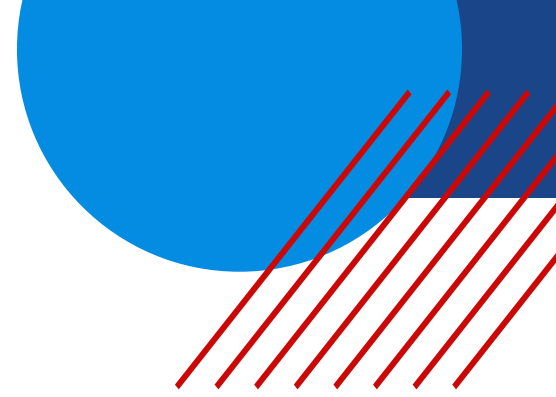


**20
23**

REDISTRICTING & COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT

A Guide For North Carolina Fair Maps Advocates

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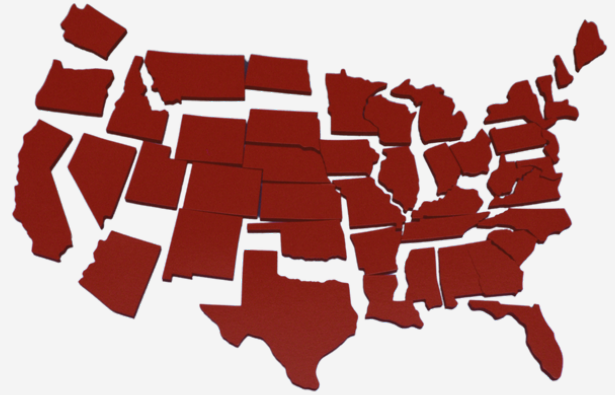
WHAT IS REDISTRICTING?

Redistricting is the process in which voting maps are re-drawn, often once every decade following the release of a U.S. Census to account for population changes. When a state redistricts, officials decide which communities are in the same district and share representation in federal and state elections. These maps directly influence how resources for roads, schools, and healthcare are distributed to North Carolina communities for the next ten years.

Accounting for state-level population changes is essential to our democracy because it upholds the principle of equal representation. Sometimes referred to as “one person, one vote,” equal representation means districts must have the same number of residents to ensure each person gets the same sized slice of the political pie. For example, if District A has 10 residents and District B has 20, a District A resident has twice the voting strength for that General Assembly, School Board, or other elected office.

WHEN DISTRICT LINES BECOME POWER LINES

Gerrymandering is when officials use their power in redistricting to manipulate voting maps and give their political party an unfair advantage; in other words, it's when politicians draw themselves into power. Voters in states where the legislature is solely responsible for drawing voting maps are vulnerable to gerrymandered maps. The risk is even greater when one party controls the process and seeks to reduce the competitiveness of elections.



The mapmaking process differs state-by-state. In North Carolina, the General Assembly draws and approves our voting maps. These maps are **NOT** subject to the Governor's veto.

In their pursuit of power, politicians who gerrymander undermine the will of the people and enable elected officials to be unresponsive representatives. They can carefully choose which apartment buildings, houses, and street blocks they represent to make sure districts have more of their party's voters. They can also strategically draw maps with “other” voters spread across several districts, diluting their voting strength. Gerrymandering allows politicians to stifle the competition for political power and secure it for themselves and their party.

Our representatives' priorities should be to draw fair maps that keep our communities whole and genuinely assess the political will of voters, but recent redistricting cycles in North Carolina have served politicians, not people. Greedy politicians have turned our district lines into power lines that surge with corruption and dysfunction.

PARTISAN GAMESMANSHIP AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

The Voting Rights Act and the Constitution prohibit racial discrimination in redistricting, but Black and Brown communities continue to be targeted, packed, and cracked to give power-hungry politicians an advantage. This is because politicians defend their maps in Court by arguing that they are partisan gerrymanders, lawfully discriminating against voters of the opposing party, not Black and Brown voters.

