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LEGISLATIVE ACTION ALERT

District voting maps – and gerrymandering claims – remain the states' responsibility: Supreme Court

By [The Associated Press](#) June 27, 2019

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court says federal courts have no role to play in policing political districts drawn for partisan gain. The decision could embolden political line-drawing for partisan gain when state lawmakers undertake the next round of redistricting following the 2020 Census.

The justices said by a 5-4 vote Thursday that claims of partisan gerrymandering do not belong in federal court. The court's conservative, Republican-appointed majority says that voters and elected officials should be the arbiters of what is a political dispute.

#SCOTUS rules that partisan-gerrymandering challenges to electoral maps are political questions that are not reviewable in federal court, dismissing challenges by Dem. voters to NC congressional map drawn by Rep. officials and by Rep. voters to 1 district drawn by Dems in Md. The #SCOTUS opinion in *Rucho v. Common Cause* (North Carolina), together with *Lamone v. Benisek* (Maryland), is available on the Supreme Court's website at this link:
https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/18pdf/18-422_9o11.pdf ...

Both parties have drawn congressional and legislative districts to their own advantage. Republicans and Democrats have designed

districts filled with their party's voters to protect their majorities, critics say. The Supreme Court ruling leaves that practice in place.

The court rejected challenges to Republican-drawn congressional districts in North Carolina and a Democratic district in Maryland. The justices regularly have been called to invalidate state electoral maps that have been illegally drawn to reduce the influence of racial minorities by depressing the impact of their votes. However, it had never found a plan unconstitutional because of partisan gerrymandering. Political districts will be redrawn following the next population count.

Pennsylvania has often been described as the nation's poster child for political gerrymandering. Last year, the state Supreme Court revamped Pennsylvania's congressional map. The court ruled that the old districts were unconstitutional because they were designed to protect incumbents, with Republicans holding 13 of 18 congressional seats. Republicans slammed the new map and viewed it as the Democratic-controlled court engaging in its own version of gerrymandering to aid Democrats. With new congressional districts in place last fall, Democrats captured seats in the Philadelphia suburbs and now hold 9 of the state's 18 congressional seats.