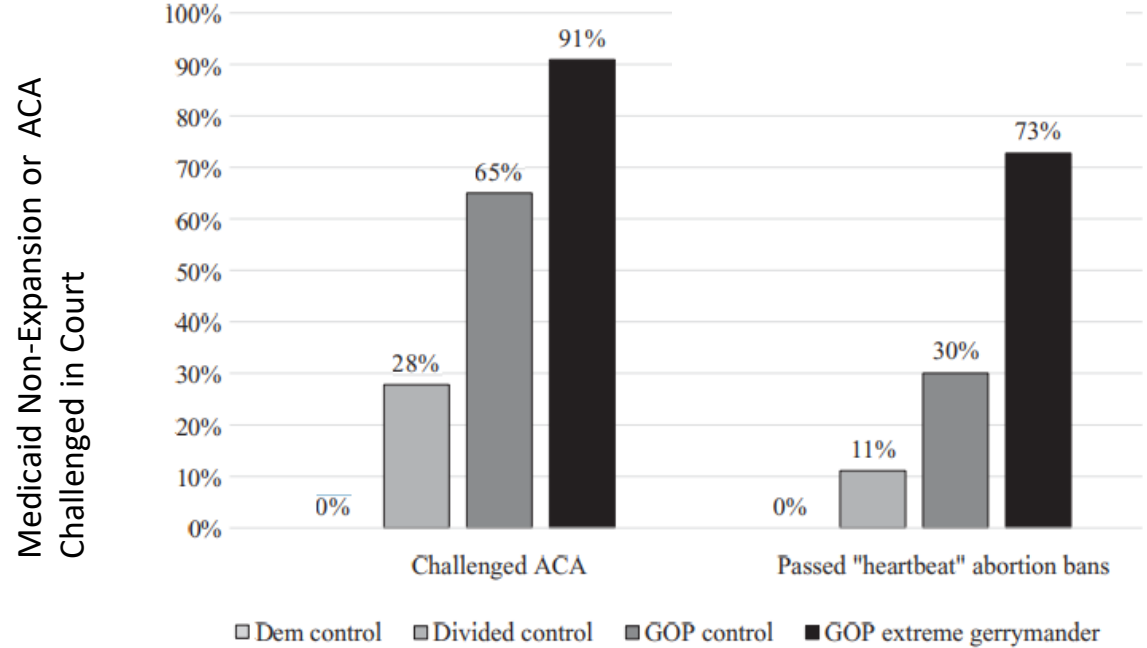
- After the 2010 midterm elections, states with extensive GOP gerrymandering showed more political opposition to Medicaid expansion
- In contrast, states with balanced partisan legislative chambers had better chances of extending Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act

References:

Tausanovitch A, Emily G. How partisan gerrymandering limits access to health care. <https://americanprogress.org/article/partisan-gerrymandering-limits-access-health-care/> Accessed November 29, 2021.

Keena A, Latner M. The policy and social consequences of State Legislative Gerrymandering. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/abs/gerrymandering-the-states/references/825973FED0599372286E49CA750FE558#> Gerrymandering the States, 2021.

States with extreme
Republican
gerrymanders most
likely to
challenge Medicaid
Expansion



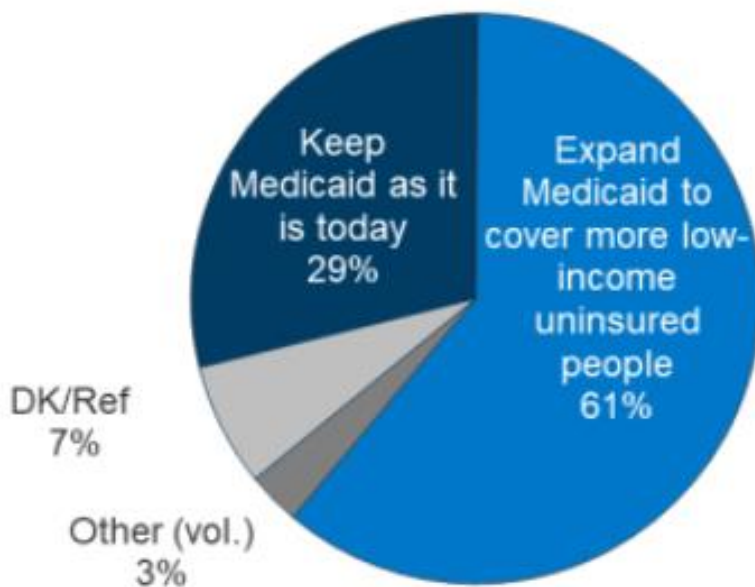
Each state in the database (excluding Alabama and Mississippi) was given a score of:

- "1" if they had not implemented ACA requirements
- "0.5" if they had but were party to the legal challenges before 2016
- "0" if implemented ACA

Figure 4

Majority Of Those Living In Non-Expansion States Want To See Their State Expand Medicaid

AMONG THOSE WHO LIVE IN STATES THAT HAVE NOT EXPANDED MEDICAID: Percent who say their state should...



