

Redistricting 2021: Get Ready!

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About Fair Districts GA

Fair Districts GA is a nonpartisan organization that works to end electoral map rigging in Georgia.

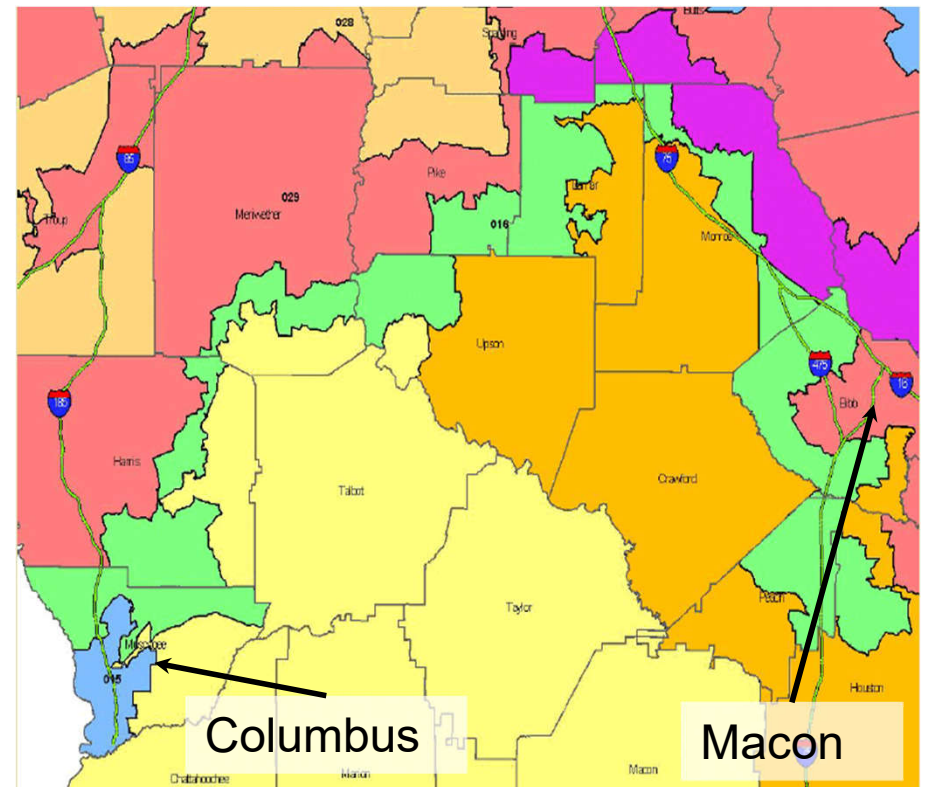
Our focus is to fight gerrymandering, the practice of drawing legislative district lines to favor one group over another.

Our ultimate goal is to reform Georgia's process for drawing state and federal electoral maps.

Georgia is now a swing state. Our legislative and congressional districts should reflect this new reality.

4 Questions:

1. Redistricting 101
2. What to expect in 2021?
3. What is gerrymandering?
4. What can you do?



GA Senate District 16, 2001

1. Redistricting 101-What Happens this year in Georgia?

2020 Census

- Mandated by the Constitution and conducted by US Census Bureau non partisan government agency
- Counted every person living in the US and the five US territories, Puerto Rico, Guam, US Virgin Islands, Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa
- Data used to provide funding for services, seats in US House of Representatives and used to draw congressional and state districts

What is Redistricting?

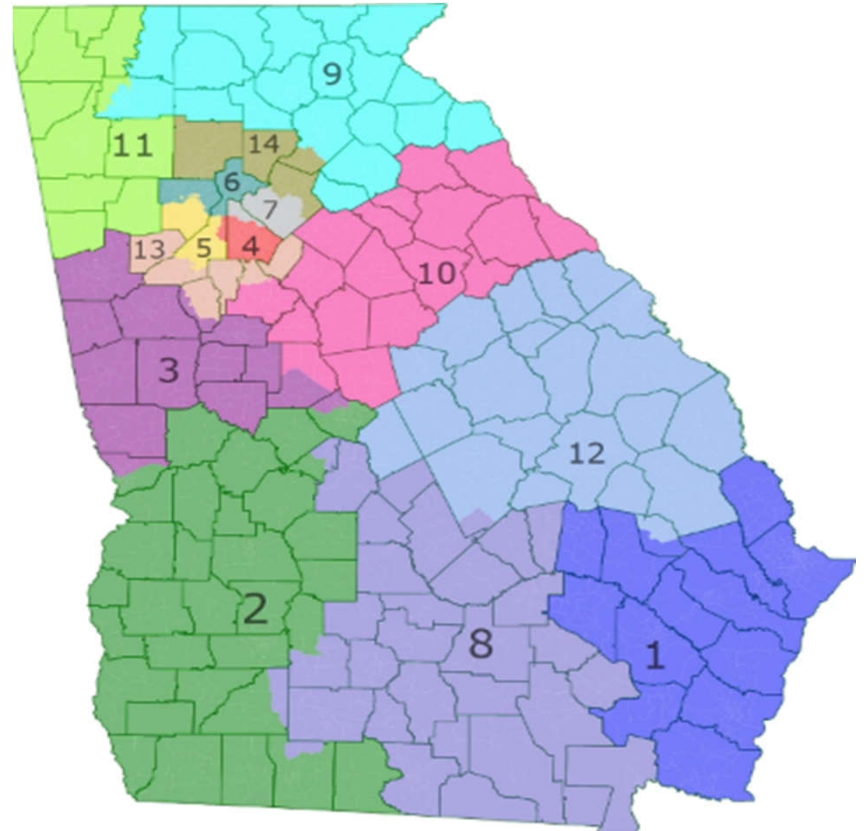
To maintain the same number of people in each district (1 person, 1 vote), after every Census, lines are redrawn for:

- **US House Districts (US-435; GA-14)**
- **GA House Districts(180 House Districts From Across Georgia)**
- **GA Senate Districts(56 Senate Districts From Across Georgia)**

The legislature draws the lines; the majority party controls the process.



