



The ABCs of Redistricting Reform

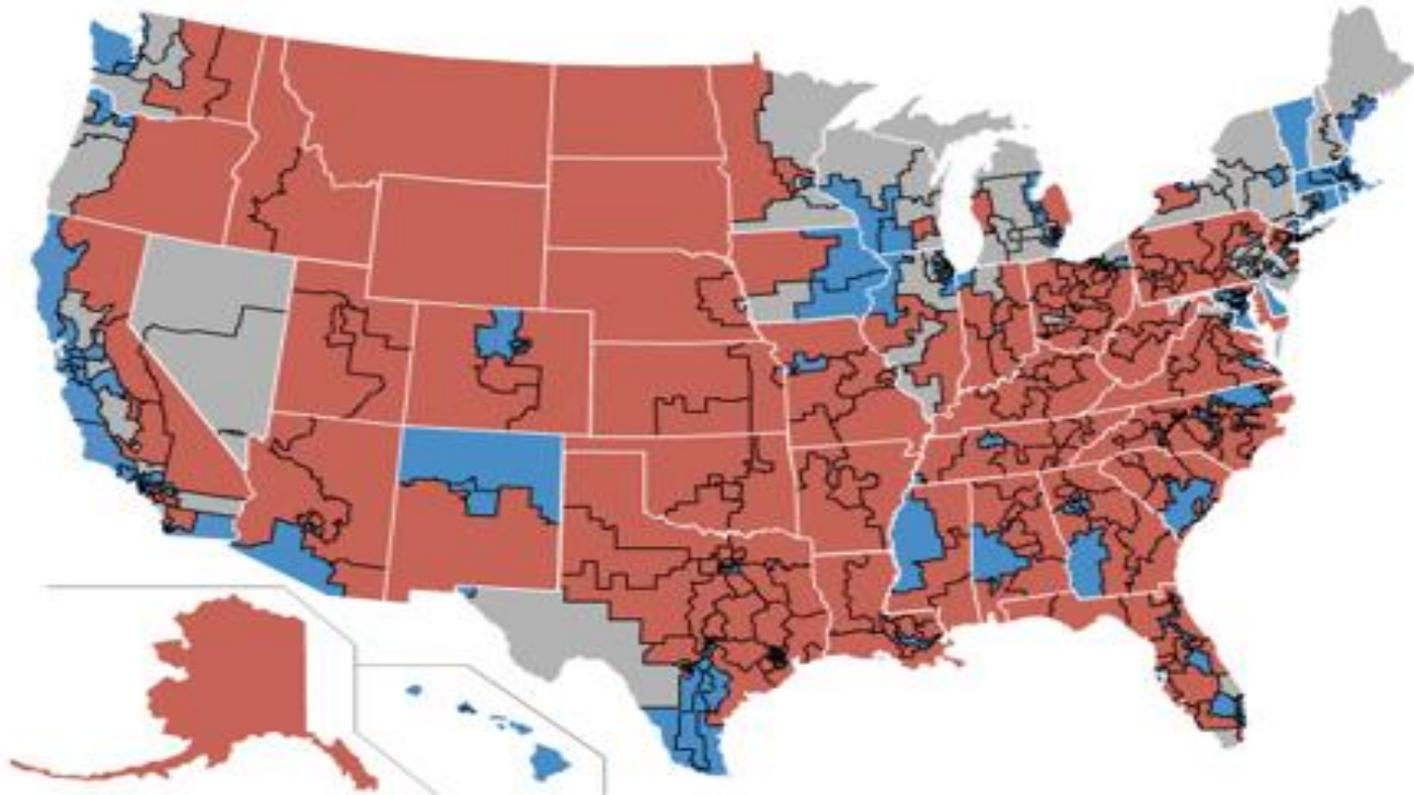
Different Approaches and the state of play

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Overview of Talk

- Leading models for more independent redistricting
- Measuring impact of different approaches
- State of play around the country



Lack of Voter Choice in US House Races

FairVote projected results of 2016 election in 85% of districts, two years before the election. 100% accuracy.