SOURCE: KFF Health Tracking Poll (conducted February 13-18, 2020). See topline for full question wording and response options.

Medicaid Eligibility

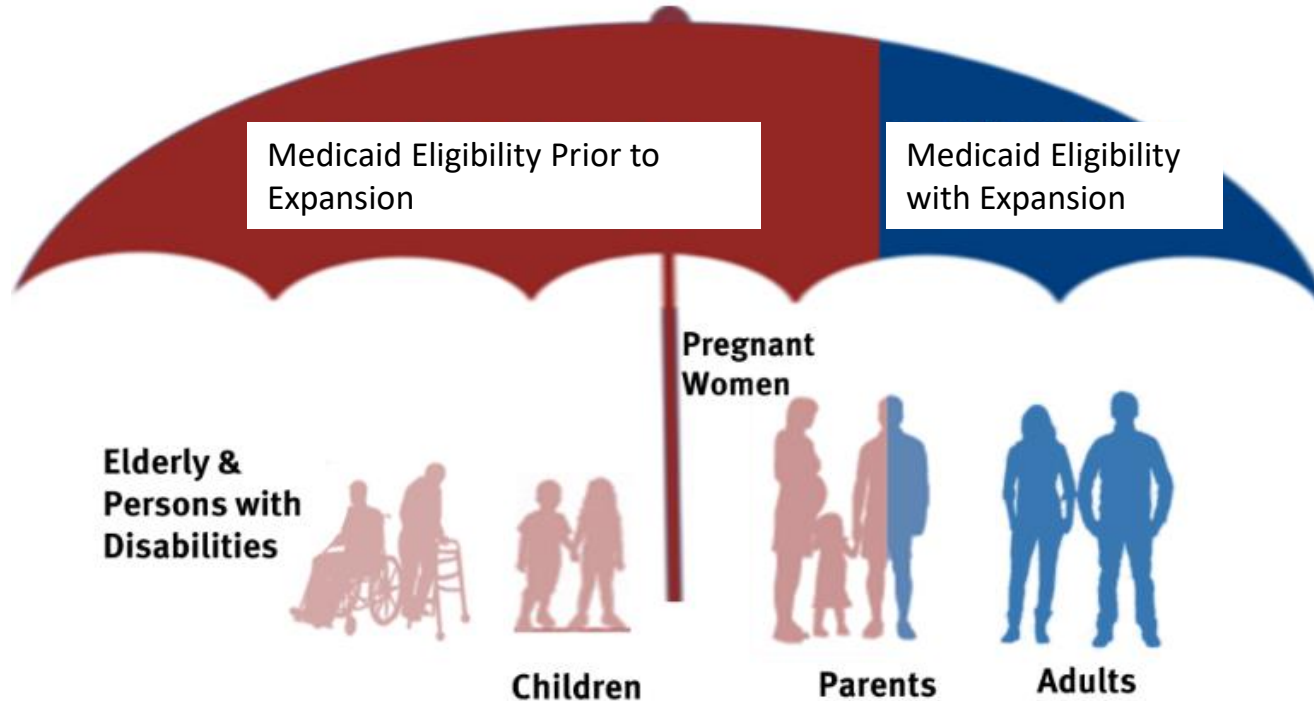
Historically, Medicaid eligibility generally limited to:

- Low income AND
 - Pregnant women
 - Parents of dependent children
 - Elderly
 - With disabilities

Medicaid expansion expands Medicaid eligibility to:

- **Non-elderly single, childless adults**
- With incomes up to 133% of the federal poverty level (FPL)

The ACA Medicaid Expansion Fills Current Gaps in Coverage



NOTE: The June 2012 Supreme Court decision in *National Federation of Independent Business v. Sebelius* maintained the Medicaid expansion, but limited the Secretary's authority to enforce it, effectively making the expansion optional for states. 138% FPL = \$15,856 for an individual and \$26,951 for a family of three in 2013.