Ideal Districts are:

- Contiguous (required by Georgia Constitution)
- Compact
- Competitive
- Representative of community



Hypothetical Fair Georgia Districts, Daily Kos, 2012

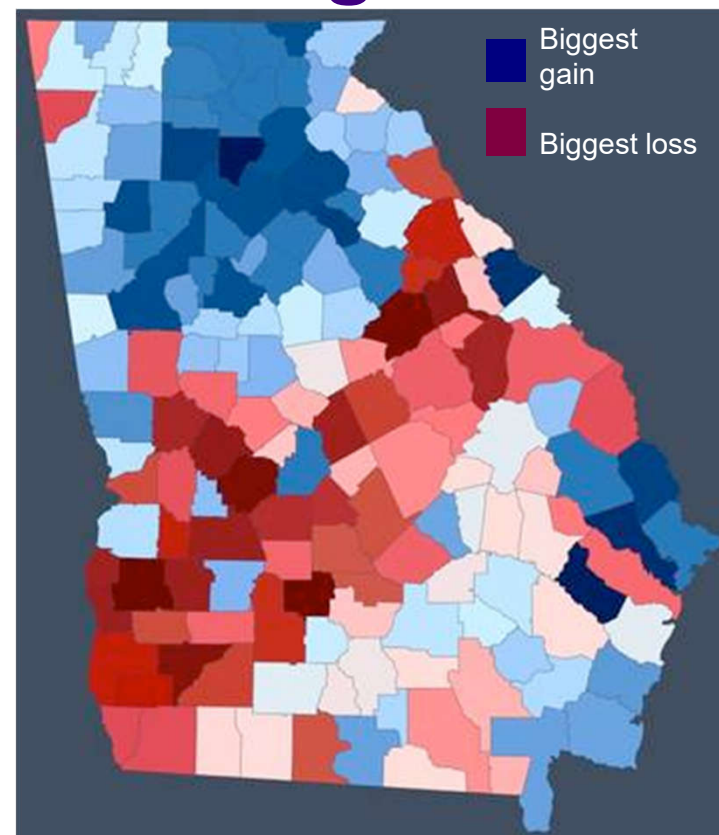
Redistricting Timeline for 2021

January 11 – March 31	Regular legislative session
April 30	Census release: state population totals Congressional reapportionment
Spring - Summer	Local hearings throughout state by legislative committees (assumed – awaiting plan from committees)
 September 30	Census release: full PL 94-171 data
October ?	Legislature drawing official plans
 Late 2021 or early 2022	Special legislative session to vote on redistricting plans

2. What Could Possibly Happen With Redistricting In Georgia In 2021?

Big population changes impact 2021 redistricting

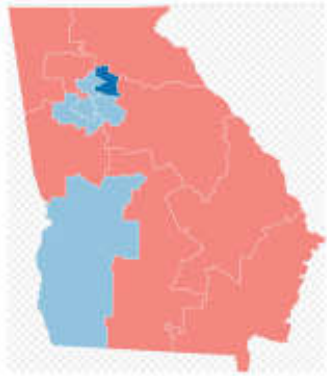
- Georgia population growth ~ 10%
- Population shifts from rural areas to metro areas
- Growing minority populations (expect to be a majority minority state in the next decade)
- Significant district changes will be required to account for these population changes



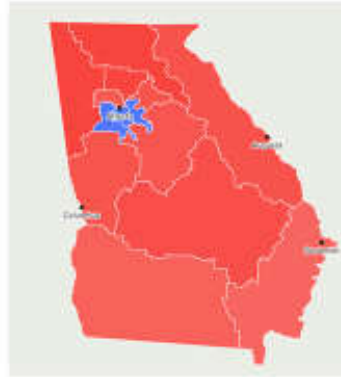
Population
change 2010-
2018

Source: Nick
Wooten,
Macon.com,
US Census
data

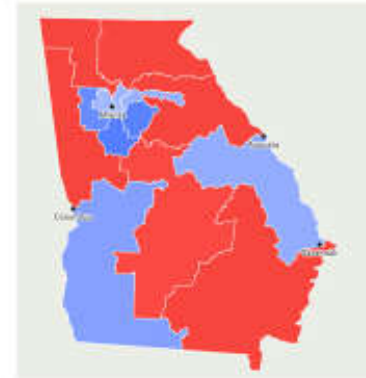
Which is the most fair map?



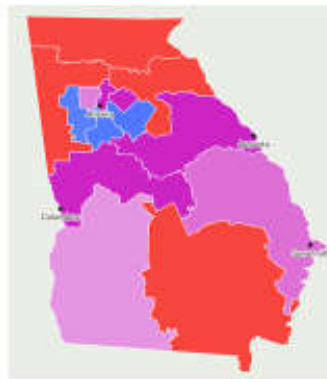
Current Congressional districts 6D/8R



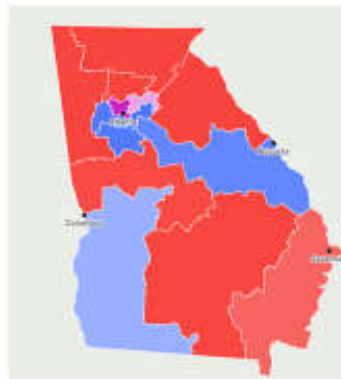
Gerrymander to favor Republicans 3D/11R



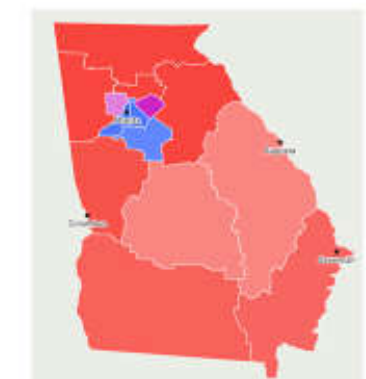
Gerrymander to favor Democrats 8D/6R



Promote competitive elections 3D/7C/4R



Maximize maj-minority districts 5D/2C/7R



Compact via county borders 3D/2C/9R

3. What is gerrymandering? Why is it a problem?

What is Gerrymandering?