California: Citizen redistricting

Independent citizen panel draws lines based on specific criteria



- First adopted in 2011
- Complicated selection process: State auditors select 20 Ds, 20 Rs and 20 independents. Legislative leaders may remove 2 from each group. Eight then chosen to serve at random; they select 6 more (2 from each group).
- Contiguity, compactness and consistency with political boundaries are key criteria
- No partisan information or demographic data other than population numbers may be considered by map makers
- Maps must be approved by 9 members of the commission, including 3 from each group

Florida: “Fair Districts”

Legislature redistricts, based on clear criteria, subject to judicial approval



- Voters approved Fair Districts amendments to state constitution in 2010 mandating redistricting that is free of all partisan intent
- Contiguity, compactness and consistency with political boundaries are key criteria
- Constitution mandates that no district “shall be drawn with the intent to favor or disfavor a political party or an incumbent.”
- Judges found partisan intent in 2011 cycle, ordered new congressional and state senate maps

Arizona: “Bipartisan” independent commission

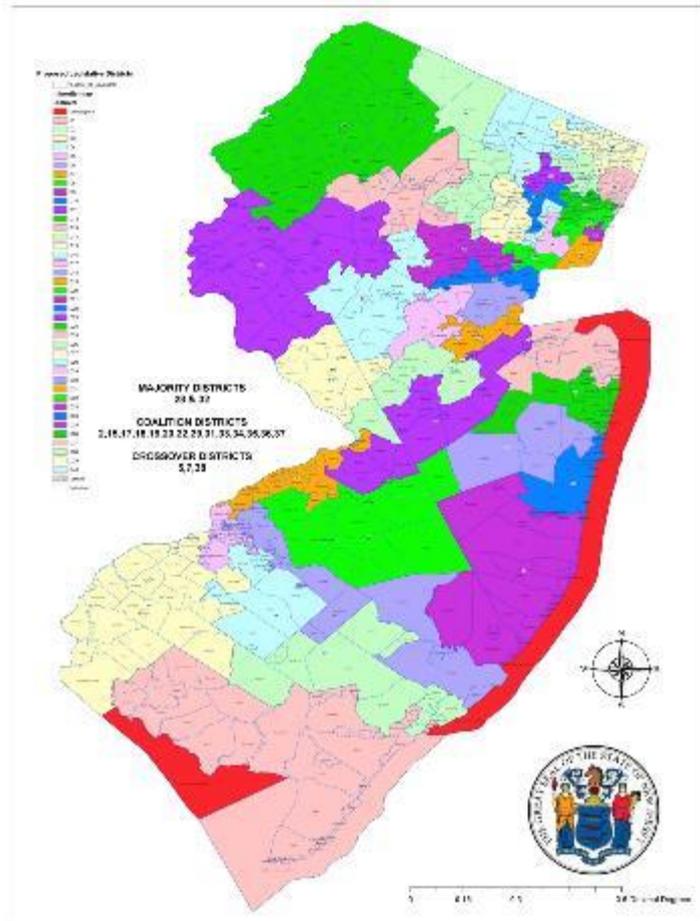
Panel of citizens, appointed by legislative leaders, chaired by an independent



- Voters approved at ballot initiative in 2000
- Panel of five includes two Democrats and two Republicans, appointed by legislative leaders, and an independent chair, selected through a nonpartisan appellate court process
- Six specific criteria laid out by law: Equal population, compactness, compliance with Voting Rights Act, respect for communities of interest, incorporation of visible geographic factors, creation of competitive districts where possible
- Has not removed partisanship. Decade-long court battles, complicated partisan intent on both sides, battles to game “independent” chair – including removal of the 2010 chair by the governor

NJ, WA, CT, HI: “Bipartisan” commissions

Panels of esteemed citizens, appointed by politicians, chaired by independent



- Both parties select the same number of commission members. Commission then chooses its own chair
- Versions of this reform used in New Jersey, Washington, Hawaii, Connecticut, others
- N.J. criteria includes contiguity, consistency with municipal boundaries and compactness
- Process tends to protect incumbents and safe seats for parties

How effective are these reforms?

Ask the experts!

- We partnered with 14 top scholars to test 37 electoral reforms

Redistricting reforms did not fare well

- Scholars found that commissions improve competition only at the margins

Legislative redistricting with judicial approval

- “No impact” to “low impact”: Requires one umpire to ensure fair play rather than setting up fair system

“Bipartisan” commissions

- Judged likely to produce entrenched incumbents, few competitive seats, difficulty in flipping chambers

