

The Curse of Gerrymandering: How Ethnicity and Race is Used to Draw Partisan, Electoral District Lines in the United States

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Abstract

Probably the most vexing political problem facing the American voter today — when it comes to elections — is the controversial practice known as “gerrymandering.” As some political scientists have suggested, gerrymandering shouldn’t even exist. Further, and most improbably, keeping “gerrymandering” has become sorely and surely confusing and untenable. Therefore, this work is an analysis of the best understanding of “gerrymandering,” and how it has upset and undermined the legitimacy of elections — at all levels — in the United States. Indeed, some see “gerrymandering” as the catchall name for drawing illegal or bias district lines — that is, in respect to our elections and politics. Thus, this paper also examines how “gerrymandering” has negatively influenced our politics and election systems since the 1800s, while pushing our nation close to a disastrous, political edge. To a large extent, many Americans are unfamiliar with the concept of “gerrymandering,” and its negative implications. In addition, the American people should pay close attention to what is going on with “gerrymandering” in every state, especially in terms of its blatant unfairness when it comes to black voters and how they are grievously overlooked by the two major political parties. Finally, this paper attempts to address whether we will be stuck with a discriminatory process that is (part and parcel) undemocratic.

Introduction: The Limits of Gerrymandering

From the very start, it should be understood that *gerrymandering* is the “Drawing of electoral district lines to give one political party [an] unfair advantage” (“gerrymandering,” 2000, p. 699) — that is, when it comes to political elections and electoral redistricting. In other words, this scornful word *gerrymander*, as political scientists William T. Bianco and David T. Canon (2009) explain — is a way of twisting “the process of redrawing district boundaries to benefit a political party, [and to] protect incumbents, or change the proportion of minority voters in a [specific] district” (pp. 355-356). However, the word *gerrymander* is not mentioned in the U.S. Constitution; hence, it (gerrymandering) shouldn’t be recognized as a legitimate endeavor in our political system. Yet, some politicians see *gerrymandering* as “an age-old political practice that predates the actions of nineteenth-century Massachusetts Governor Elbridge Gerry, who in 1811 signed off a salamander-shaped district (hence the name)” that was designed “to be a safe haven for Jeffersonian Democrats” (Kerbel, 2024, p. 266). For some political sycophants, such a redistricting action was neither *here* nor *there*; but this “egregiously awkward” shaped “redistricting bill,” by Elbridge Gerry, “allowed his Democratic-Republican party to take state Senate seats [that] it couldn’t get with more reasonably shaped districts” (Clairmont, 2019, p. 11), (Note 1) or legitimately. Additionally, the myth that “gerrymandering” is necessary in our political system is simply not true, as the practice is a profound threat to fair and democratic government.

After all, our U.S. government and democracy depend on *compromise*, critical thinking, political connectiveness, and working together, even with political and ideological differences. Nevertheless, *gerrymandering* is when district lines are strangely drawn “in a way that favors the electoral prospects of the [political] party in power” (Kerbel, 2024, p. 266), which might lead to polarization and greed as political power. For example, “in 2010 Republicans won majorities in both houses of Pennsylvania’s legislature, which gave them control of the state’s decennial redistricting process,” where “they drew districts to benefit themselves, like children left alone with a box of cookies,” and later “won 13 of the state’s 18 congressional seats despite winning just 49% of the statewide vote” (“Gerrymandering,” 2018, p. 23). To say the least, this clearly violated Pennsylvania’s constitution and the idea of fairness in elections.

Although *gerrymandering* hasn’t ended in the United States, another problem with this *undemocratic* process is that it implies that the American people *wholeheartedly* accept it. But nothing could be further from the truth. So, are there serious misconceptions about *gerrymandering*? Perhaps. Indeed, why can’t most Americans see and understand what is actually going on with *gerrymandering*? Is it because the general public is inattentive? Or is it because some American citizens simply don’t care? No doubt, “gerrymandering” is a political nightmare, for some, that discourage competitive elections, especially in the drawing of so-called “safe district lines,” where the incumbent politician is elected and reelected over and over again, with sometimes preconceived objectives beyond providing fairness or equality (and *parity*) in different elections. Consequently, “gerrymandered districts also tend to be *safe districts* — where voters are likely to vote for one [political] party over another by a large (“safe”) majority” (Morone & Kersh, 2023, p. 300). (Note 2) In no uncertain terms, we must consider how *gerrymandering* has negatively affected our politics. This is to say that for some political ideologues, *gerrymandering* is indispensable and celebrated; but it has created (no less) a distasteful and corrupt method of drawing electoral district lines (or election boundaries) by state legislatures that never previously existed.