The manipulation of district boundaries to create an advantage or disadvantage for a specific group.

- **Racial gerrymandering** (illegal in U.S.) favors one race over another.
- **Partisan gerrymandering** (still legal in US) favors one political party over the other.
- **Prison gerrymandering** (also legal) counting prisoners where they are incarcerated rather than where they live.



...graphics from 1990s Supreme Court Redistricting Decisions. Peter S. Watson
www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/departments/scri/REDIST/red907.htm

50 Dimes



50 Pennies



A top-down view of a person's hands in a grey long-sleeved shirt mixing small, round, brown coins on a green felt surface inside a metal tray. The coins are arranged in a neat grid on the left and scattered on the right. The hands are positioned to mix the scattered coins.

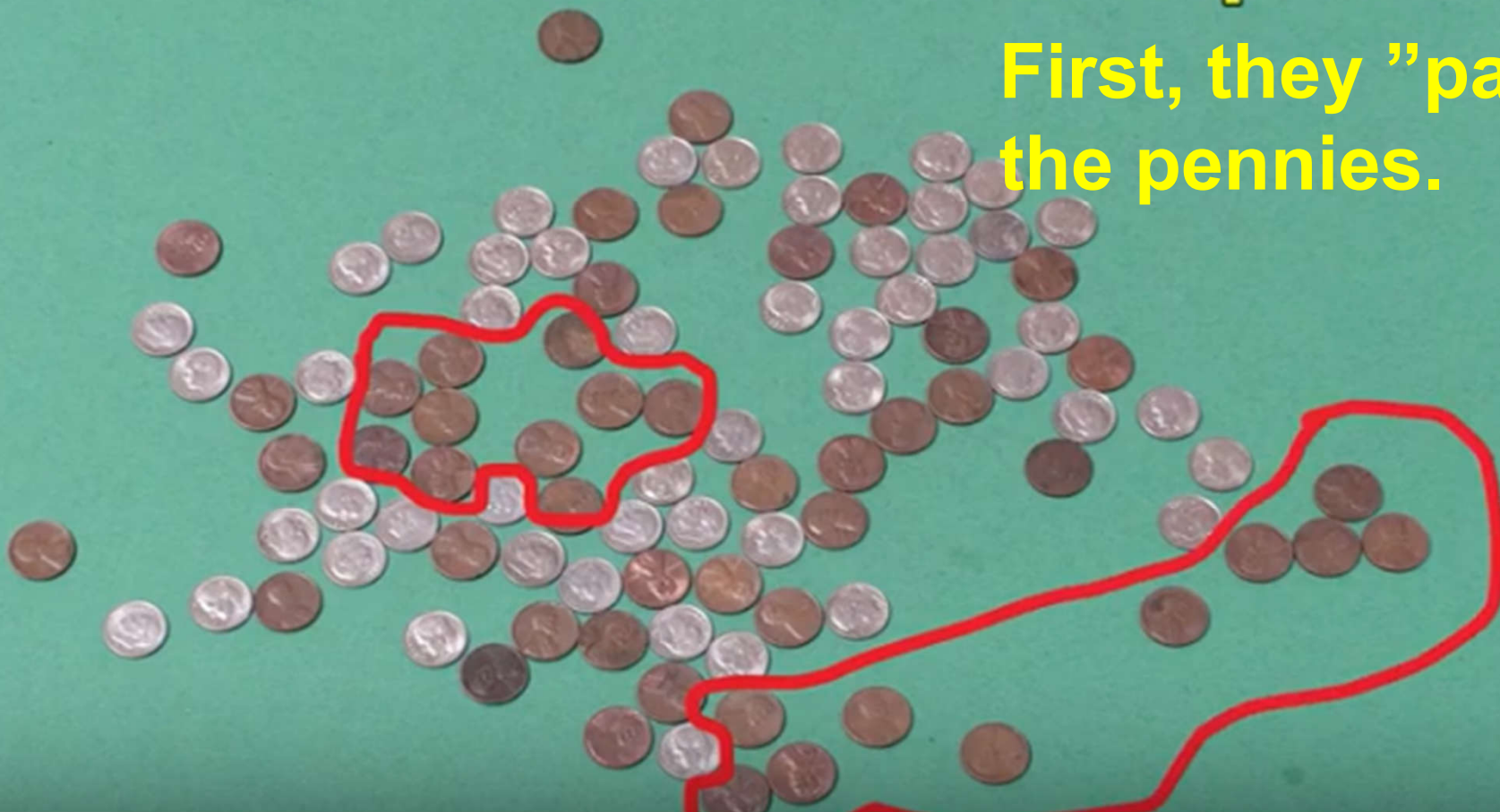
But people don't live in neat little rows like that, so let's mix them up.

