



Fair Districts GA Town Hall July 28, 2026

Tonight's Agenda

- What happened in Special Legislative Session?
- What do we do next?
- New website features you can use
- Q/A

Special Session Preparation

- Research
 - Tools, benchmarks, scorecards
- Communication
 - Op-ed
 - Press releases
 - Dedicated webpage
- Legislative Advocacy
 - Volunteers, materials, partners, legislator meetings, Capitol recon



Special Session Preparation - Research

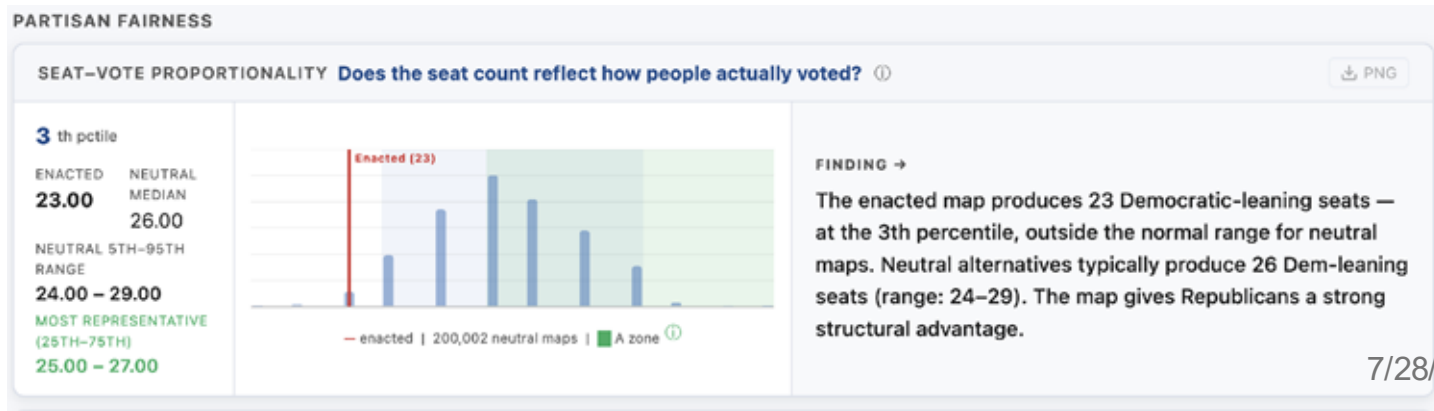
- Creating new benchmarks for fair maps
 - Statistical ranges for political and demographic
 - Yardsticks for grading new maps against standards
- Preparing rapid map comparison tool
 - Quantify changes from existing maps
 - Political
 - Demographic
- Presentable scorecards

Creating new benchmarks

- Prior benchmarks
 - 2021 – Princeton Gerrymandering Project
 - Partisan lean, competition, Black representation
 - Assumed Voting Rights Act protection
 - Extremely effective advocacy tool
- Updated benchmarks
 - Produced in-house by Vish Ganapathy
 - Consulted with experts
 - David Cottrell – U-Georgia
 - Tyler Simko & Chris Kenney – ALARM
 - Update election data to include 2018-2024
 - Assumes no Voting Rights Act Protection
- Challenge
 - Ridiculously short timeframe

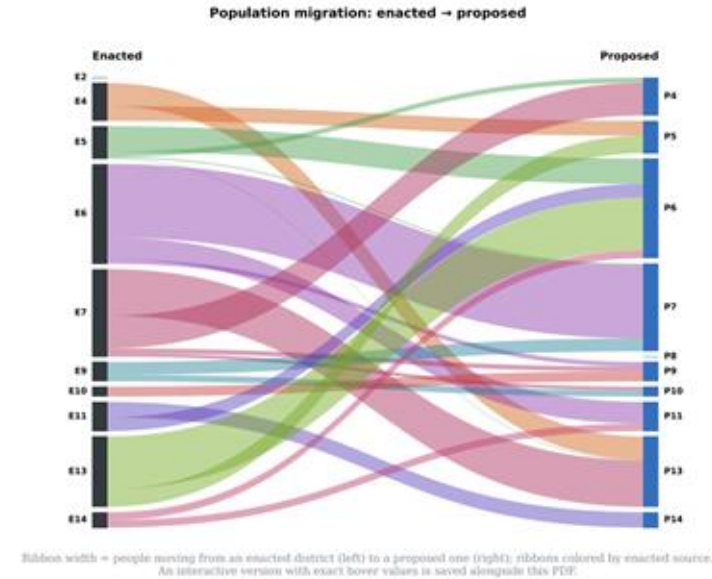
Creating new benchmarks

- Results
 - Produced partisan lean & competitive results that made sense
 - Produced demographic benchmarks (White, minority, Black)
 - Question: Post-Callais, how do we define appropriate balance of districts defined for demographic groups?
 - Benchmarking still needs refinement
- Decided to pause benchmarking work and rely on old-vs-new map comparison



