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Politicians should not be hand-picking their voters. Voters should be hand-picking their politicians.

What is redistricting?

Redistricting is the process of re-drawing district maps after the census to equalize the populations of congressional and legislative districts. Indiana is one of the 44 states that put the state legislature in charge of redistricting.

In Indiana, the General Assembly draws the maps for congressional and state legislative districts and the requirements are minimal. Current requirements for redistricting include compliance with the Voting Rights Act, contiguity and equal populations.

What does this mean for Indiana?

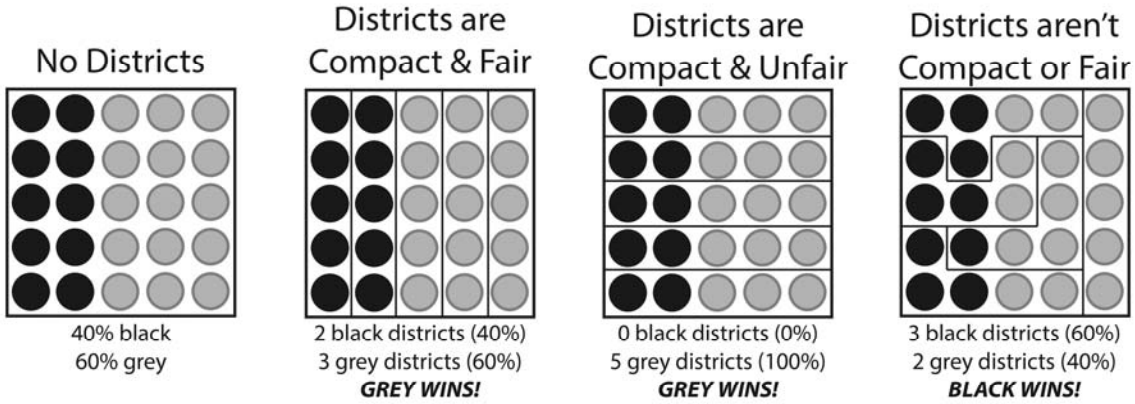
- Since legislators draw the district maps, politicians gerrymander districts to choose voters they already know will vote for them and exclude those who will vote against them.
- Communities of interest, including cities, counties, school districts, and neighborhoods are often divided by district lines, making it difficult for those citizens to be heard. This can lead to a community's interests being ignored or underserved.
- When districts are lopsided from a partisan perspective it creates polarization, with candidates appealing to the fringes, instead of the middle. Compromise becomes a dirty word, there is no reward for consensus building.
- In 2014, 54 of the 125 candidates for the Indiana House and Senate had no opponents. As a result, Indiana's voter turnout rate was the lowest in the country at 28%.
- In 2016, 35 of the 125 candidates for the Indiana House and Senate had no opponents.
- On average from 2010 to 2014, about 42% of Indiana's state legislative candidates ran unchallenged by the opposite party. When politicians don't have competition at the ballot box, Hoosiers cannot be fairly represented.

The time for reform is NOW.

The Special Interim Committee on Redistricting, a bipartisan panel of legislators and citizens recommended the General Assembly pass a law to create a 9 member redistricting commission. It's a step in the right direction but needs improvement in several key areas, including the following:

- **A broader and more independent commission selection process.** Eight of the nine Commission members would be appointed by the legislative leadership. We have concerns that this process would limit the independence of the Commission members and would result in a Commission that is not representative of Hoosier voters.
- **The allowance of secret discussions.** The draft would allow Commission members to have private, ex-parte discussions with legislators and others directly impacted by the maps.
- **Protection for incumbent Senators.** The draft says that incumbent Senators cannot be put in a district with another incumbent Senator. We believe that districts should be drawn in the public interest, not to protect incumbents.

Gerrymandering Simplified



The Indiana Coalition for Independent Redistricting has put forth a proposal that merges the best features from California and Iowa redistricting laws, including the following:

- A nine member commission composed of 3 Republicans, 3 Democrats and 3 voters who are neither Republican nor Democrat would direct the redistricting process.
- Any qualified Hoosier could submit an application to serve and legislative leaders would select finalists from the public submissions, but a random draw would determine final commission members.
- Commission members must be ethnically, geographically and gender diverse.

This group, representative of Hoosier voters would direct the non-partisan Legislative Services Agency in drawing the maps, using ranked statutory criteria. Map-drawing criteria must be ranked in order of importance:

- Equal population and respect for the Voting Rights Act must come first because of legal requirements.
- Contiguity, compactness and political competition should also be considered. The more vibrant the political competition, the more vibrant and representative our democratic processes will be.
- There should be special consideration giving to identifying communities of interest. Care should be taken to ensure that district lines do not divide communities or inhibit their ability to make their voices heard in political and legislative arenas.

The redistricting process must be open and transparent, with opportunities for citizens to impact the map-drawing throughout.

- The public should have access to map-drawing software and all tools available to the official map drafters, so they will be able to submit their own map proposals to the Commission.

Representation is a crucial element of a strong democracy.
Redistricting is crucial to representation.

Take Action!

House Bill 1014, sponsored by Speaker Brian Bosma and Rep. Jerry Torr would, if passed into law, put 9 citizens appointed by the legislative leaders in charge of drawing districts.

While a step in the right direction, we can do better.

Contact your State Senator and State Representative!

Urge them to support redistricting reform by putting a group INDEPENDENT of the General Assembly in charge of drawing districts.

To look up and/or
e-mail your legislators, visit:
http://iga.in.gov/legislative/find-legislators/

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