Hypothetical State



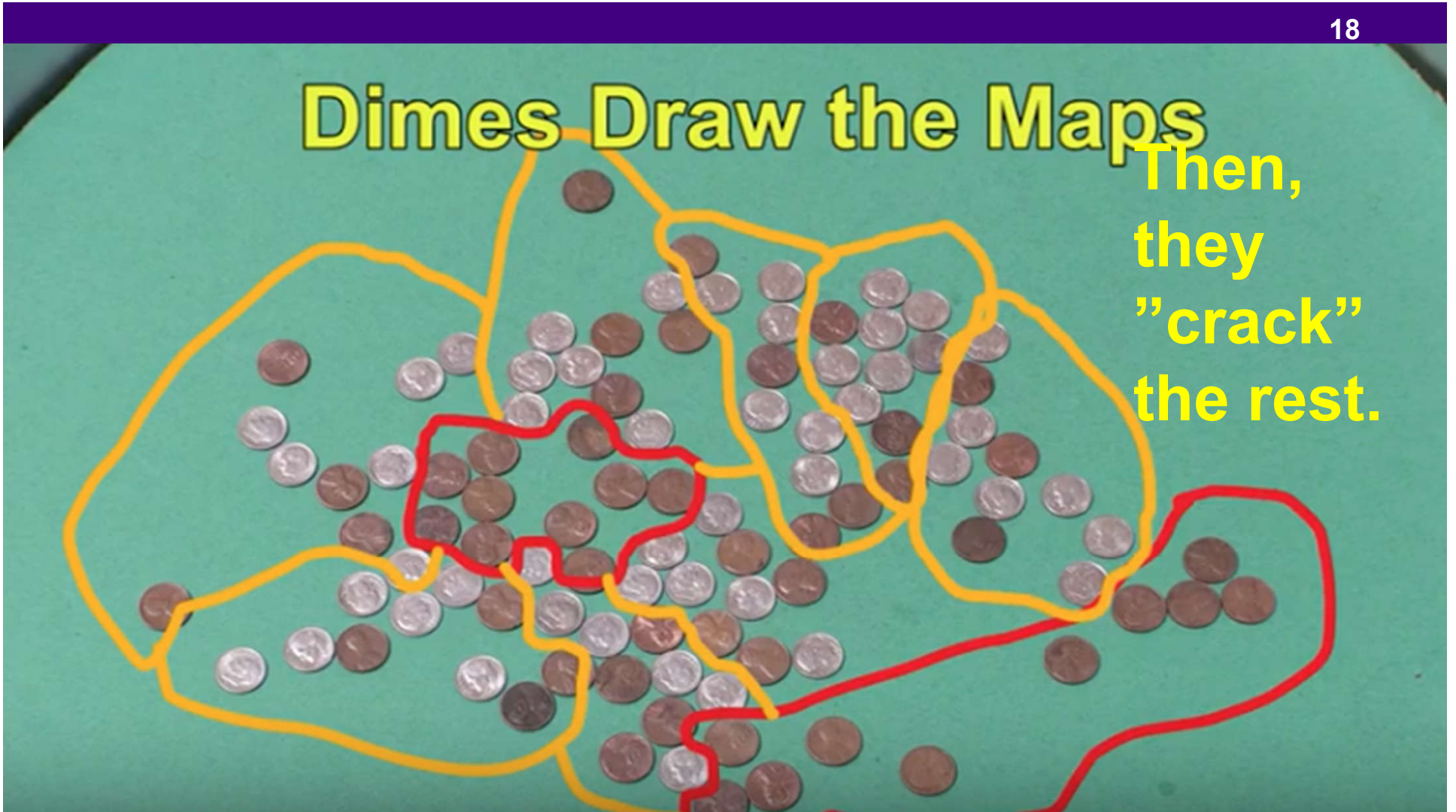
Dimes Draw the Maps

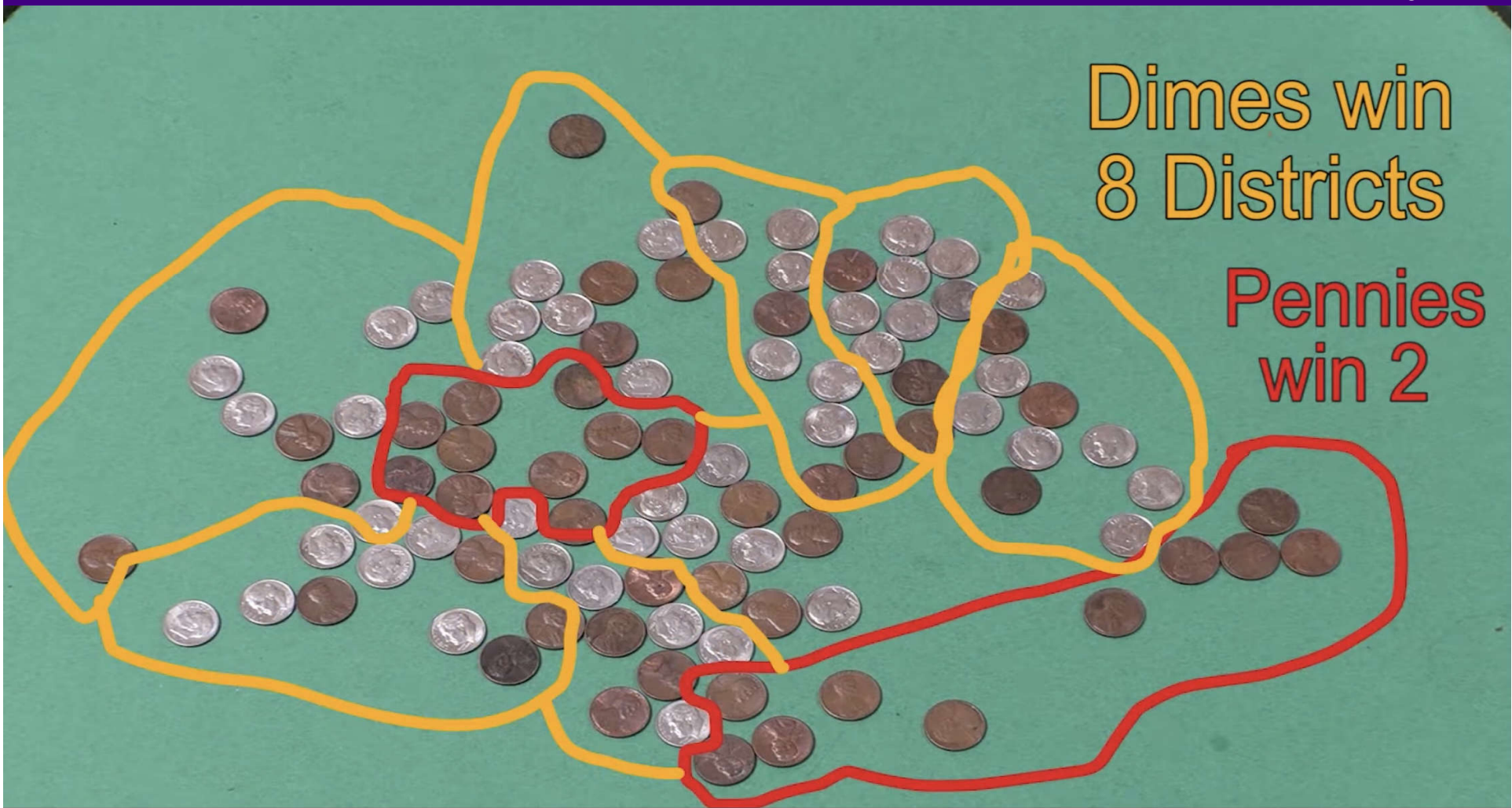
First, they "pack"
the pennies.