Unfortunately, both of the major political parties in the United States have perfected the practice of *gerrymandering* — “although Republicans have become masters of the art [of extreme gerrymandering] in multiple states” (Morone & Kersh, 2023, p. 299). Indeed, as pointed out in a *New York Times* editorial, and quoted in the *Las Vegas Sun*:

Both Democrats and Republicans draw biased [gerrymandered] maps... but modern partisan gerrymandering is mostly the work of Republicans, who control a majority of governorships, as well as the legislative chambers in 32 states. [Republican] efforts to lock in this advantage by any means necessary — including by kneecapping any institutions, including the courts, that [might] try to stop them. (“The great Republican,” 2018, p. 2) (Note 3)

Partisan Gerrymandering

The phenomenon of “gerrymandering” has also become, perhaps, to our detriment an intricate (or under the radar) way of weaving political division (or polarization) into the fabric of our electoral politics. This is to say that because of *gerrymandering*, there are conservative Republicans who are “hellbent on keeping white voting power disproportionately strong while weakening legitimate minority power bases — all in an effort to solidify Republican control over areas of the country that have been slipping away [from them] for decades” (Greenspun, 2019, p. 1). And for the *uninitiated* and those who don’t pay attention, *gerrymandering* is perplexing, because some Americans genuinely have no idea how the drawing of electoral district lines actually work; or how the Republican Party is mostly benefiting from the practice today. According to political journalist Adam Liptak, “in recent years, as Republicans captured state legislatures around the country, they have been the primary architects and beneficiaries of partisan gerrymandering,” despite words to the contrary (Liptak, 2019, p. 1). (Note 4) Furthermore, *gerrymandering* really has no set parameters or political guidelines for implementation; therefore, it is considered a decentralized process, where states or legislatures can draw Congressional and State district lines however they see fit. But even the Supreme Court indicated that, “they don’t like the way states draw one-sided election districts.” Nevertheless, in 2018, the Supreme Court justices “did not appear ready to devise a solution” (Wolf, 2018b, p. 6A). (Note 5) To be blunt, in terms of the highest U.S. court, *gerrymandering* has reach a sort of tipping point in American politics, particularly in the collective consciousness of our different political leaders. To be absolutely certain, “partisans continue the practice [of *gerrymandering*] because they believe it gives them an edge” (Kerbel, 2024, p. 266). In this regard, Bianco and Canon write (2009):

Partisan gerrymandering is when elected officials from one party draw district lines that benefit candidates from their [political] party and hurt candidates from other [political] parties. This usually occurs when one party has majorities in both houses of the state legislature and occupies the governorship, and can therefore enact redistricting legislation without votes from the minority [political] party. (p. 355-356)

Currently, Republicans have an edge among governors and state legislatures over Democrats, who “have been hurt by [being gerrymandered] the most” (Wolf, 2019a, p. 3A). Therefore, Democrats are at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to the redistricting process and our political elections. Moreover, in this respect, *gerrymandering* has been really debilitating (politically) for the Democratic Party. In other words, Republicans, “at the federal and state levels [have] benefited from gerrymandered districts in states where they controlled the redistricting process” (Kerbel, 2024, p. 266). Perhaps more poignantly, there isn’t a part of our political system where Americans are not negatively affected by *gerrymandering* — that is, those adult citizens who vote and politically participate. Redistricting, of course, is the process where “the redrawing of congressional district lines within a state [is supposed] to ensure roughly equal populations within each district” (Greenberg & Page, 2003, p. 315). (Note 6) However, there is a great deal at stake (today) in politics, particularly when it comes to filling congressional seats. According to the Executive Director of the NRA, Chris W. Cox, “redistricting is intended to be non-partisan, [but] in the real world — especially in the highly charged political climate we live in today — redistricting often becomes a political football” (Cox, 2018, pp. 19-20), or an exploding, political landmine. Obviously, the electoral stakes are even higher now because of *gerrymandering*, which has never been sufficiently fleshed out, as mentioned earlier, or codified throughout the nation by state courts. According to professors John J. Coleman, Kenneth M. Goldstein, and William G. Howell, “The [Supreme] Court’s one person, one vote principle provides no [explicit] guidance about how to draw the lines that separate districts” (Coleman, Goldstein, & Howell, 2011, p. 50), as already discussed. Needless to say, *gerrymandering* should be considered an inappropriate way to draw district lines at any level, all things considered.