In the South, persistent residential segregation makes it harder for politicians to slice and dice white Democrats and white Republicans who live in close proximity to one another. It is easier to identify Black voters and other communities of color, and since party preference and race are often correlated, politicians target these communities. They dilute the voting strength of historically disenfranchised communities and hinder their ability to elect representatives who fight for the resources they need and the issues most important to their lives.

OFFICIALS USE TWO BASIC TECHNIQUES TO GERRYMANDER OUR DISTRICTS – THEY PACK AND CRACK OUR COMMUNITIES.



When officials **crack** a district, they split communities with similar characteristics and interests across multiple districts. The division of political power makes it harder for cracked communities to elect a candidate of choice in any of the districts.



When officials **pack** a district, they draw the lines to include as much of a community's voters into the same district(s). Though they are likely to elect a candidate of choice in the packed district(s), their voting strength is diluted in surrounding districts and their overall representation is limited.



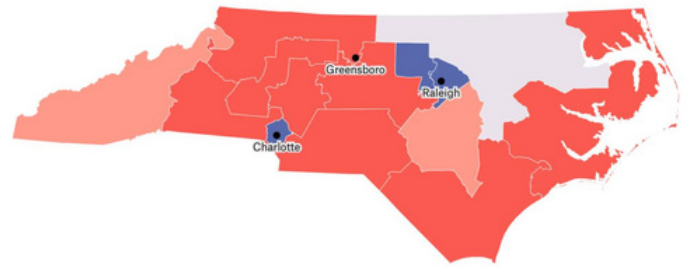
Whether they crack or pack districts, politicians who gerrymander maps undermine the will of the people and discriminate against communities they were elected to represent.

WHERE DOES NC STAND?

North Carolina is historically one of the most extremely gerrymandered states in the nation, and has seen numerous redistricting legal challenges in the last decade. Most recently, in early 2022, the North Carolina Supreme Court struck down Republican-drawn maps for violating the state's constitution as illegal partisan gerrymanders. The Court made lawmakers go back to the drawing board, resulting in new state Senate and state House districts in 2022. And after finding that lawmakers still drew a partisan-gerrymandered Congressional map, the trial court hired an expert to modify this plan to fix the gerrymander. Under this 2022 court-ordered map, voters electing Democrats and Republicans in approximately equal numbers statewide elected seven Democrats and seven Republicans to the U.S. Congress.

In early 2023, the partisan makeup of the North Carolina Supreme Court changed and it subsequently overruled its earlier holding outlawing partisan gerrymandering in the state. The Court also gave state lawmakers permission to redraw maps in 2023. Although North Carolina Republicans have not revealed any details, it is expected they will again gerrymander maps in their favor, with the likely effect of diluting and minimizing the power of Black and Brown voters across the state.

A map approved by Republicans in 2021 but never implemented because it was struck down would have given the GOP a strong chance to win 10 seats.



Since 2017, North Carolina's State Legislature has disclosed the following criteria when redrawing its state House and Senate maps

- **Equal populations** – Populations between districts may only deviate +/-5 percent.
- **Contiguity** – Districts must be made up of contiguous land, or areas that are touching.
- **County Groupings and Transversals** – Map drawers must keep counties whole within districts as much as they can.
- **Compactness** – Districts must be reasonably shaped, without “tentacles” or bizarre and irregular shapes.
- **Municipal Boundaries** – Map drawers should consider the boundaries of municipalities when drawing maps, such as towns, villages, and school districts.
- **Incumbency Protection** – Legislatures must try to avoid putting two incumbents of either party into the same district, which would force them to run against each other.
- **Election Data** – Partisan politics and election data may be used in drawing maps.
- **Racial Data** – Lawmakers are not allowed to use racial data when drawing maps.

WHAT CAN YOU DO RIGHT NOW?

Social media can be a powerful tool to quickly raise awareness and advocate for fair districts. By using platforms like Instagram, TikTok, Twitter (or X), and Facebook, you can reach broader audiences and mobilize supporters. Here are a few tips, tricks, and examples to effectively use social media to advocate for fair maps:

- **Create engaging content**

- *Infographics* – share visually appealing infographics that explain the redistricting process, its impact, and the importance of fair districts.
- *Videos* – create videos that convey your message. You can share your personal story through videos – social media users enjoy feeling connected so sharing your personal story and experiences with gerrymandering can resonate with your audience.
- *Visual comparisons* – share maps that highlight the differences between gerrymandered maps and fairly drawn districts. Visuals can make a strong impact.

