Achieving Fair Maps in Georgia

Joint Senate and House Redistricting Committees

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About Fair Districts GA

Fair Districts GA is a **nonpartisan** grass roots citizens' group that works to end electoral map rigging in Georgia.

Our focus is to fight gerrymandering, the practice of drawing legislative district lines to favor one **group** over another.

Our ultimate goal is to reform Georgia's **process** for drawing state and federal electoral maps.

Georgia is now a swing state. Our legislative and congressional districts should reflect this new reality.

Fair elections require fair voting rights **and** fair districts.

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About Princeton Gerrymandering Project

- The Princeton Gerrymandering Project (PGP) does nonpartisan analysis to understand and eliminate partisan gerrymandering at a state-by-state level
- Use state-of-art ensemble methods to create a normative collection of maps to understand what a map would look like without bias
- Serve as experts in federal and state courts

"We bridge the gap between mathematics and the law to achieve fair representation through redistricting reform."
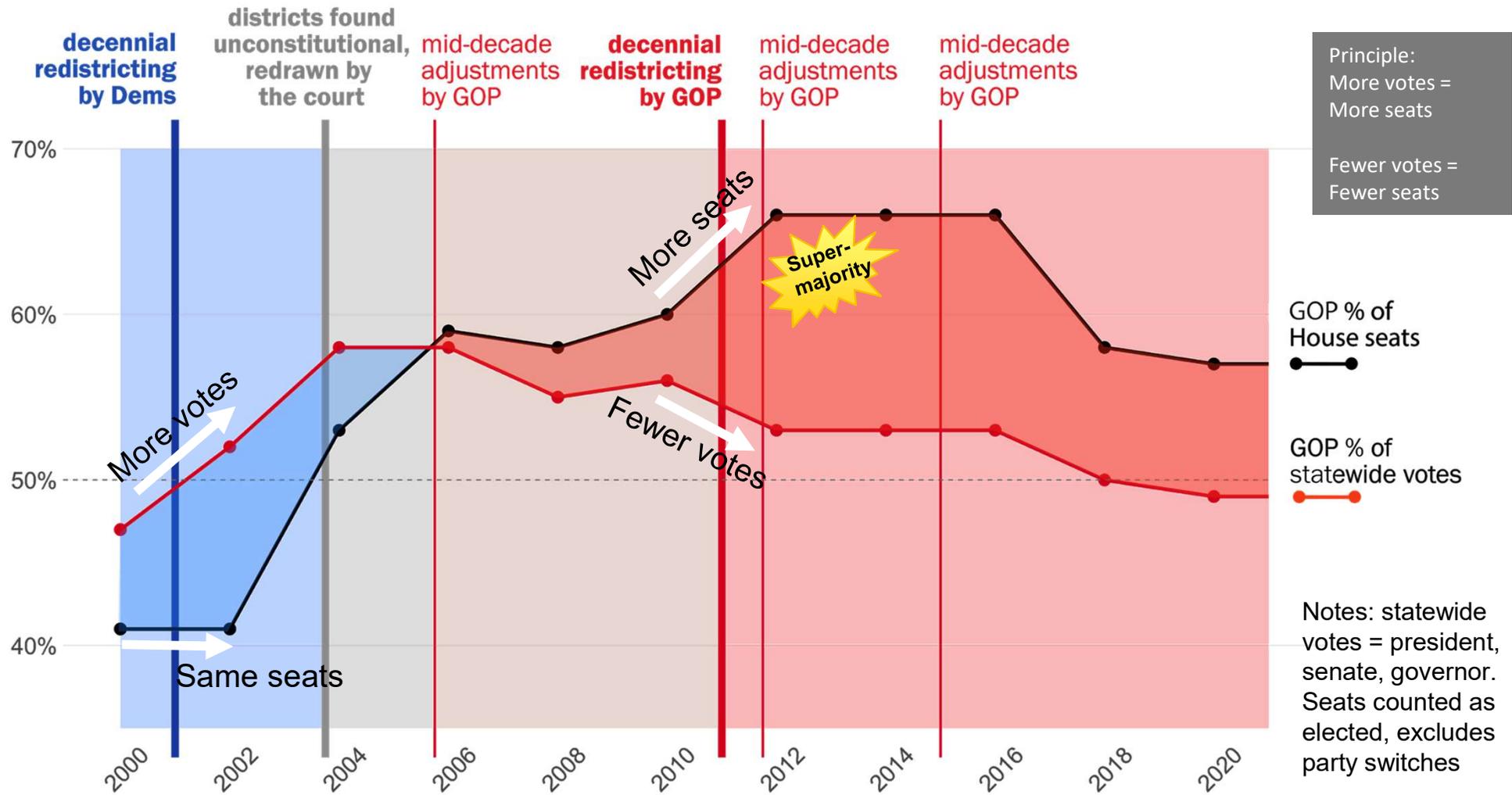
PRINCETON GERRYMANDERING PROJECT