Equally important, *gerrymandering* has triggered a national debate over the redrawing of electoral district lines in so-called red states. Equally important, the idea of *gerrymandering* doesn’t give the mass public time for questioning governors or state legislatures. Why? The essence is this: A public comment period is needed, in all cases, where there should be a factual input *for* and/or *against* a particular, (biased) redistricting plan. We should also be able to inject a degree of *sanity* when allowing independent, electoral *commissions* or state legislatures to draw election district lines, because they might be at the mercy of the political process. *Gerrymandering* also remains the most ill-conceived and most controversial subject/topic in politics today, promulgated by dishonest, political party actors/operatives who care *only* about raw, political power. For example, “in 2008, a Republican operative named Chris Jankowski devised a [warped] plan, “Project REDMAP,” to draw [gerrymandered] maps gaining the most U.S. House seats with the fewest votes, [and] moving them into Republican hands for the next 10 years” (“Pandering to Gerrymandering,” 2018, p. 4). Consequently, *gerrymandering* poses a greater (or potential) threat to our nation than we might imagine or believe, as the process doesn’t benefit *everyone*. This is to say that the practice “benefit[s] some particular group or interest;” and as pointed out earlier, “it can create strikingly bizarre [or strange-looking] shapes” (Edwards & Lippucci, 1998, p. 362) — that is, when we draw the plan on a map. Furthermore, different or partisan politicians, in general, will not take the lead in eliminating *gerrymandering*, because “they [firmly] believe it gives them an edge” (Kerbel, 2024, p. 266). (Note 7) Therefore, American voters must clearly understand how *gerrymandering* works, because the strategy can negatively affect us all — that is, when it comes to voting and participating in elections. Hence, *we-the-people* should not be led astray about this controversial, political issue, as *gerrymandering* shouldn’t rule the day in our electoral system.

Racial Gerrymandering

Even more important, we should understand that voters today live in a *topsy-turvy* (and racially charged) world, where people believe in whatever they want to believe about our politics because of political ignorance, disinformation, and/or misinformation. However, if *gerrymandering* “violate[s] the Constitution by relegating some [American] voters into irrelevance, it [most certainly] could signal a sea change in the way legislatures controlled by one party have tried to rig the [electoral] mapmaking process” (Wolf, 2019a, p. 3A). In a nutshell, *gerrymandering* hides what the major political parties are actually doing in terms of concealing their true motives and political interests.

Furthermore, some progressive politicians probably believe that *gerrymandering* is stained by *racism* and *discrimination* today, because state and congressional district lines are mostly drawn along racial/color lines by state legislatures. Hence, racial *gerrymandering* means “drawing district lines in a [specific] way that [combines] disparate populations of minority groups in order to guarantee representation by those groups in Congress” (Kerbel, 2024, p. 266) and state legislatures. Unfortunately, in 1960, racial *gerrymandering*, or “the drawing of election districts to ensure that African Americans would be a minority in all districts — was ruled unconstitutional in *Gomillion v. Lightfoot*” — as the Supreme Court believed that the practice “was contrary to the Fifteenth Amendment” (Burns et al., 2004, p. 462). Still, the basic tenets or philosophy behind partisan *gerrymandering* (unconstitutionally) infringes on the rights of blacks and other minorities to choose their own representatives to Congress. Even more important, “The Supreme Court has ruled on multiple occasions that race cannot be a major factor in the way district lines are drawn, but it has yet to set a standard for how much politics is too much” (Wolf, 2019a, 3A); (Note 8) or why is drawing electoral lines necessary in the first place? Therefore, partisan (or illegal) *gerrymandering* can shortchange African Americans and other people of color in terms of limiting their political participation. Also, *gerrymandering* has been rightly berated for particularly diluting the vote of communities of color, as it perpetuates *inequities* when it comes to voting and having respective, political representation in our state legislatures and Congress. Emeritus McKenzie Professor of Government at Florida State University, Thomas R. Dye (2007) even tells us that “Racial gerrymandering appears to help Republican congressional candidates,” because of unfair, legislative mapmaking. Dye goes on to explain: “If African American voters are concentrated in heavily black districts, the effect is to “bleach” surrounding districts of Democratic leaning black voters and thus improve the chances for republican victories” (p. 256). (Note 9) Therefore, if Republican state legislators, “who hold the majority,” pack black voters into as few districts as possible, or “certain districts,” they will “make surrounding districts whiter and more Republican” (“High court,” 2018, p. 4A). (Note 10) To be clear, the Republican, political *shibboleth* is on full display with partisan *gerrymandering* and racial *gerrymandering*. Therefore, we must strongly question or contest the *efficacy* of conservative political beliefs when it comes to any type of *gerrymandering*.