Map Comparison Tool

- First used in 2023 redistricting cycle
- Compares existing to proposed map
- Identifies all changes
 - Partisan flips
 - Gain/loss competitive districts
 - Gain/loss Black & minority districts
 - Voter disruption (district-to-district move)
 - Extensive maps and graphics
- Upgraded tool – Vish again!
 - More permanent code base
 - Automatically generates comprehensive report
 - Automatically generates visualizations and maps
- Net: Ready to compare maps



Legislative Advocacy

- Prior to the session
 - recruit volunteers
 - materials preparation
 - partner outreach
 - solicit legislator meetings
 - Capitol reconnaissance
- During the session



Legislative Advocacy - Recruit Volunteers

- Legislative meetings
- Phone calls & e-mails
- Testimony
- Limited by compressed timeline

Legislative Advocacy - Preparing Materials

- Signs
- Testimony
 - Scripts
 - Talking points
- Joint communications



Legislative Advocacy - Partner Outreach

- ACLU, LWV, Common Cause, SPLC, Fair Count
- Other voter protection groups
- Necessary Trouble
- Ad hoc groups
- Value
 - Source(s) of training
 - Amplification of FDGa message
 - Coordination of testimonies



Legislator Meetings / Capitol Visits

- Effort to secure meetings with Committee Chairs, etc.
 - No success → limited response
 - Anticipation of withdrawal?
 - e-mail trail
- Democratic Caucus policy team
- LCRO
 - Gina Wright - Executive Director
 - Dan O'Connor - Redistricting Data Specialist



What Happened on June 17? Public Pressure...



...+ Political Calculus = Victory, For Now



Arvin Temkar/AJC



7/28/26

The Official Statement

- Speaker's letter:
 - We've always done this giving careful consideration to constitutional requirements and Georgia's communities.
 - We always allow ample time for public input.
 - Court cases still pending; confident Georgia will prevail.
 - Changes should only be made after all facts are understood
- What it doesn't say:
 - Redistricting for 2028 is off the table



The Political Calculus

- Neither party's rank-and-file members wanted this
 - Democrats opposed on principle
 - Republicans concerned about backlash
- Pushed by members of leadership running for higher office
 - June 16 primary result left different people in charge on June 17
 - Some members supported the opponent who won
- Gov. Kemp may have opened the door in exchange for support for his candidates
- Bottom line: Not a politically smart move in this environment
- But....door is still open for another session this year



Key Learnings

Partnerships are useful or even essential.

- Amplifying FDGa message(s)
- Training and other resources
- Covering testimony topics
- Informal information flow
- Participation in group "actions" is useful but FDGa doesn't need to be leadership.
- We need to be working *now* to prepare for any late 2026 special session or the 2027 regular session.



Pledge Campaign Preview

- Goal(s)
 - 33% of all candidates
 - 40% of all district races (with a choice)
- Preparation
 - Update pledge
 - Identify legislative candidates
 - Mine FDGa membership list
 - Legislative districts

Pledge Campaign Preview

- Launch – by August 28th
 - E-mail solicitation
 - Phone calls
 - 2 press releases
 - Letters to the editor
- Execution
 - Compile
 - Follow-up
 - Public scorecard → individual responses

I TAKE THE PLEDGE!
FAIR DISTRICTS GA

Name:
Signature:
Candidate for:

I PLEDGE TO SUPPORT FAIR REDISTRICTING AND REDISTRICTING REFORM ACROSS GEORGIA, TO INCLUDE:

A fully transparent redistricting process with robust citizen engagement;
Fair district maps, validated by independent experts, reflecting the diversity and communities of interest of Georgia which do not unnaturally favor any political party;
Competitive districts that give voters meaningful candidate choices;
An end to mid-cycle redistricting and prison gerrymandering.

The form also includes several small photos of people who have signed the pledge, including a woman holding a sign, a woman with glasses, a man in a suit, and three women in the bottom row.

