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Cc: Charles Stephens; Peter Robins-Brown
Subject: Fwd: Louisiana Progress Redistricting Guide
Attachments: Every Vote Counts Progress 10.25.pdf

EXTERNAL EMAIL: Please do not click on links or attachments unless you know the content is safe.

Thank you for your participation in the Redistricting Road Show. Attached for your review is the Make Every Vote Count- Redistricting Guide which may be useful for you.

Our goal is to get explain the Redistricting Process in Louisiana. We believe that Redistricting is very important.

Please share the guide with your constituents who are seeking to understand the process, the terms and the data.

The report is attached below and available at www.louisianaprogress.org.

We appreciate your participation in the road shows and your attention to the concerns of Louisiana citizens.

Thank you
Melissa S. Flournoy, PHD

LOUISIANA
PROGRESS

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MAKE EVERY VOTE COUNT

What do you need to know about redistricting?

LOUISIANA
PROGRESS

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ABOUT US

Louisiana Progress works with citizens, community leaders, activists, advocates, students, and policymakers to inform Louisianans on important issues, engage people in the political process, and help them mobilize to fight for people-centered, solutions-driven public policies. Learn more about Louisiana Progress and sign up for alerts at www.louisianaprogress.org.

Louisiana Progress's leadership is committed to making lasting change by developing engaged, energized stakeholders who come together to work on a strategic, thoughtful, shared vision. We want to thank our board, staff, and college advocacy fellows for their commitment to impactful progressive change.

The Coalition for Louisiana Progress was formed in 2005 as a 501(c)3 organization. Louisiana Progress Action was formed in 2011 as a 501(c)4 organization.

Melissa Flournoy, PhD
Louisiana Progress Board Chair

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**WHAT WE DO IN THE
NEXT YEAR WILL
DECIDE WHAT KIND
OF LOUISIANA WE
LEAVE TO FUTURE
GENERATIONS.**

REDISTRICTING 101

WHAT IS REDISTRICTING?

Redistricting is the process where political maps are redrawn for the U.S. Congress, state legislatures, municipal councils, and other political bodies. The goal of redistricting is to reshape political maps to account for demographic shifts that are reflected in the decennial Census and to ensure the principle of “one person, one vote.”

Learn more on the Louisiana legislature's redistricting website: redist.legis.la.gov

WHY IS REDISTRICTING IMPORTANT?

1. Redistricting affects the outcome of elections for the next decade. It can largely determine who runs for office, who wins those races, and how elected officials vote after they are elected.
2. Every issue is a redistricting issue, because redistricting has such widespread ripple effects on all facets of politics. If you care about criminal justice reform, environmental justice, education, health care, and infrastructure, those are all redistricting issues too.
3. Redistricting is a major factor in whether or not people are civically engaged. Gerrymandering, which occurs when elected officials draw maps with the purpose of influencing, or even pre-determining, the outcomes of elections, can lead to people thinking their vote doesn't matter, so they become less likely to vote and take part in other aspects of democracy and government.

WHEN DOES REDISTRICTING HAPPEN?

Redistricting is happening now in Louisiana!

Most, if not all, state and local political bodies will complete their redistricting work in early 2022. The Louisiana legislature's redistricting special legislative session will take place in February 2022. But legislative briefings are already happening, and the legislative committees in charge of the process are holding 10 regional meetings around the state (known as the “roadshow”) from October 2021 through January 2022.

ROADSHOW

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

1020	UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA MONROE	1130	FUHRMAN AUDITORIUM
1021	LSU SHREVEPORT	1215	TBD (LAKE CHARLES)
1026	UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA LAFFYETTE	0105	UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS
1109	LSU ALEXANDRIA	0111	NICHOLLS STATE UNIVERSITY
1116	SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY A&M	0120	LOUISIANA STATE CAPITOL
		TBD	REDISTRICTING SESSION STARTS!

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE DETAILS](#)

WHO CONTROLS REDISTRICTING?

