



Redistricting in 2022: What's Happened So Far?

As the 2022 midterm elections approach, officials across the country continue to work towards completing a new round of redistricting nationwide. Unfortunately, as we have seen in previous decades, many states have continued to gerrymander their congressional lines to give one of the two major parties an unfair electoral advantage. At the same time, there have been several positive examples of this process indicative of momentum against partisan gerrymandering. MAP and its members have previously discussed the negative impacts of partisan gerrymandering, including at the 2019 and 2020 Future Summit events, which continues to be a problem across the political spectrum.

A number of states this cycle have stood out as examples of fairness and transparency in the redistricting process. Two such examples include:

- **Colorado:** This redistricting cycle was the first in which redistricting for Colorado, both for Congress and the state legislature, was controlled by independent redistricting commissions (IRCs). These changes were first approved by voters in a series of referendums in 2018. According to Colorado state law, IRCs must consist of four members from the state's largest party, four members from the second largest party, and four members not affiliated with any party, with all commission members being selected by the Colorado Supreme Court. On September 28th, 2021, the commission approved its final congressional map, which was in turn approved by the state's supreme court.
- **Michigan:** A highly competitive swing state, Michigan saw one of the most robust changes to its congressional redistricting process for the 2020s. Previously, like most states, Michigan's process was entirely controlled by its state legislature, resulting in a highly-gerrymandered map throughout the 2010s. Like Colorado, Michigan adopted an IRC to draw congressional and state legislative maps this cycle. Michigan's IRC consisted of 13 members, including four Democrats, four Republicans, and five independents or members of minor parties. Additionally, maps approved by the commission were required to have at least two Democrats, two Republicans, and two independents vote in favor. Additionally, Michigan's IRC was required to consider partisan fairness under the new map's lines. Michigan's new map was passed under these procedures on December 28th, 2021.

Standing in contrast to these examples, we have seen both parties in major states continuing to flagrantly engage in gerrymandering.

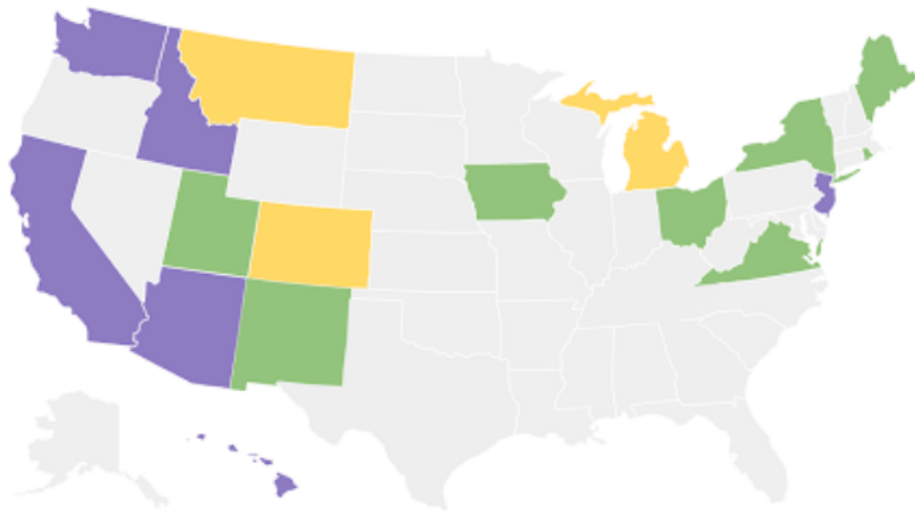
- **New York:** Though in 2014 New York voters approved the establishment of a redistricting commission in the state, New York state law permits the legislature to approve its own maps if the commission cannot come to an agreement. Taking advantage of this loophole, New York's legislature drew a new map widely regarded to

be a partisan gerrymander in favor of Democrats, and which is now facing a lawsuit in the state's Supreme Court. The plaintiffs in this lawsuit have put forward claims that New York's legislature ignored communities of interest and other anti-gerrymandering provisions in New York's Constitution.

- **Texas:** Texas' new congressional districts have come under immense criticism for a number of factors. Having passed the legislature on a near-party-line vote, Texas' new map has faced legal challenges on the basis of being discriminatory towards racial minorities. As evidence, advocates cite data indicating that though growth by Black and Latino residents accounted for 95% of Texas' population growth in the 2010s, no new majority minority seats were drawn in the state despite Texas gaining 2 seats. These claims have attracted the attention of the Department of Justice, which has filed a lawsuit against Texas on the basis of these claims of discriminatory representation.

The fight for fairer political maps is one worth fighting. Political control of the process undermines the legitimacy of our institutions of governance. While IRCs are an imperfect solution, they prioritize the imperative of fair representation to a much greater degree than most partisan redistricting processes. It is worth the work to implement these bodies in pursuit of a depolarized democracy.

**Updated 2/22/2022*



- An Independent redistricting committee (IRC) will be used for the first time in 2021**
- An Independent redistricting committee is already in place**
- Has an advisory redistricting committee only OR legislature may overrule committee**
- Legislature-controlled redistricting process**