- **Use hashtags**

- Research and use relevant and or trending hashtags to increase the visibility of your posts. Relevant hashtags include: #NCPOL #NCGA #FairMaps #Redistricting #Gerrymandering and #VotingRights.

- **Collaborate and tag allies**

- Collaborate with like-minded organizations, activists, or influencers. Tag them in your posts to boost the reach of your content.
- Tag relevant politicians, officials, or policy makers to ensure they see your message.

- **Storytelling**

- Share the impact that gerrymandered maps can have on communities with real-world examples.
- Share success stories from other communities that have achieved fair redistricting.

- **Share resources**

- Share links to articles, reports, and tools related to redistricting. Empower your audience with information.
- Provide easy to follow steps for contacting elected officials or participating in public hearings.

EXAMPLES:

Example Caption: "Did you know that NCs redistricting process is happening now? 🗳️ Stay informed and get involved — start by contacting your local representatives and urging them to support fair redistricting. Your voice matters! 📧 #FairMaps #Gerrymandering #NCPOL #NCGA"

Example Video: Scan QR code for example content to share
Example Caption: "Redistricting affects us all, including North Carolinians! Check out this video showcasing the impact of redistricting on community members in Texas and their fight for fairness. Learn how you can make a difference right here in North Carolina. 🗳️ #FairMaps #VotingRights"



Remember, social media can be a powerful tool but it's just one part in your advocacy toolkit. Combine your social media efforts with on the ground organizing, community outreach, and direct contact with elected representatives to maximize your impact in the fight for fair maps.

SCAN QR CODE
FOR EXAMPLE VIDEO



FAIR VOTING MAPS START WITH A FAIR PROCESS AND END WITH FAIR DISTRICTS

No matter our color, background, or zip code, voters should choose their elected officials, not the other way around. Mapmakers should draw district lines that give our votes equal weight, not power lines that guarantee their reelection.

Every person in North Carolina, regardless of age or immigration status, will be affected by new voting maps and should have the opportunity to engage in the process. Whether you're cooking up a Sunday block party, planting a neighborhood garden, or supporting each other through a global pandemic, you know your community best – the people who live there, the issues you face, and your specific needs.

Ideally, our elected officials would do robust outreach in the communities they represent to hear our interests and perspectives, and take those into account when drawing lines. Historically, that hasn't happened. North Carolinians have had to fight to be heard by mapmakers who would rather gerrymander themselves into power.



OUR STATE DESERVES BETTER. TOGETHER, WE CAN MAKE POSITIVE CHANGE, HELP SHAPE THE PROCESS, AND GIVE NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITIES A BETTER OUTCOME FOR THE NEXT DECADE.

PUBLIC HEARING INFORMATION

As of Sept. 21, the General Assembly has only announced three public comment sessions, with no online submission options. No potential maps or redistricting criteria have been released. All hearings will open their doors at 3 p.m. and begin at 4 p.m. Sign-up for public comment ends at noon the day of each meeting.

More information can be found at the House and Senate Committee's website.

- **MON., SEPT. 25, 2023 – College of the Albemarle, 1208 North Road Street, Elizabeth City, NC**

- Senator Paul Newton will be presiding
- To sign up as a public speaker, [click here](#).

- **TUES., SEPT. 26, 2023 – Appalachian State Hickory Campus, 800 17th St NW, Hickory, NC**

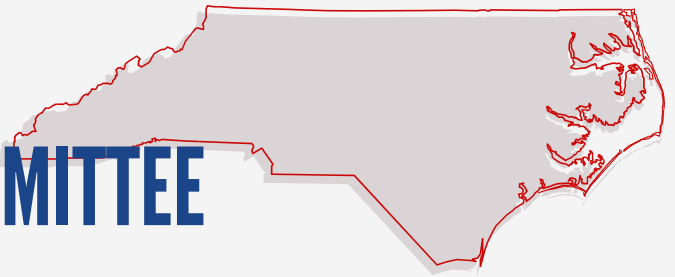
- Senator Warren Daniel will be presiding
- To sign up as a public speaker, [click here](#).