Dimes Draw the Maps

Then,
they
"crack"
the rest.





Dimes win
8 Districts

Pennies
win 2

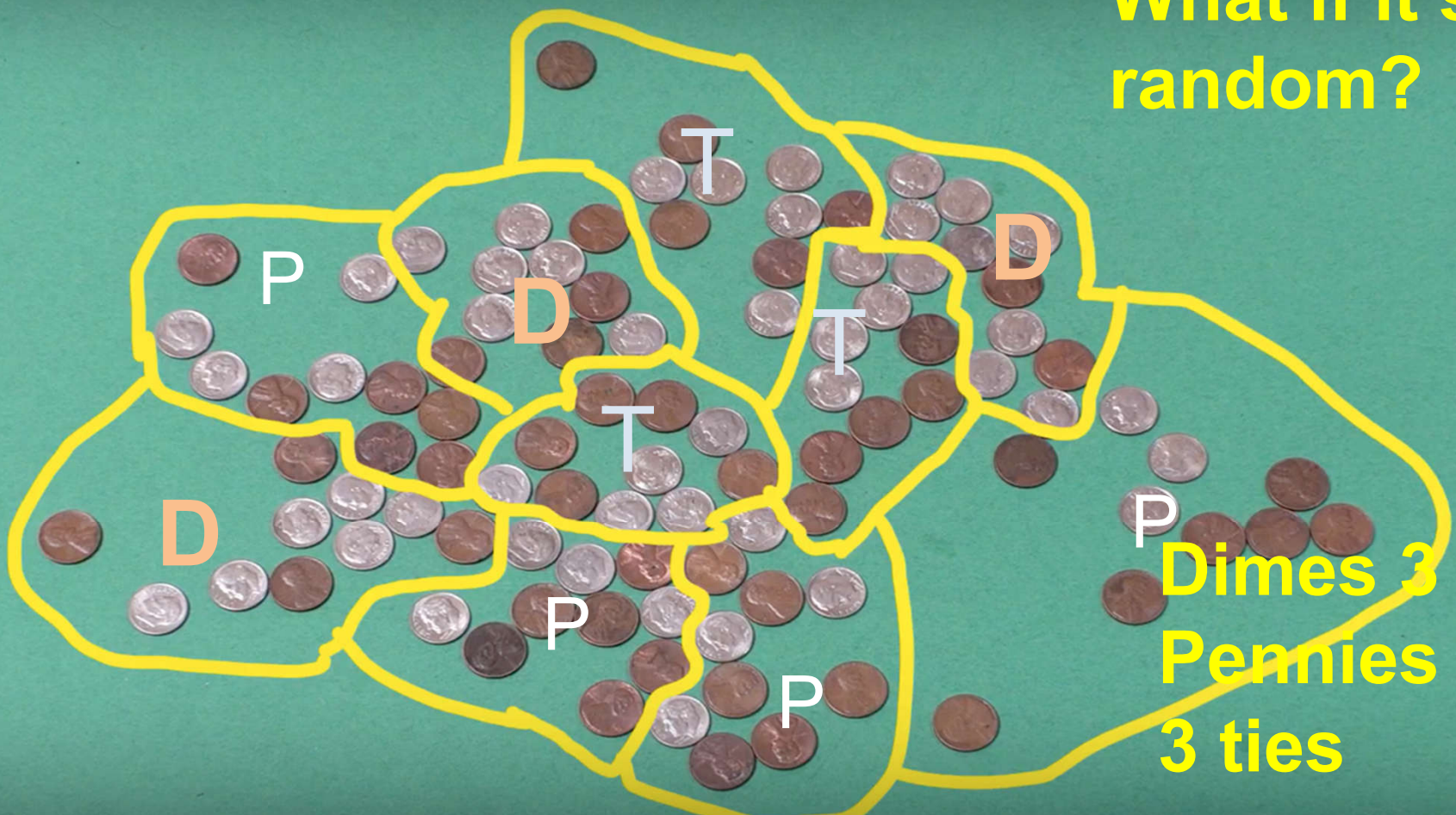


Pennies Win

8/2


Pennies Draw the Maps

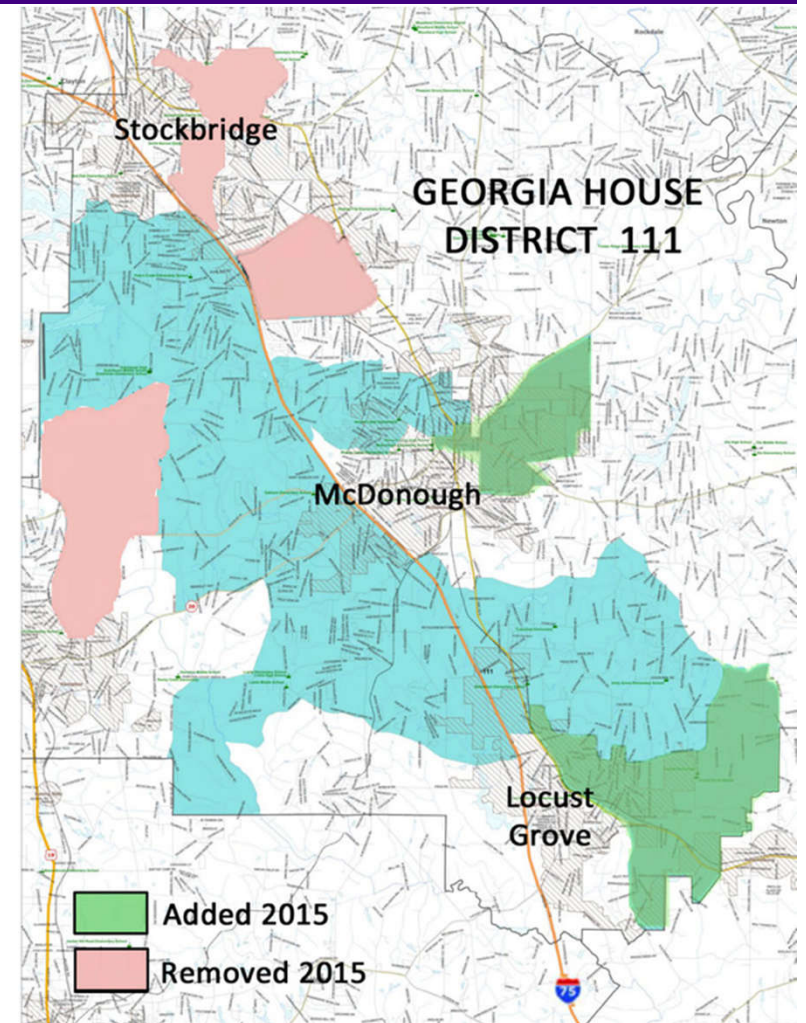
What if it's random?



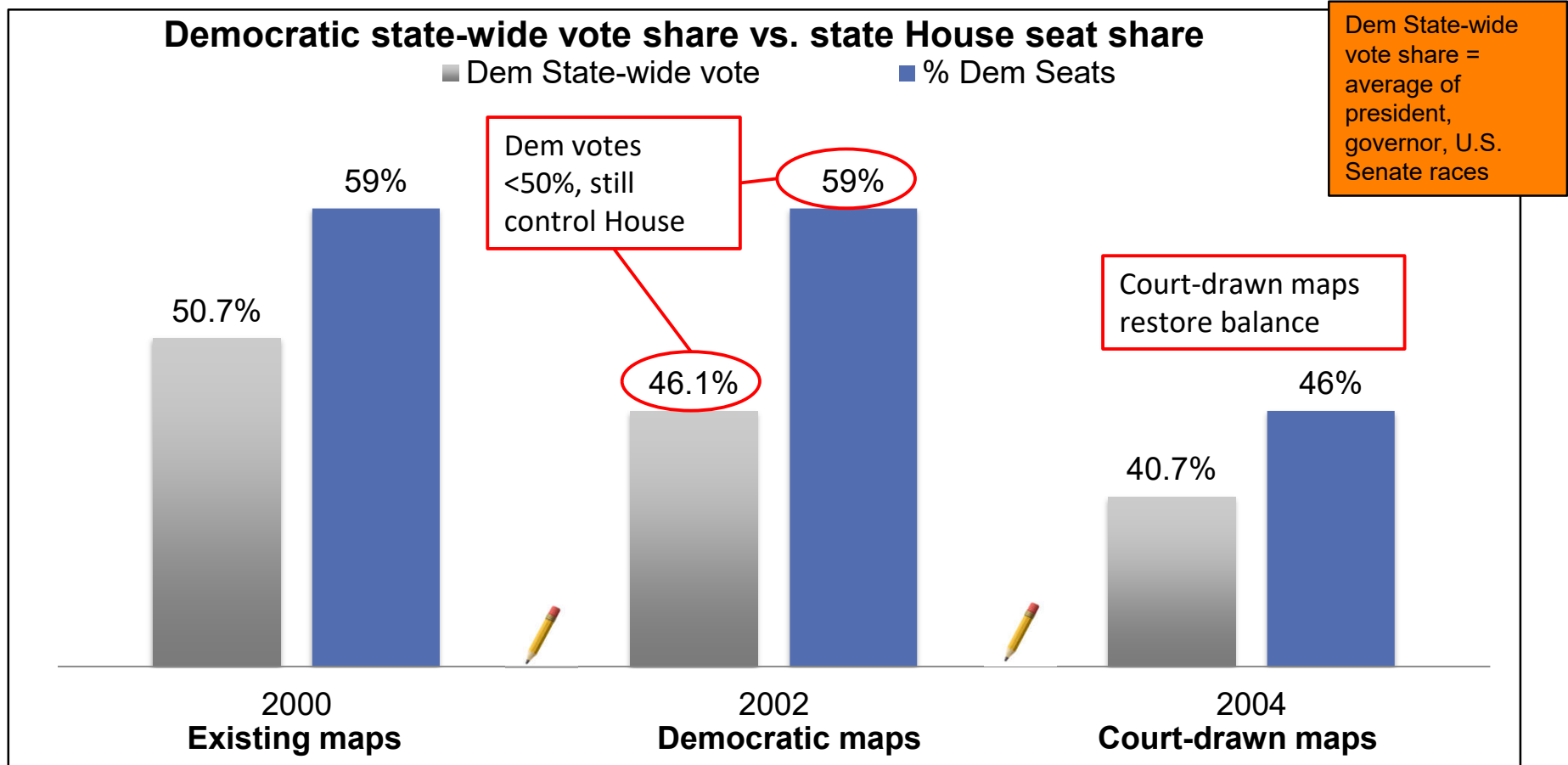
Dimes 3
Pennies 4
3 ties

Mid-cycle gerrymandering in GA in 2015

- Legislators can change districts at every session to make their seats safer.
- Republicans adjusted HD111 to protect an incumbent
 - 2014: (R) Incumbent won by 1124 votes (53%)
 -  mid-cycle adjustment
 - 2016: (R) Incumbent won by 946 votes (52%)
 - 2018 (Jan. special): New (R) won by 742 votes (51%)
 - 2018 (Nov.): (D) won by 3758 votes (57%)