What is 133 percent of the federal poverty level?

Percentages Over 2022 Poverty Guidelines

Family Size	100%	133%
1	\$13,590	\$18,075
3	\$23,030	\$30,630
4	\$27,750	\$36,908
5	\$32,470	\$43,185

Health Benefits of Increasing Medicaid Eligibility to 133% of the Federal Poverty Level

Expansion was associated with increases in various health outcomes:

- Early-stage cancer diagnoses
- Early, uncomplicated presentation to hospitals for surgery
- Access to mental health medications and services
- Access to opioid use disorder treatment and smoking cessation medications

Review of over 400 research studies shows that Medicaid expansion is associated with

- Greater access to care
- Decreased uncompensated care costs
- Reduced medical debt
- Improved affordability of care
- Greater use of primary care services

Slide from Dr. Jennifer Cowart's October 2019 Presentation, entitled "Medicaid Expansion in Florida"

<https://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/the-effects-of-medicaid-expansion-under-the-aca-updated-findings-from-a-literature-review-august-2019/>

Increasing Medicaid Eligibility Reduces Health Disparities

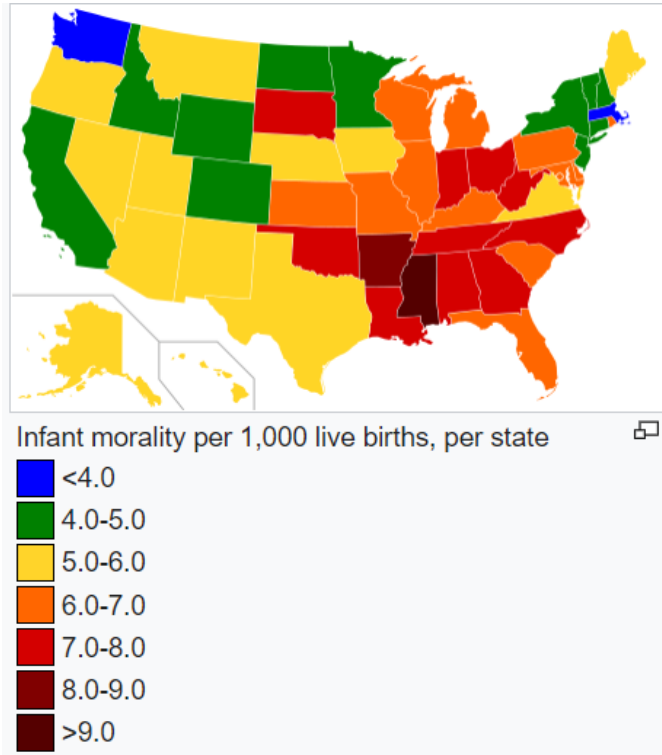
- Improved access to care by race, income, education level, and employment status
- **Infant mortality declined** in states that increased Medicaid eligibility to 138% of the federal poverty level (and rose in non-expansion states)

References:

Slide from Dr. Jennifer Cowart's October 2019 Presentation, entitled "Medicaid Expansion in Florida"

<https://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/the-effects-of-medicaid-expansion-under-the-aca-updated-findings-from-a-literature-review-august-2019/>

Infant Mortality in Georgia, as of 2017



Rank	State, federal district, or territory	Infant mortality per 1,000 live births
1	Massachusetts	3.7
2	Washington	3.9
44	Georgia	7.2
44	Ohio	7.2
45	Indiana	7.3
46	Alabama	7.4
46	Tennessee	7.4
46	U.S. Virgin Islands ^[2]	7.4
49	Oklahoma	7.7
49	South Dakota	7.7
51	Arkansas	8.2
52	Mississippi	9.6
53	American Samoa ^[2]	9.9
54	Guam ^[2]	10.8
55	Northern Mariana Islands ^[2]	11.5
16	Oregon	5.4

Reference: US States by infant mortality in 2017 according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/infantmortality/infantmortality.html).

Increasing Medicaid Eligibility Helps State Economies

- **Protects rural hospitals from closure**
- Increases jobs (31K in Colorado, 40K in Kentucky)
- In Ohio, expansion Medicaid enrollees report having Medicaid made finding work easier

References:

From Dr. Jennifer Cowart's October 2019 Presentation, entitled "Medicaid Expansion in Florida"

<https://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/the-effects-of-medicaid-expansion-under-the-aca-updated-findings-from-a-literature-review-august-2019/>

Increasing Medicaid Eligibility May Also Prevent Rural Hospital Closures

Georgia is the #6 state with the most rural hospital closures since 2005

Rural hospitals have long struggled financially and the situation is getting worse. In the mid-1940s, Congress provided funding to [build hospitals](#) in rural areas, leading to a rise in their numbers, especially in the South. By

the 1980s
spending.