- **WED., SEPT. 27, 2023 – 300 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh, NC**

- Senator Ralph Hise will be presiding
- To sign up as a public speaker, [click here](#).
- Online stream available, [click here](#).



SUBMIT TESTIMONY TO NC'S REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE



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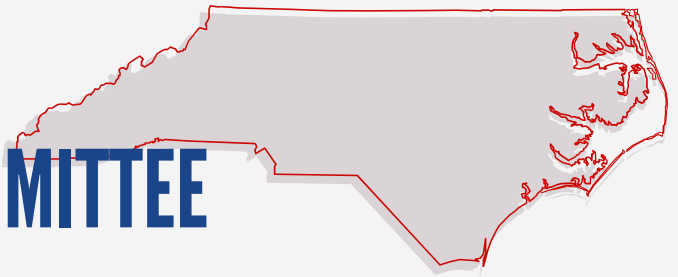
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TESTIMONY TIPS

PRO-TIP: Use your notes, if necessary to capture all of your points

- **Introduce yourself**, *your organization or any coalitions you work with*
- **Be clear on goals**, *letting the audience know exactly why you're there*
- **Tell your story**, *including how your community is impacted*
- **Ask for a specific solution**, *including how your community is helped*
- **Introduce your community**. *Keeping "communities of interest" (people who have the same political or other interests) together is critical for those that have traditionally been left out of the process. Ask yourself: What makes your neighborhood unique? What are the reasons they should keep your specific community together? Are there geographic boundaries that help paint a picture?*

SAMPLE TESTIMONY SCRIPT

My name is TONYA SMITH. I've been a resident of HOPEVILLE for 35 years. I'm here with my neighbors in the HOPE STREET neighborhood coalition. I urge this committee to keep my community together when considering our legislative districts.

The HOPE STREET community is the oldest predominantly-Black neighborhood in HOPEVILLE, home to nearly 1500 of the town's 30,000 residents. Many of the HOPE STREET residents attend the same church; our children go to the same school district; many work in the same nearby factory on its North end; and we share many of the same family names. My father and grandfather lived in the same neighborhood, and like many of my neighbors, I live in the home my grandfather built with his own hands.

HOPE STREET is surrounded on its east side by railroad tracks that flow through HOPEVILLE, and on its east side by the HOPEVILLE RIVER. In 2011, HOPE STREET was redistricted by the lawmakers and our tight-knit community was cracked between two legislative districts in order to erode the political power of this historic Black community.

In the process, we went from having our first-ever Black legislator — a person who understood our needs and was responsive to our calls — to a different elected, who, like members of the adjoining districts, has failed to provide the promised resources we need to provide internet access to our kids while they've been sheltering at home, extend desperately needed healthcare to those in need, and protect our residents during the COVID-19 pandemic.

HOPEVILLE has been hard-hit by the pandemic. We fear that without a newly-restored district that keeps our community of interest whole, our voices will be silenced, the legislature will continue to ignore our concerns and our community will continue to get sicker. Worse, we are concerned that the town council may follow the lead of the legislature and model their own maps on the ones that have carved our neighborhood in two.

We have submitted maps that more closely reflect the pre-2011 changes and would ask that you consider them before finalizing your redistricting of HOPEVILLE and keep our community whole. As was true in prior meetings and online forums, we are happy to take your questions.

Thank you for your consideration.