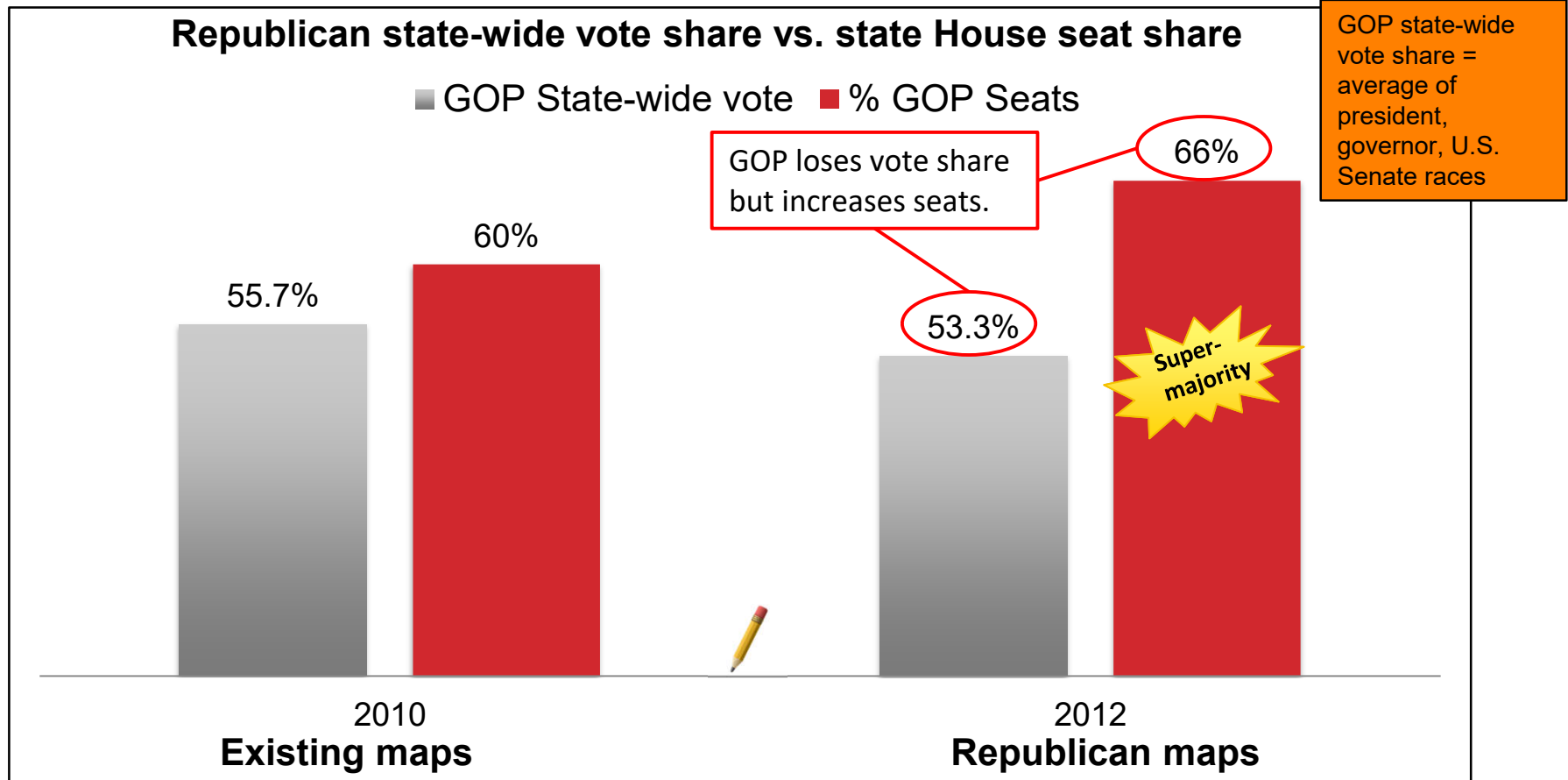


Democrats gerrymandered the GA House in 2001.



Source: Fair Districts GA analysis of GA Secy. of State voting data

Republicans gerrymandered the GA House in 2011.



Source: Fair Districts GA analysis of GA Secy. of State voting data

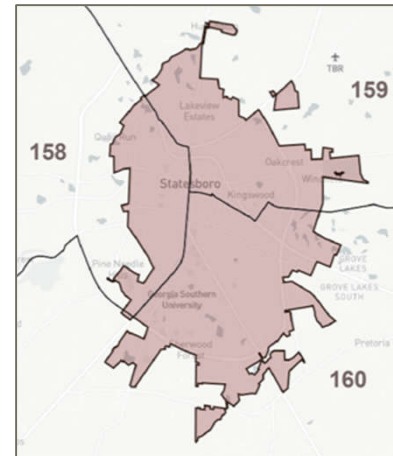
Splitting cities into multiple districts dilutes their voice

The Legislature requires that city boundaries be considered when they draw district lines - they have distinct needs and should have a distinct voice.

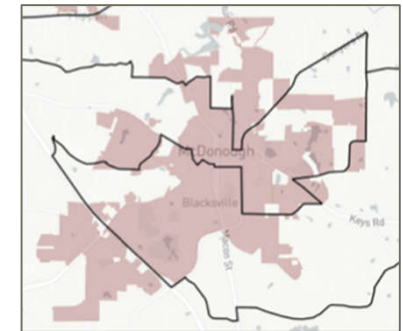
But the Legislature hasn't been following their own requirements.

More than two-thirds of small cities are split into multiple districts in the State House of Representatives.