Since 2005, 181 rural hospitals have shut their doors. **The causes are many:** an older, poorer population; advances in outpatient medical procedures; and more recently, a decision among many Southern states against expanding Medicaid under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, or the ACA. That leaves hospitals with a greater share of uncompensated care as uninsured patients continue to be treated. The coronavirus pandemic made matters worse by delaying nonessential services that bring in revenue. The fallout from hospital closings [can](#)

Increasing Medicaid Eligibility in Georgia

If Georgia were to increase Medicaid eligibility to 133% of the FPL

- **452,600 uninsured nonelderly adults** would become eligible for coverage
- This represents **39% of the state's uninsured nonelderly adult population**

How Politics Played into Medicaid Expansion in Georgia

- Former Gov. Nathan Deal (R) stated early in his tenure that he had no “intentions of expanding Medicaid”
- In 2014, concerned about the possibility of a Democrat being elected after Deal’s term, Republican state legislature passed a bill ensuring Medicaid expansion could not be accomplished without legislative approval
- In 2019, however, after the election of Gov. Brian Kemp (R), the Legislature reversed course and gave Kemp discretion to pursue other changes to the state’s Medicaid program

Reference: <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/partisan-gerrymandering-limits-access-health-care/>

Extreme Partisan Gerrymandering Impacts Public Health Policy: The COVID Pandemic

Extreme Partisan Gerrymandering and Response to COVID

- Heavily gerrymandered states have demonstrated lower legislative response to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Poorer performance on an index of numerous health measures, including:
 - Expanding access to telehealth services
 - Providing grace periods for payment of insurance premiums
 - Increasing worker compensation
 - Transparently sharing state COVID-19 data by gender and race
 - Waving cost sharing for COVID-19 treatment

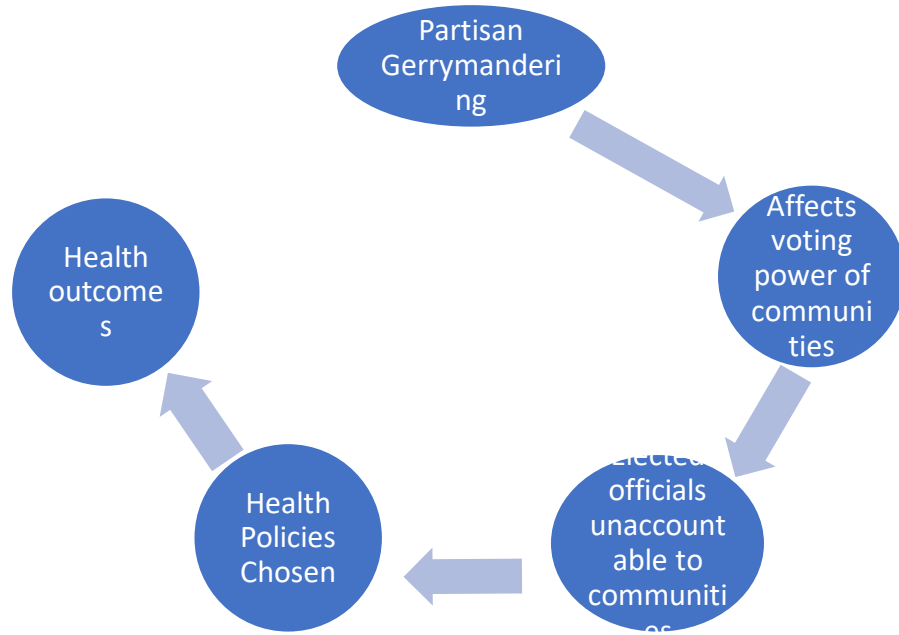
References:

Allcott H, Boxell L, Conway J, Gentzkow M, Thaler M, David Y. Polarization and public health: partisan differences in social distancing during the coronavirus pandemic. *J Public Econ* 2020;191:1–11. 10.

The best and worst states to work in America—during COVID-19.

<https://www.oxfamamerica.org/explore/countries/united-states/poverty-in-the-us/covid-map/> Accessed February 13, 2022.

In Conclusion



- Extreme gerrymandering affects state health policy, including:
 - Exposure to environmental hazards
 - Medicaid eligibility
 - Funding of public health agencies and emergency response
- Impact of gerrymandering on voter well-being cannot be ignored

Next Steps...