In Louisiana, the legislature controls redistricting for the state's six U.S. congressional districts, state legislative districts (House & Senate), Louisiana State Supreme Court, Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE), and Public Service Commission (PSC). The Governor has the power to sign or veto a redistricting plan that passes out of the legislature.

Local redistricting in Louisiana mostly falls to Parish Councils or Police Juries. They redraw their own districts and their parish's school board districts.

HOW DOES THE REDISTRICTING PROCESS WORK?

STATE REDISTRICTING

The process for passing new maps is almost exactly the same as it is for any other piece of proposed legislation. Maps are introduced as bills, they are debated in a committee and, if it passes out of the committee, goes to a full debate and vote on the House or Senate floor.

If the map/bill is passed by one side of the legislature (House or Senate) it moves to the other side, where it goes through the same process (committee debate and floor debate). When a map/bill makes it through both chambers, it goes to the Governor's desk for his signature or veto. If the Governor approves the map, he can sign it into law. If he rejects it, he has to sign a veto, and then the State Supreme Court steps in and takes over the process.

LOCAL REDISTRICTING

The process is similar, though scaled down, at the local level. Parish Council or Police Jury members usually hire a redistricting specialist to help them develop proposed maps for council and school board districts. Those proposals are debated in public hearings, and then the Council/Police Jury votes on them.

HOW CAN YOU ADVOCATE ON REDISTRICTING

There are many ways you can play a role in shaping the outcome of redistricting in Louisiana. Louisiana Progress has a citizen's redistricting guide that you can find on the Redistricting page of our website at [Louisiana-progress.org/redistricting](https://louisianaprogress.org/redistricting)

Key steps include:

- Review redistricting materials from Louisiana Progress and other organizations that advocate on the issue (see list of organizations below)
- Learn more about current state and local district maps
- Identify specific issues with current maps that are concerning to you
- Learn to draw your own maps on Dave's Redistricting App (davesredistricting.org)
- Educate your family, friends, and neighbors about the importance of redistricting
- Organize your community to advocate on this issue
- Help shape the redistricting narrative: Write opinion pieces for your local newspaper, appear on a local radio show, speak to community and/or religious organizations in your community
- Set up meetings with your state and local elected officials to learn more about their perspectives on redistricting and gather information
- Learn the redistricting timeline in your Parish
- Attend public redistricting hearings
- Provide testimony at those hearings and/or help others in your community provide testimony. Testimony can include:
 - Personal stories about how the current maps adversely affect you and/or your community
 - Speaking about redistricting concepts and principles

LOUISIANA REDISTRICTING ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS

Louisiana Progress is one of many advocacy organizations that are advocating on redistricting in the state. We encourage residents who are interested in the issue to also explore our friends and partners in this arena, including:

- [Fair Districts Louisiana \(fairdistrictsla.org\)](https://fairdistrictsla.org)
- [Together Louisiana \(togetherla.org\)](https://togetherla.org)
- [Power Coalition for Equity and Justice \(powercoalition.org\)](https://powercoalition.org)
- [ACLU of Louisiana \(laaclu.org\)](https://laaclu.org)
- [Urban League of Louisiana \(urbanleaguela.org\)](https://urbanleaguela.org)
- [League of Women Voters of Louisiana \(lwvofla.org\)](https://lwvofla.org)
- [NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund \(naacpldf.org\)](https://naacpldf.org)
- [Southern Poverty Law Center \(splcenter.org\)](https://splcenter.org)

REDISTRICTING GLOSSARY

KEY REDISTRICTING TERMS AND IDEAS

REAPPORTIONMENT & REDISTRICTING

These two terms are often used interchangeably, even though they have slightly different meanings.

Reapportionment is the redistribution of U.S. congressional seats based on changes in population. The number of congressional seats is set at 435, and each state's allocation of those seats can change based on population shifts in between decennial Censuses.