In other words, the whole idea of *gerrymandering* puts our Democracy in a perilous, political position, because of its brazen unfairness and wanton illegitimacy. The late Senator John Whitehouse, a Democrat, stated that “Partisan gerrymandering has become a tool for powerful interests to distort the democratic process” (Liptak, 2017, p. 5), which in itself is wrong, immoral, and unjust. *Gerrymandering* can also be infuriating to political candidates on the losing end of biased and excessively partisan, district lines. Such partisan *gerrymandering* can also be at the expense of minority communities and non-conservative, political actors and African American voters. Consequently, we should never underestimate the destructive impact of *gerrymandering*, because it “frustrates the representation of the majority and allows the endowed to pass their [illegal] laws, select judges and create policing policies that favor domination” (Becker, 2020, p. 2). More importantly, *gerrymandering* is an audacious, political strategy, which contributes to the divisions in our election politics. To say the least, it is not some relatively *benign* way of drawing electoral district lines and/or new legislative maps, because it might conceivably help one party over the other; however, “Republicans say the influence of gerrymandering is overblown. They argue that Democrats fail to win seats in proportion to their popular votes because Democratic voters are clustered in urban districts” (Gabriel, 2019, p. 5). What rubbish. This comment isn’t accurate, because contrary to almost everything about *gerrymandering*, racial identity and prejudice attitudes have also played a significant part in the drawing of electoral district lines, much to the chagrin of Republicans and Democrats; and primarily because the practice might substantially alter the shape of voting districts for both of the major political parties. For instance, voters in 2018 “passed ballot questions” in five states, “shifting the power to draw political districts away from partisan lawmakers” (Gabriel, 2019, p. 1), (Note 11) which was considered a political *coup* or brilliant plan. Still, African American voters must immediately reject and fight against the discriminatory tactics of *gerrymandering*, while not taking the practice for granted, as it encourages imbalance in voting and participation.

Furthermore, in this regard, “Gerrymandering has been used both to prevent ethnic groups from influencing elections and to better their chances of being represented” (Edwards & Lippucci, 1998, p. 362) (Note 12) in the United States, which is certainly ironic, given the incongruity of establishing election districts. Moreover, *gerrymandering* can be unpredictable, because it is carried out initially behind the scenes, sometimes in secret, without the larger public knowledge of what is really going on. Or the drawing of district lines or strict, legislative maps are done without the necessary *scrutiny* by the general public.

Additionally, the two major political parties have flagrantly abused *gerrymandering* at many levels in almost every state; and it is an unconstitutional deprivation of people's voting rights. Indeed, "American democracy suffers from a catch 22" because of *gerrymandering*. That is, "When voters delegate power over government policies to their elected representatives, they also delegate control over the rules of the election in which those representatives are chosen" ("Ending gerrymandering," 2018, p. 26). (Note 13) So, is the *gerrymandering* system in the United States totally broken? Perhaps. After all, the hallmark of our electoral system, again, should be about *fairness*; however, this take on the electoral system is *incongruent*, because the aim of partisan *gerrymandering* is basically to *dilute*, as mentioned, the vote of minorities. And to add insult, in 2019, the Supreme Court ruled "that partisan gerrymandering of congressional and legislative districts is none of its business" (Sherman & Gresko, 2019, p. 8A). What? Conveniently, this judicial decision allows the two major political parties "to rig [state] elections in their own [favor], by gerrymandering the borders of legislative districts" ("Ending gerrymandering," 2018, p. 26). (Note 14) And this is the rub — that is, *gerrymandering* continues to spark major controversy.