LETTER TIPS

- **Be direct and specific.** *Identify your concern in the first sentence and explain the hometown relevance of redistricting, using “I” statements and bringing up specific examples.*
- **Be factual but personal.** *Explain how the issue affects your life.*
- **Be concise.** *Keep your letter to one page or your email to 500 words or less.*

SAMPLE LETTER

Representative XXX,

My name is TONYA SMITH and I am writing to you because I am deeply concerned with how the General Assembly’s redistricting plans will affect my community of HOPEVILLE. Our community is incredibly close-knit, attending the same church and sending our children to the same schools — many of us work in the same nearby factory on the North end, and we share many of the same family names. My father and grandfather lived in the same neighborhood, and like many of my neighbors, I live in the home my grandfather built with his own hands.

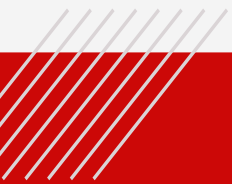
And yet in 2011, as you know, HOPEVILLE was split into two legislative districts in order to erode the power of the predominantly-Black voting population.

Like many other communities, HOPEVILLE was hit incredibly hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. But our community has also endured incredibly unique challenges, including mass lay-offs from the factory, lack of access to healthcare in a rural setting, and the hardships of living in a food desert. These issues are not experienced by the other communities in the legislative districts we have been put into.

Now, the new proposed maps do nothing to remedy this erasure of our voting power. Our current elected official has no reason to listen to our concerns about internet access or rural healthcare because HE/SHE has no incentive to care, and we have no power to hold HIM/HER accountable at the voting booth.

My fellow residents and I have submitted maps that more accurately reflect the HOPEVILLE community. I pray you will consider them in your redistricting process. I would be happy to answer any further questions.

Sincerely,
TONYA SMITH



TALKING POINTS

COMMUNITY-CENTERED REDISTRICTING

- **These maps are a shameless discriminatory gerrymander**, surgically diluting the power of Black voters and cracking communities apart.
- **They packed and cracked the state's most urban and diverse communities, diminishing the voting power of these areas** – despite the fact that they've driven population growth over the past decade.
- **Towns and communities are senselessly split** for no other reason than to give politicians an unfair advantage.
- **Counties with vastly different issues and values are now grouped together in far-reaching districts.** Residents in Rocky Mount and residents in the Outer Banks face very different problems- how can one lawmaker fairly represent both communities? They won't.
- **Our democracy is built on the idea that voters choose their representatives**, not the other way around.

ACCOUNTABILITY

- **Mapmakers are once again operating under a cloak of secrecy.** They have drawn these maps behind closed doors, without meaningful input from their peers, community stakeholders, or most importantly, the public. If they were operating in good faith, they would have welcomed robust discussion and public scrutiny before releasing these maps.
- **General Assembly leaders know they can do whatever they want-** destroying and diluting the power of voters across the state without anyone standing in their way.
- **Lawmakers have admitted partisan considerations were used to draw they maps.**
- **The rushed redistricting process is intentionally meant to trip up advocates from challenging these unfair maps.**

DANGERS OF GERRYMANDERING

- **Gerrymandering threatens our communities'** access to resources for roads, schools, and healthcare.
- **Voting districts that divide communities unfairly dilute** their power to elect candidates of choice in any district and limits their representation in state and federal government.
- **Rigged maps could erase years of progress** in not just voting rights, but civil rights, education, workers' rights, and healthcare.
- **Gerrymandering carves up our communities** and serves politicians their re-elections on a silver platter.
- **There are politicians who don't want your vote to count**, and the power to dilute your vote is in their hands.
- **Legislators should draw voting maps to reflect a decade of change**, not secure a decade of power.
- **Despite the Voting Rights Act** and the Constitution's prohibition of racial discrimination in redistricting, communities of color continue to be targeted, packed, and cracked to give power-hungry politicians an advantage.

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

- **The system may seem rigged against us, but there is hope.** Now is the time to get mad and let lawmakers know we are watching.
- **Communities must use their anger to rally together**, creating public action to not only reach the General Assembly, but more importantly, the people in these communities who are not active voters.
- No matter what brings people together, **now is the time to come together over a love of your community and fight for democracy.**
- **The tireless work of North Carolina advocates and activists helped hold lawmakers accountable** to draw more competitive districts in certain areas.

TALKING POINTS

All three maps harm communities in a number of ways, from splitting towns down the middle to linking them with other towns with no common interests.