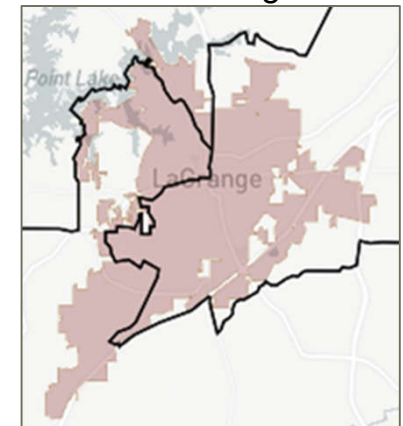
Statesboro



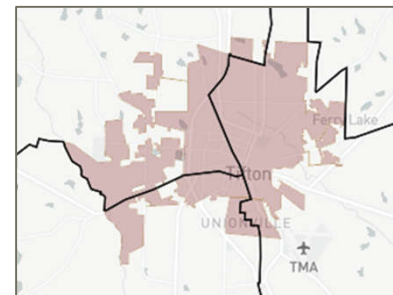
McDonough



LaGrange



Tifton



Effect on Georgia Elections: Less Competitive

In 2016, district lines were redrawn to favor one party to the point 81% of legislative seats were uncontested. What happens as a result?

- Other party candidates do not run.
- People don't turn out to vote.
- Decisions are made in primaries.

Redistricting gone awry is called Gerrymandering

Gerrymandering Undermines Our Democracy

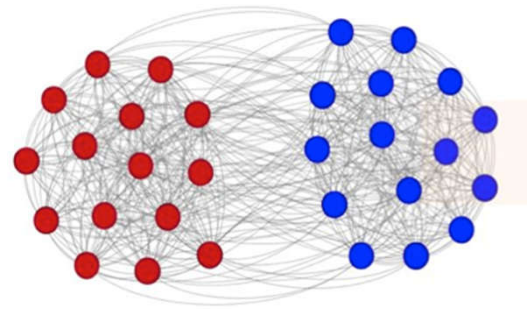
- Every vote doesn't count equally.
- Incumbents do not need to listen to all constituents.
- It leads to extreme partisanship and lack of bipartisan problem-solving.
- Counties and municipalities are split, making it harder for leaders to represent the district.



Why is gerrymandering so important today?



Big Data



Extreme
Partisanship



2021
Redistricting

Gerrymandering may not be what you care about most...but it's what you need to care about first.

It's not a right or left issue.

It's a right or wrong issue.



**4. What can you do?
Where can you start?**

In 2017 Citizens Made a Difference - HB515

Citizens collaborated to:

- **Communicate** with the Senate and House Committees.
- **Attend** the Senate hearing on HB515 (over 200 citizens packed the hearing room).

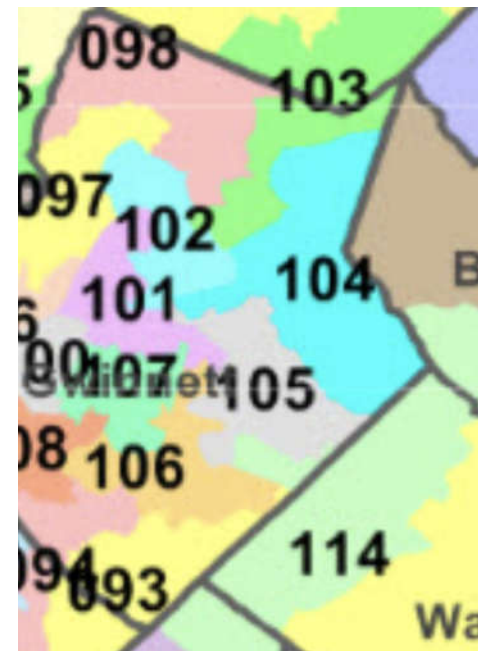
As a result, the bill was dropped.



CITIZENS HAVE POWER!!!

2019 “Sweetheart” Gerrymandering Attempt: HB 564

- **March 6, 2019:** Republican and Democrat cosponsored a bill to redraw the lines between their districts
- **Public outcry:** Citizens contacted their legislators about the unfairness of the proposed gerrymandering
- **March 7, 2019:** The reps withdrew their names from the bill and it was dropped
- Since then, there have been **NO** further attempts at mid-cycle gerrymandering



CITIZENS HAVE POWER!!

Five Easy Ways to Help:

1. Educate yourself at www.fairdistrictsga.org
2. Sign up for FDGA's Action Alerts on the Get Involved page
3. Take action: contact legislators, postcarding, letters to the editor, volunteer for one of our committees
4. Invite us to speak to your group or in your community!
5. Donate to Fair Districts GA



What's happening in Congress?

H.R. 1 – For the People Act

- Addresses campaign finance, election security, government ethics, etc.
- Redistricting for congressional districts only
 - Bans mid-cycle redistricting
 - Bans partisan bias
 - Requires accounting for communities of interest
 - Requires consideration of multi-minority groups for VRA districts
 - Requires independent citizen commissions (2030)



H.R. 4 / S.4263 – John Lewis Voting Rights

Advancement Act

- Restores the pre-clearance requirement for voting and redistricting changes

Mark your calendars

“The Voting Rights Act: Minority Opportunity Districts in Georgia”

Fair Districts GA May Town Hall
May 24, 7pm

Partners:



PRINCETON
GERRYMANDERING
PROJECT
Fixing bugs in democracy



Mark your calendars

Postcard Party with Pam

- Sunday, May 2nd 4-5pm or on your own
- Virtual via Zoom
- Write postcards to the redistricting committees of the GA legislature
- Email Pam at pamwoodley@comcast.net
 - Name, cell, address
 - How many postcard sets needed
 - Need help buying stamps?



Invite your friends!

Public hearings are coming to your community

- Community groups / orgs will have a voice
- Groups and Organizations: let us know who you are
 - Info@FairDistrictsGA.org
- We will be reaching out to help you prepare



Thank you

Email: info@fairdistrictsga.org

Twitter: [@FairDistrictsGA](https://twitter.com/FairDistrictsGA)

Web: fairdistrictsga.org

Facebook: Fair Districts GA



Questions and Discussion