Additional Actions You Can Take Now

- Pledge campaign
 - Compiling contact information
 - Contacts & tracking
- Legislative Engagement
 - Office visits (incl. in home districts)
 - Telephone calls
 - E-mails
 - Testimony
- Contact Dave Thomas: Advocates@FairDistrictsGA.org

Gerrymandering Reform Framework

Problem Solvers Caucus

- Five principles for Congressional re-districting
 - ***Stability and predictability*** in representation;
 - ***Transparency*** and public confidence in the map-drawing process;
 - Fair and consistent application of standards across states;
 - ***Respect for communities and political subdivisions***; and
 - Reduction of incentives for partisan manipulation.

Gerrymandering Reform Framework

Problem Solvers Caucus

- Four core reforms:
 - **Once-a-Decade Redistricting**: Restrict congressional redistricting to once every ten years following the decennial Census.
 - **Nationwide Uniform Standards**: Require congressional districts to be drawn using clear, objective criteria while rejecting partisan advantage and incumbent protection as legitimate goals.
 - **Reducing Partisan Influence**: Support approaches that minimize partisan influence, including independent commissions, ...
 - **Federal Resolution of Challenges**: ...



Gerrymandering Reform Framework

Problem Solvers Caucus

- Fair Districts Georgia response:
 - Letters of support
 - Problem Solvers Caucus
 - Georgia Representatives
- Potential future (?post election?)
 - Constituent campaign

New on our website – poll results



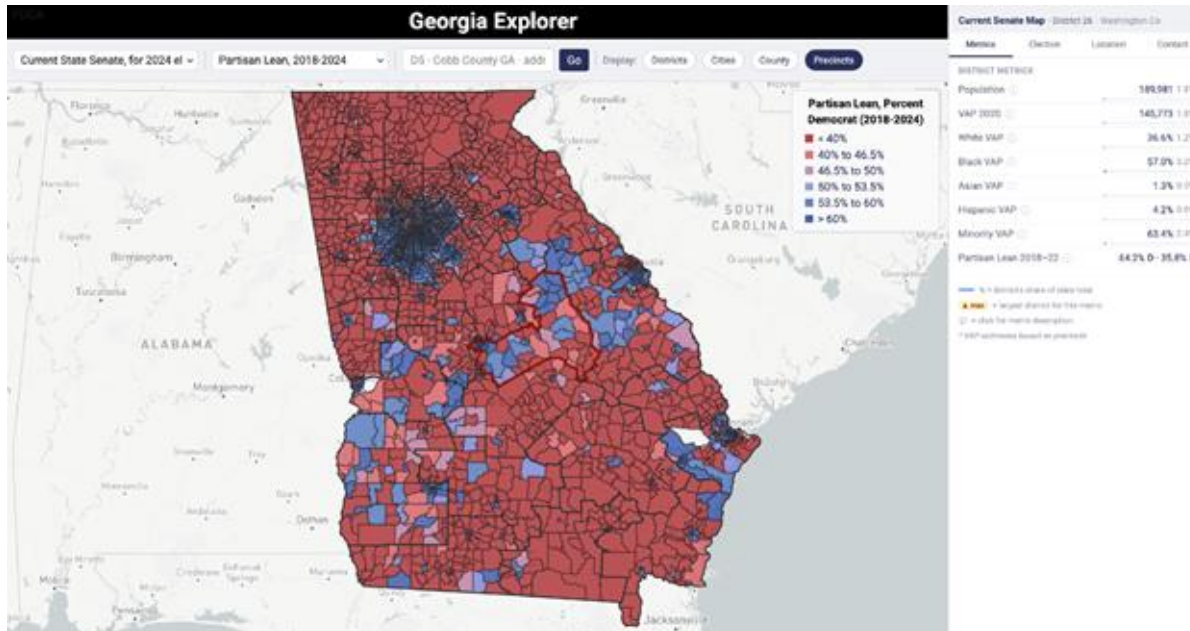
Research team next steps

- Benchmarks
 - Consulting with experts to refine approach
 - UGA, Georgia Tech, Electoral Innovation Lab (Princeton)
 - Prepare for next round of maps
- Map comparison tool
 - Possible public access
- New Georgia Explorer Map



New Georgia Explorer Map

- Updated election data - 2018-2024
- New census data (2025 American Community Survey)



Two ways to support Fair Districts



- Fair Districts GA Foundation
 - Supports research, education, communication, & community programs
 - Tax-deductible charity 501(c)(3)



- Fair Districts GA
 - Supports legislative advocacy and lobbying
 - Not tax deductible



@FDGAven

FairDistrictsGA.org/support

Thank you!

Next Town Hall – Pledge Campaign Kickoff

Next Town Hall



Email:
info@fairdistrictsga.org
Twitter: @FairDistrictsGA
Web: fairdistrictsga.org
Facebook: @FairDistrictsGA
Instagram: @FairDistrictsGA





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