Check to see how your community has been affected using www.northcarolina.redistrictingandyou.org and use the following talking points.



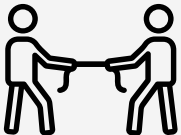
Splitting towns: “My town, Townville, was split right down the middle into two different districts. This was completely unnecessary and simply dilutes my community’s voting power.”



Surgical splitting: “The majority of my city is placed into the new District X. But three neighborhoods have been grabbed and taken into the neighboring District Y, which is primarily made up of much more rural counties.”



Cracking and packing urban areas: “My city has seen major population growth in the last few years. Yet map makers have split my area into three different districts, pairing us with much more rural areas instead of with each other.”



Erased competition: “District X has been a highly competitive district over the last few years, allowing myself and other voters a lot of power to weigh the merits of all candidates. But now, map makers have diluted the power of the people.”



Linking different communities: “My community is fairly suburban and faces very specific issues. But we have now been placed in a district linking us with the Outer Banks, which have very different interests and values.”



Splitting communities of interests: “Townville, Cityville and Hamletville have a long history of being grouped together, sharing many cultural and economic interests and institutions. During the public comment, many people spoke out about keeping these three communities together. But map makers have instead placed each city into a different district.”

CONNECTING TO OTHER ISSUES

EDUCATION

Redistricting directly affects funding for education. We all want our children to have access to quality education, the most up-to-date academic programs, and activities to help put them ahead as they prepare for their futures. Having representation from someone who understands our community, gives our children a greater chance of equitable education.

In 2018, North Carolina Democrats received 50.5 percent of the vote for the state Senate and 51.2 percent of the vote for the state House. However, Republicans won a majority in both houses of the General Assembly. The next year, despite proposals from Gov. Roy Cooper, the legislature proposed across-the-board cuts to programs targeted at children, including early education and childcare, and provided only a fraction of the amount Cooper proposed for pre-K programs.

VOTING RIGHTS

Redistricting directly affects voting rights. When legislators gerrymander district lines, they directly affect the power of our votes. Drawing district maps unfairly can affect how much a vote is truly worth in a district. Letting our voices be heard during redistricting keep our voices and votes heard.

In Galveston, Texas, Stephen Holmes has served on the County Commissioners Court for over two decades as the sole Black commissioner in a county that is made up of 45% Black and Brown residents. In 2021, the commissioners drew new maps, eliminating Holmes' district and diluting the power of Black and Latine voters by putting them all in majority white districts with no opportunity to elect a candidate of their choice to the County Commissioners Court.

RIGHTS FOR INCARCERATED PEOPLE

Redistricting directly affects how incarcerated people are counted, how funding for prisons is handled, including the handling of the prison over-population issues. Those who represent districts in the state legislature are also in charge of making our laws, which directly affect the criminal justice system in our state.

In 2022, incarcerated people made up 41% of one commissioner district in Granville County, North Carolina, despite not having the right to vote, giving non-incarcerated residents in this district significantly more power than their neighboring districts. Although the board of commissioners voted to stop counting inmates as part of the county population, the prisoners now are still invisible in the eyes of the census, which should be changed to count incarcerated individuals at their last residence before incarceration.

POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

Redistricting directly affects how specific local needs are addressed. When legislators gerrymander district lines, they will group communities together who may have no shared connection or identity. Because of this, needs that are specific to one community may be ignored.

In Flint, Michigan, state Republicans gerrymandered their maps and gained control of the legislature, installing a state-appointed emergency manager over certain local municipalities. Voters successfully opposed the law, but lawmakers ignored the vote. This manager switched the water system supply in Flint, leading to more than 10,000 children in Flint drink lead-contaminated water.

HEALTHCARE

Redistricting directly affects funding for healthcare. We all want access to quality healthcare from hospitals and specialist care. Having representation from those who understand our communities' needs gives us a better shot at having much-needed healthcare opportunities.

*In the communities that challenged Alabama's congressional maps in *Allen v. Milligan*, Black residents saw their concerns about Medicaid expansion and price controls for insulin ignored.*