- Use of the Princeton Gerrymandering Scorecard to define "heavy gerrymandering" within states
 - Is it a simple Yes or No?
 - Are there degrees of gerrymandering?
 - Where did Georgia fall on the spectrum of heavy gerrymandering, particularly at time of passage of the ACA?
- Of states who expanded Medicaid, were any "heavily gerrymandered" and towards what political party?
- Of states that have not expanded Medicaid, were any "heavily gerrymandered" and towards what political party?

**Princeton gerrymandering scorecard assessing gerrymandering by state, <https://gerrymander.princeton.edu/redistricting-report-card>

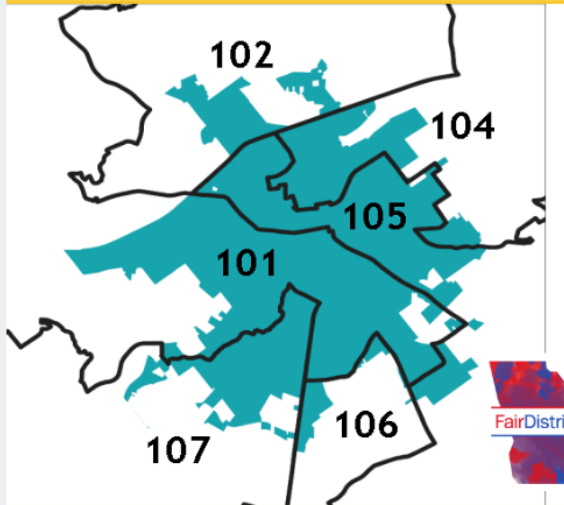
Next Steps...as I might suggest them

- Overlap of “most cracked” communities in Georgia with HCUP data
 - Did healthcare utilization and health outcomes change in these communities, before and after cracking?
 - How does this compare to health outcomes in communities that were not cracked?
- Qualitative interviews with longstanding members of Georgian communities that were once “whole” then subsequently cracked
 - What health outcomes notably changed after the community was cracked? Access to care? Health insurance? Employment? Food Access?

The “Winners” of the **Most Cracked Cities** are Lawrenceville and Stonecrest, which are now cracked across SIX House districts although they could be drawn into a single district.

Lawrenceville 2020

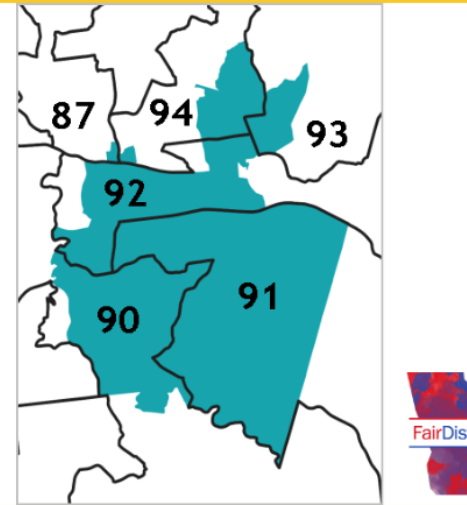
Gwinnett County, Georgia



Cracked into Six

Stonecrest 2020

DeKalb County, Georgia



Cracked into Six

Reference: <https://www.fairdistrictsga.org/split-cities>

A Call to Action: Fair Representation and Fair Maps for the Communities of Georgia

- Creation of an independent citizens' redistricting commission committed to providing balanced maps that represent communities
 - Takes redistricting out of the hands of the partisan legislature
 - ~20 states have created such commissions, resulting in more competitive elections
- Provide a fair, transparent, nonpartisan, and accountable process that hears the voices of communities in designing maps
 - Hearing impaired
 - Language interpretive services
 - Needs of working families

Reference: <https://www.fairdistrictsga.org/gerrymandering>

Q and A

What's Next?



- Follow and support ongoing litigation
- Get involved in your community for local redistricting phase #2—municipal districts; FDGA local redistricting toolkit: bit.ly/FDGALocalToolkit
- Ask the 2022 candidates to support fair redistricting, to complete the FDGA candidate pledge
- Partner on fighting any attempts at mid-cycle redistricting
- Prepare for the “tipping point” opportunity to pass redistricting reform including an independent redistricting commission
- Watch for FDGA public redistricting poll
- Join our monthly town halls, next one on June 27, 7pm

Thank you

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Next Town Hall



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