For example, Texas added two new congressional seats this year, while New York lost one. Louisiana's allocation remained the same, with the state continuing to have six seats.

Redistricting is the actual process of drawing districts for U.S. congress, and state and local government bodies, also using Census data.


DELAYED TIMELINE

Redistricting usually happens in years ending in '1' (e.g., 2011), following Census years, which end in '0' (e.g., 2010). However, the Covid pandemic delayed Census data collection and analysis, so redistricting in many states, including Louisiana, will take place in 2022.

MALAPPORTIONMENT & POPULATION DEVIATION

One key redistricting principle is ensuring that each district has as close to the same number of people as possible. There are laws and rules governing how much district populations can deviate from the "ideal" numbers that are set for those districts.

For example, U.S. congressional seats must be as close to the ideal population number (776,911 people in Louisiana) as possible. And state legislative districts cannot have a population deviation of more than 5 percent from the ideal number (44,360 people for a State House district and 119,430 people for a State Senate district), even if the deviation in question is for a legitimate constitutional purpose, like ensuring adequate racial representation.



Malapportionment is the “inequitable or unsuitable apportioning of representatives to a legislative body,” according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary. It occurs when a district or districts have total populations that are outside the range of acceptable population deviation and/or when districts are drawn in ways that disenfranchise certain voting blocks or communities.

GERRYMANDERING

Gerrymandering is sometimes described as politicians picking their voters, instead of voters picking their elected officials. It occurs when elected officials draw maps with the purpose of influencing, or even pre-determining, the outcomes of elections. It can be done to protect and expand, or attack and diminish, the power of political parties, racial groups, geographic regions, and/or specific elected officials.

Gerrymandering has far-reaching implications. Many voters don't get to choose between political parties or candidates with differing ideologies, and are instead left to choose between ideologically similar candidates. Often, they don't get to choose at all, because incumbents in safe seats regularly fail to draw viable challengers or even any challengers at all. It also creates an environment where the voices and votes of many communities are unfairly minimized or even silenced.

MAJORITY-MINORITY DISTRICTS

One of the most important considerations during the redistricting process is majority-minority districts, which is when a majority of the population in a district is non-white. In Louisiana, the focus of majority-minority districts is almost always based on Black and Brown communities, since the state has the second highest proportion of Black and Brown residents in the U.S., and a relatively small non-Black-and-Brown minority population.

Redistricting bodies have to strongly consider how new maps impact minority communities because federal law bars them from diluting the voting power of minority groups by decreasing the number of majority-minority districts, unless Census data shows enough of a decline in minority population to warrant a decrease (which isn't the case in Louisiana).

PACKING & CRACKING

One way that gerrymandering is used to unfairly minimize or silence the power of communities of color is through what's known as packing and cracking. This is how minority votes are essentially wasted because they either make up an inordinate percentage of a district's population (packing), or they are split up across multiple districts so that they don't make up a large enough voting bloc in any one of those districts to have political influence (cracking).

Creating and holding majority-minority districts is essential, but those minority voters don't need to account for 70 or 80 percent of the district's residents in order to ensure that those districts are majority-minority. At Louisiana Progress, we consider almost any majority-minority district that is more than two-thirds minority voters to be packed (the only exceptions would be in urban areas where populations are very segregated).

On the other side of the equation, cracking is apparent when you see several districts in one geographical region with 15-25 percent minority populations. In Louisiana, districts tend to need at least one-third of their population to be minority voters in order to be competitive between political parties. So when those minority communities are cracked out across multiple districts, staying below that one-third threshold in each case, it is likely a case of cracking.

INCUMBENCY

An incumbent is a current elected official who is running or will run to retain their seat. Unfortunately, incumbency often plays an outsized role in redistricting, with elected officials prioritizing their own job security over principles, demographics, and data.

