



Pennsylvania Conference of Teamsters

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LEGISLATIVE ACTION ALERT

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Federal court blocks Alabama's new congressional map

A US federal court blocked Alabama's newly drawn congressional map ruling that it likely violates Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act because it only includes one district where Black voters have the opportunity to elect a candidate of their choice.

The order gives the legislature 14 days to draw a new map that includes "two districts in which Black voters either comprise a voting-age majority or something quite close to it."

The court also delayed the state's ballot qualification deadline from January 28 to February 11.

If Monday's decision stands, it will likely lead to Democrats gaining a seat in the House from Alabama this November. "The court's decision reminds us that the moral arc of the universe does indeed bend toward justice -- but only when enough people join together and pull it toward justice," former US Attorney General Eric Holder

This is the second congressional map blocked by judges surrounding redistricting. The Ohio Supreme Court ruled earlier this month that that state's new map was a partisan gerrymander that violated the state constitution.

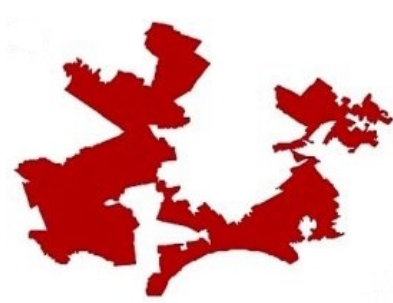
Pennsylvania is the poster child for gerrymandering

Gerrymandering over the last few decades has been blamed for the widening partisan divide in Congress, in state legislatures and down to town hall meetings.

Advocates for underrepresented groups also blame gerrymandering for keeping certain communities shut out from elected office.

"The current process is redistricting gone wrong—a process driven by partisan politics, mapping technology, big data, and outside money," according to Fair Districts PA. "The result is gerrymandering: the practice of manipulating voting districts to benefit parties, not people.

Gerrymandered districts give voters less voice and less choice, and we get polarization instead of problem-solving in Harrisburg and Washington."



Former 7th Congressional District

While Congressional District 7 no longer looks like a cartoon, you can find similar stories across Pennsylvania. Follow the odd little squiggles in the PA House and Senate maps. You'll see communities and counties divided and voters deprived of choice and voice.

Gerrymandering is used to determine elections

In Pennsylvania, political leaders draw district lines to decide elections before a vote is cast. Here are some ways they manipulate maps to protect incumbents and keep their party in power:

Cracking

Cracking reduces the voting power of a certain party or community by splitting its population and spreading its members among several districts where they become an irrelevant minority.

Packing

Packing concentrates voters of one party or community in as few districts as possible to reduce their influence in the remaining districts.