Conclusions

When it is all said and done, *gerrymandering* can cause a conflict of interests, opinions, and confusion, which will ultimately lead to uncertainty when it comes to elections and drawing district lines. For example, in a "5-4 opinion by Chief Justice Roberts, in 2019, who was joined by the court's other conservatives, said partisan election maps drawn by North Carolina Republicans and Maryland Democrats are [so-called] constitutional despite their one-sided nature" (Wolf, 2019b, p. 1). What nonsense. It should also be remembered that Republicans are prepared to aggressively defend the practice of partisan *gerrymandering*. And when they (Republicans) believe that Democrats have an unfair partisan advantage in election campaigns, they use litigation (often) to reverse Democratic gains in respective states, especially in terms of drawing (distorted) legislative maps. An editorial in *The New York Times* put it this way:

In 2018, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court struck down Republican drawn district maps for violating the state constitution and appointed a nonpartisan mapmaker to draw new ones. The maps, drawn in 2011 were so skewed that when Democrats won a majority of the popular vote in 2012, they [Republicans] got just five of the state's 18 congressional seats. [So,] how did Republican lawmakers deal with losing their [political] power? First they defied the court's ruling and then they tried to impeach the [state] justices who voted in favor of it. ("Do-It-Yourself," 2018, p. 8) (Note 15)

Such hardball, political tactics on the part of the Republicans, of course, was wrong and outrageous; hence, we must note that unconstitutional *gerrymandering* today unfairly favors Republicans, because they draw districts "with excessive partisanship" (Robertson, 2018, p. 4A). (Note 16) Although "both [political] parties have engaged in political gerrymandering... the great majority of misdrawn maps — in places like Texas, North Carolina, Ohio, Wisconsin and Florida were created by Republicans for the benefit of Republicans" ("Supreme Court paves," 2019, p. 7A). In the final analysis, some politicians might say that *gerrymandering* is obscure for some American citizens, and insanely outdated in terms of our state and federal elections; therefore, the practice hurt our democracy in profound ways. And for some political actors, *gerrymandering* is like riding a *roller coaster*, because of its *up and down* nature and instability. Nonetheless, "some legislatures are split between Republicans and Democrats, forcing compromise" (Wolf, 2018a, 3A), which is the better alternative, all things considered. Equally important, drawing electoral district lines to favor one political party over another adds to the growing concerns over *objectivity* and *fairness* in all our elections — state and national. *Gerrymandering* also makes our elections less democratic — and inappropriately out of place politically. Furthermore, African Americans and Hispanic Americans are marginalized (in terms of voting and politically participating) by both the Democratic and Republican parties; but the Republican Party has recently tried to (also) deny the vote of some American citizens by such actions as voter ID laws, eliminating mail-in ballots, purging (minority) voters, and other illegal tactics to minimize voter turn-out, which will determine election outcomes and political representation in Congress and state legislatures. Because of this, our political leaders must embrace a new stance and commitment to make *gerrymandering* fairer for the American voter, if possible, like creating or instituting independent "bipartisan commissions to draw fair and reasonable political boundaries" ("Supreme Court paves," 2019, p. 7A).

Which is to say that voting districts should be drawn with *nonpartisan* interests. To be sure, the need to rid ourselves of the illegal standards of *gerrymandering* is more important than ever, because this egregious method of drawing district lines has corrupted the integrity of our so-called democratic elections — at all levels — that exploit political candidates and the notion of equal representation.

Unfortunately, many American citizens are relatively *naïve* about *gerrymandering*, or they are culturally ignorant about politics, in general. Moreover, some voters also have a limited understanding of our biased and sometimes *perverse* elections. Thus, the practice of *gerrymandering* is not only politically destructive, but it is not in accordance with our laws and the U.S. Constitution. And for all fifty states, it should be expressly forbidden, particularly since the Supreme Court has “permitted politicians drawing election district maps to discriminate by party and even potentially mask their racial “packing” and “cracking” as mere partisanship” (Wang, 2019, p. 5). (Note 17) To be clear, American voters should question the legitimacy of *gerrymandering*, rather than embrace this “made-up,” electoral convention, because the practice does not really conform to accepted election rules. Additionally, shouldn’t there be an exceptionally clear, hard-nosed set of procedures that should be put in place for state governments, or some kind of acceptable standard for instituting *gerrymandering*? In the long run, the practice of *gerrymandering* has sparked serious criticism and conversations about the political challenges to come, and what should be done to rid ourselves of this the electoral curse.