What do we mean by fair maps?

- Respect voters' political preferences
  - Reflect the natural political preferences of voters distributed across the state
  - Sufficiently competitive
- Reflecting Georgia's diversity
  - Sufficient majority-minority districts per VRA
  - Preserve minority opportunity / influence districts
- Honor communities of interest

State House: Partisan Advantage

decennial redistricting by Dems

districts found unconstitutional, redrawn by the court

mid-decade adjustments by GOP

decennial redistricting by GOP

mid-decade adjustments by GOP

mid-decade adjustments by GOP

Principle: More votes = More seats

Fewer votes = Fewer seats

More seats

Super-majority

More votes

Fewer votes

Same seats

GOP % of House seats

GOP % of statewide votes

Notes: statewide votes = president, senate, governor. Seats counted as elected, excludes party switches

70%
60%
50%
40%

2000 2002 2004 2006 2008 2010 2012 2014 2016 2018 2020

Source: FDGA analysis of GA Secy. of State election data

Creating Fairness Benchmarks Using Computer Simulated Maps

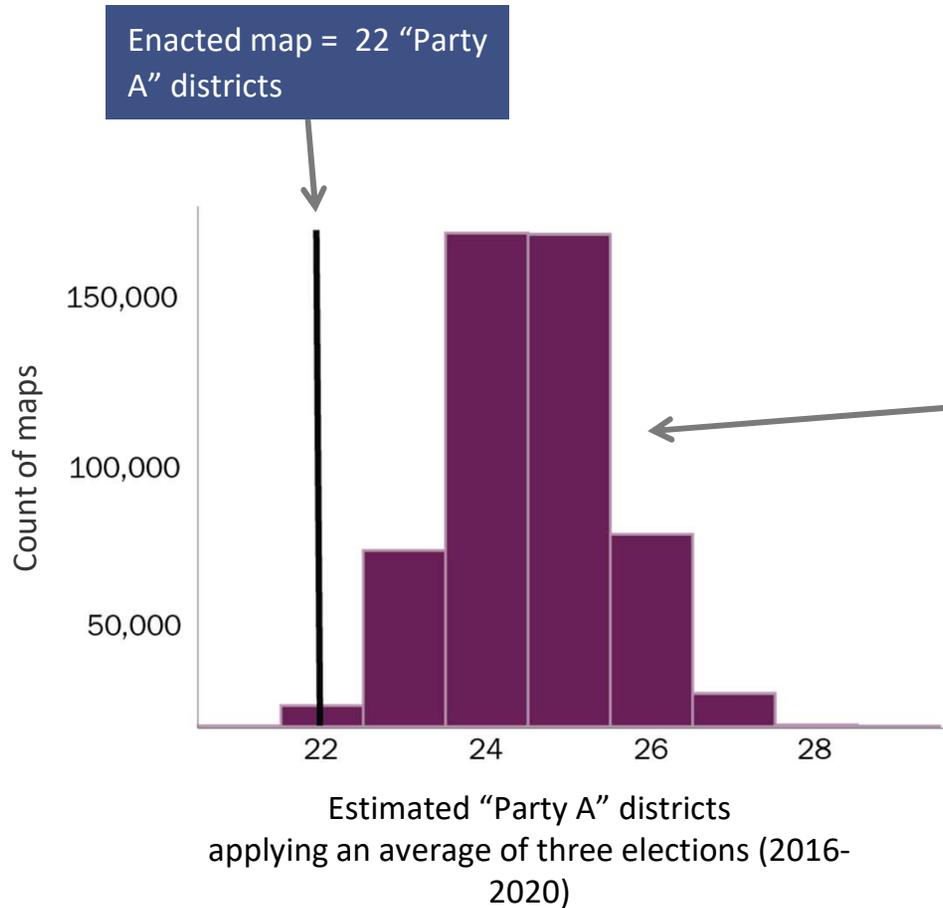Princeton Gerrymandering Project simulation
- Create ~500,000 maps for Congress, Senate and House based on 2020 census
- Comply with laws and traditional redistricting criteria
- Maintain current number of VRA-compliant districts
- Use average of 3 recent statewide elections for President, Governor and Senate