The compactness problem

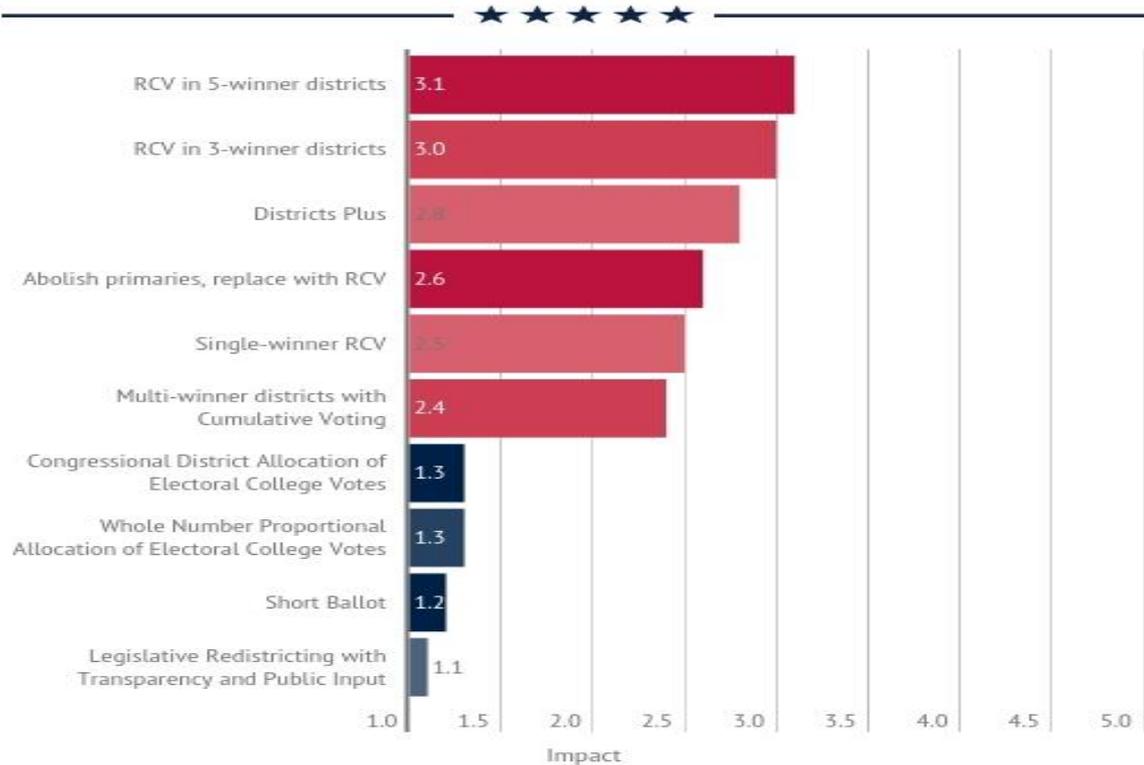
- Criteria favoring compactness and cohesion unlikely to have impact because of geographical sorting (Ds in urban areas, Rs suburban, rural)

Non-legislative redistricting

- California and Iowa models scored in top-third of our survey, but lower in impact than significant structural reforms. Scholars suggested unlikely to increase competition and participation, or decrease polarization

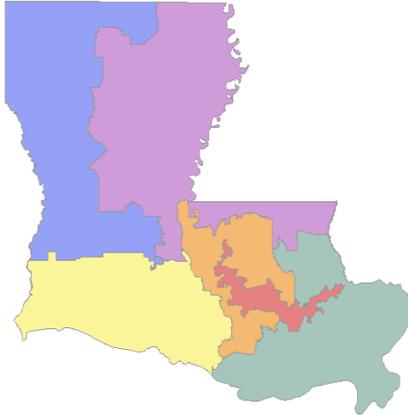
What Tested Best?

REFORMS WITH THE MOST (AND LEAST) IMPACT



Ranked Choice Voting in Multi-Winner Districts

Current Louisiana House districts



District	Dem Part.
1	26%
2	74%
3	31%
4	38%
5	36%
6	31%

Independent Redistricting



District	Dem Part.
1	38%
2	32%
3	39%
4	35%
5	48%
6	30%

Multi-Winner Ranked Choice Voting



District	# of Seats	Dem Part.	Black Pop.
A	3	39%	32%
B	3	35%	32%

2018: Where the action is

Most reform campaigns very similar to previous efforts



- Messaging: Schwarzenegger and Common Cause attracting attention for California-style commissions elsewhere
- Initiatives: Activists in **Missouri, Ohio and Michigan** targeting Activists in Virginia and **2018 or 2020 ballot initiatives**
- Legislatures: North Carolina, among other states, pushing for bipartisan reform through the legislature
- Litigation: Whitford and efficiency gap, key partisan gerrymandering cases from NC. and MD aimed at first SCOTUS standard
- Politics: Obama/Holder create National Democratic Redistricting Commission aimed at D gains ahead of 2020 census; GOP plans REDMAP 2020 of its own
- Congress: Fair Representation Act in June

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