That said, wouldn’t divorcing ourselves from the singularly *odd-looking* shapes in *gerrymandering* be a needed break from our corrupt (electoral) system of drawing district lines? At the very least, “It’s easy to lose faith in American democracy when the two major political parties have gerrymandered themselves into impregnable bunkers and bathe in rivers of campaign cash. Most depressing of all is the nationwide effort [by Republicans] to erect barriers to voting, orchestrated by the party of Lincoln” (“The shattering,” 2018, p. 2). (Note 18) But whether we like it or not, there is still a lot of uneasiness surrounding the political issue of *gerrymandering*; and unfortunately, it just might be here to stay. Quite impossibly, *gerrymandering* isn’t going anywhere *anytime* soon. Therefore, a (nonpartisan) redistricting expert is also needed in every state to draw new, legislative district lines because of *reapportionment*, which can be explained as the “reorganization of the boundaries of [congressional] House districts following the U.S. census, [which is] constitutionally required every ten years.” To this end, “the [district] lines [should be] redrawn to ensure that each House member represents roughly the same number of constituents” (Morone & Kersh, 2023, p. 298). But is this even possible? Sadly, some Republicans seemed determined to plow ahead of establishing weird electoral district lines, as they hold onto their partisan and ideological beliefs about *gerrymandering*, which might be considered a delicate, political balancing act. Hence, it is time to reconsider the whole idea of *gerrymandering* in our society — in terms of our politics and voting. Nobel Prize winning economist Paul Krugman (2019) put it another way:

If a [Republican] party is willing to rig political outcomes by preventing minorities from voting, if it’s willing to use extreme gerrymandering to retain power even when voters reject it, why won’t it be equally willing to encourage foreign powers [or adversarial governments] to subvert U.S. elections? (p. 3) (Note 19)

The ultimate solution of banning *gerrymandering* will have to come from the American voter, not our Courts, state legislatures and corrupt politicians, because they might continue the practice, and draw district boundaries in ways that will give “one political party an unfair advantage” (Ornes, 2018, p. 27), no matter what, or the circumstances. This is to say that the establishment of unfair political boundaries should (also) be considered illegal, and thoroughly *undemocratic*. In the final analysis, we need “to overcome both gerrymandering (which favors Republicans) and the tendency of Democratic voters to cluster in liberal cities,” which might give “them lopsided margins in those [specific] districts” (Rosenheck & Fransham, 2018, p. 36). Moreover, if we decide to keep *gerrymandering*, as discussed earlier, the way to go is to create *mandatory*, independent, bipartisan commissions, to draw effective and efficient electoral district lines, because politics will continue to grow (unconstitutionally) into our redistricting and election processes, particularly when it comes to *voting*, or choosing political candidates. Therefore, *gerrymandering* must be *rein-in* or unceremoniously dumped or eliminated for another or fairer, electoral system, where one political party can’t discriminate and control the electoral *mapmaking* process. Further, the Courts should also be divorced or left out of the political equation of election politics, if necessary.

Unfortunately, “History tells us that our [state] legislators,” Courts, and congressional members “are not going to have the courage to do the right thing unless they get nothing but [political] pressure” from the American people (Wines, 2019, p. 1). (Note 20) Finally, *gerrymandering* will always be a controversial issue; but we must move our electoral/political system forward without the burden of rigged election systems that might especially suit a respective political party. In this way, *we-the-people* can continue to move forward in forming a more perfect union.

Notes

Note 1. Fortunately, Elbridge Gerry was successful in his redistricting plan, which gave “disproportionate representation to the Democratic-Republican Party in the Massachusetts state-senate.” See *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Encyclopedia*, s.v. “gerrymandering.”

Note 2. A safe district can be explained as “A district consisting of voters who have historically voted for one [political] party over the other by a large majority.” See the same reference and page number.

Note 3. In a nutshell, “partisan actors, mainly on the right, are wielding high-end [gerrymandered] mapmaking tools to lock in their party’s majority for years or longer, then hobbling another branch of government that is trying to rein them in.” See the same reference and page number.

Note 4. As journalist Richard Wolf tells us: Across the nation, hundreds of members of Congress and thousands of state legislators are elected in districts drawn to favor the [political] party that controls state government. That has largely favored Republicans in the past decade. See Richard Wolf, “Supreme Court punts on partisan gerrymandering,” *USA Today*, June 19, 2018, 3A.