Benchmark example: Partisan balance in a 52-district map

Enacted map = 22 "Party A" districts

Count of maps

150,000

100,000

50,000

22   24   26   28

Estimated "Party A" districts
applying an average of three elections (2016-2020)

In 500,000 simulated maps:

- Natural partisan preference slightly favors Party B
  - Party A = 22-27 districts
  - Party B = 25-30 districts

- 98% of maps have 1-5 more "Party A" districts than enacted map (22)

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Benchmarks and map evaluation
2010-2020 historical view of current maps

Benchmarks / Fairness tests (compared to unbiased maps)			Observations
Partisan balance	Competitive districts	Minority representation	
State House ✗ 1-7 fewer Dem districts than 83% of unbiased maps	✓ 23 competitive districts, more than 81% of unbiased maps	✓ • 47 Black majority districts (as expected) • 8 opportunity districts (more than expected)	Decennial gerrymandering • Dems – 2001 • Reps – 2011 Extensive mid-cycle redistricting 2/3 of small cities split Black voter packing and cracking
State Senate ✗ 1-6 fewer Dem districts than 98% of unbiased maps	✗ 1-9 fewer competitive districts than 91% of unbiased maps	✗ • 15 Black majority districts (as expected) • Missing 1-3 opportunity districts compared to 98% of unbiased maps	Decennial gerrymandering • Dems – 2001 • Reps – 2011 Extensive mid-cycle redistricting Black voter packing and cracking eliminates opportunity districts
Congress ✓ Balanced as of 2016-2020	✓ 2 competitive districts, 78% have 1-2	✓ • 4 Black majority districts (as expected) • Slight chance to create 1 opportunity district	Mid-cycle redistricting Demographic shift has increased competitiveness of 2011 map

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FDGA / PGP benchmarks and map evaluation

Benchmarks / Fairness tests (range of values based on final 2020 census data)		
Partisan balance	Competitive districts	Minority representation
State House Republicans: W-X districts Democrats: Y-Z districts	X-Y competitive districts	W-X Majority-minority districts Y-Z opportunity districts
State Senate Republicans: W-X districts Democrats: Y-Z districts	X-Y competitive districts	W-X Majority-minority districts Y-Z opportunity districts
Congress Republicans: W-X districts Democrats: Y-Z districts	X-Y competitive districts	W-X Majority-minority districts Y-Z opportunity districts

- Benchmarks will use 2020 census data + 2018-2020/21 election data

- Evaluation of maps released by legislature

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Why Should We Adopt Independent Benchmarks?

- Fairer districts – and provides the justification
- Transparency – check by independent experts
- Restores public trust and confidence in the process
- Demonstrates compliance with Voting Rights Act
- May help avoid costly litigation

Fair Districts GA and Princeton as Resources

- Available to consult and review draft maps using benchmarks
- Fair Districts legislator resource page: bit.ly/FDGALegislatorResources