Note 5. It should be noted that, “The Supreme Court has never struck down a voting map on the grounds that it was drawn to amplify the power of the political party in control of the state legislature.” See Liptak, “Gerrymandering returns,” 1.

Note 6. In this respect, a definition of *reapportionment* is in order here, as it “is the reallocation of House seats among the states, done after each national census, to ensure that seats are held by the states in proportion to the size of their populations.” See the same reference and page number.

Note 7. So, are political actors wired to reject the idea of ridding us of the unconstitutional practice?

Note 8. In 2019, the Supreme Court removed “itself and all federal courts from hearing any dispute about how about how the states may or may not rig the election process.” Hence, gerrymandering has “rendered [the] right to vote [almost] meaningless.” See Greenspun, “Supreme Court,” 1.

Note 9. In order “to bolster the influence of minorities,” the “language added to the Voting Rights Act in 1982 [prohibited] states from diluting the voting power of racial minorities, which was interpreted broadly in same states as a green light to [gerrymandering]. See Kerbel, *American Government*, 266.

Note 10. Unfortunately, “Republicans in some southern states have used this [racial gerrymandering] requirement to enact plans that elect minorities (who tend to be Democrats) in some districts, but favor Republicans in adjoining district.” See Bianco and Canon, *American Politics Today*, 356.

Note 11. Sadly, “the U.S. Supreme Court has been unwilling to tackle partisan gerrymandering,” which has “left state political parties free to redraw voting maps in egregious ways using ever more powerful software.” See Peter Coy and Greg Stohr, “Gerrymandering Finally Gets Its Day in Court,” *Bloomberg Businessweek*, January 22, 2018, 39.

Note 12. It should be noted that “white-dominated legislatures [use] two techniques to [undermine or] minimize the effect of [minority] votes: packing [means] concentrating ethnic minority voters in a few districts so that they could elect only a few [individuals or political candidates]; and stacking” spread minority voters “so thinly across many districts that they [can] not elect anyone.” See the same reference and page number.

Note 13. Supposedly, the Supreme Court continues to bar “Redistricting aimed at reducing the political representation of racial minorities....” See Mark Sherman and Jessica Gresko, “Redistricting allowed to stand,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, June 28, 2019, 8A.

Note 14. Unfortunately, “for voters unhappy with such Shenanigans, the only recourse is to support a different political party. However, in most cases, the gerrymandering successfully prevents reformist candidates from winning elections, ensuring that the [current] system remains in place.” See the same reference and page number.

Note 15. Although the state of Pennsylvania high court did the right this case, “voters can’t count on state courts to step in and solve all redistricting disputes.” See the same reference and page number.

Note 16. Although it isn’t immediately clear, in a 6-3 decision on May 23, 2024, the Republicans on the Supreme Court “cleared the way for South Carolina to keep using a congressional map that had been deemed an unconstitutional racial gerrymander, reversing a lower-court ruling that said the map resulted in the “bleaching of African American voters from a district.” See Adam Liptak, Abbie Vansickle and Alicia Parlapiano, “Looking back at the Major Decisions by the Supreme Court,” *The New York Times*, July 7, 2024, 14.

Note 17. It has been argued that the Supreme Court “should avoid drawing a S-shape line between what’s acceptable and not,” in terms of gerrymandering, “because that would encourage redistricters to crawl right up to the edge.” See Peter Coy and Greg Stohr, “Gerrymandering Finally Gets Its Day in Court,” *Bloomberg Businessweek*, January 22, 2018, 39.

Note 18. This editorial first appeared in *The New York Times*. It is worth noting that “elected officials in some states across the country — largely Republicans but Democrats as well — are increasingly seeking to punish or restrain judges who hand down unfavorable decisions, accusing them of making law instead of interpreting.” See Michael Wines, “Judges say toss out the map; lawmakers say toss out the judges.” *Las Vegas Sun*, February 19, 2018, 1.

Note 19. As quoted in *The Economist*, “The nicest thing that” has been “said about a new Republican-drawn congressional map for Pennsylvania (in 2018) was that none of the districts [resembled] a cartoon character.” See “Re-districting: Quaker notes,” *The Economist*, February 17, 2018, 28.

Note 20. Unfortunately, gerrymandering has persisted to the present day, and redistricting battles in the state legislatures have often had to be decided by the courts.” See *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Encyclopedia*, s.v. “gerrymandering.”

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