Political districts are the people's districts, not elected officials' districts, and should be drawn as such. They should be drawn to fairly represent the citizens of Louisiana and not be gerrymandered to protect incumbents and/or political parties. Given that we have term limits in place for the legislature, as well as many local elected offices, new maps should be drawn with little concern given to protecting incumbent officials.

FAIR, EQUITABLE & REPRESENTATIVE MAPS

According to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), representative maps are important because they are fundamental to ensure that every vote counts, and serve as the foundation of systemic equality for Black and Brown residents.

Our next set of electoral maps must represent everyone, upholding the Fourteenth Amendment's guarantee of equal protection, and complying with the requirements of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. When voters of color are equally empowered and fairly represented, their concerns are more likely to be heard and addressed."

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF STATE LEGISLATURES REDISTRICTING PRINCIPLES

There are numerous ideas and principles that can be considered in the redistricting process. The National Council of State Legislatures (NCSL) has [compiled a list](#) of them, which is laid out below:

In addition to the mandatory standards set out by the U.S Constitution and the Voting Rights Act, states are allowed to adopt their own [redistricting criteria](#), or principles, for drawing the plans. Principles, or criteria, may be found in state constitutions or statutes or be adopted by a legislature, chamber, or committee, or by a court that is called upon to draw a plan when the legislative process fails.

THESE TRADITIONAL DISTRICTING PRINCIPLES (OR CRITERIA) HAVE BEEN ADOPTED BY MANY STATES:

- Compactness: Having the minimum distance between all the parts of a constituency (a circle, square or a hexagon is the most compact district).
- Contiguity: All parts of a district being connected at some point with the rest of the district.
- Preservation of counties and other political subdivisions: This refers to not crossing county, city, or town, boundaries when drawing districts.
- Preservation of communities of interest: Geographical areas, such as neighborhoods of a city or regions of a state, where the residents have common political interests that do not necessarily coincide with the boundaries of a political subdivision, such as a city or county.
- Preservation of cores of prior districts: This refers to maintaining districts as previously drawn, to the extent possible. This leads to continuity of representation.
- Avoiding pairing incumbents: This refers to avoiding districts that would create contests between incumbents.

THESE EMERGING CRITERIA HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED AND ADOPTED IN A FEW STATES SINCE 2000:

- Prohibition on favoring or disfavoring an incumbent, candidate or party: The prohibition in a given state may be broader, covering any person or group, or it may be limited to intentionally or unduly favoring a person or group. Details on these prohibitions are included in the state descriptions below.
- Prohibition on using partisan data: Line drawers, whether they be commissioners (California and Montana), nonpartisan staff (Iowa), or legislators (Nebraska), are prohibited from using incumbent residences, election results, party registration, or other socio-economic data as an input when redrawing districts.
- Competitiveness: Districts having relatively even partisan balance, making competition between the two major parties more intense. This criterion typically seeks to avoid the creation of "safe" districts for a particular party. For instance, the Arizona constitution (cited below) states that "to the extent practicable, competitive districts should be favored where to do so would create no significant detriment to the other goals."

THIS FUTURE CRITERION HAS BEEN ADOPTED BY OHIO AND MISSOURI FOR LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS BEGINNING IN 2021:

- Proportionality: The statewide proportion of districts whose voters, based on statewide state and federal partisan general election results during the last ten years, favor each political party shall correspond closely to the statewide preferences of the voters.

VOTING RIGHTS ACT (VRA)

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 created a new set of rules for redistricting that were largely aimed at addressing racial disparities. In its 2013 *Shelby v. Holder* decision, the U.S. Supreme Court stripped most of those protections away, but Section 2 of the VRA is still in place.

The [Brennan Center for Justice](#) provides a [deep dive](#) into the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and how it will impact this redistricting cycle:

SECTION 2 (OF THE VRA) REQUIRES STATES TO DRAW DISTRICTS WHERE MINORITIES HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ELECT A CANDIDATE OF THEIR CHOICE IF THERE IS:


- Large, compact minority population
- Politically cohesive minority voting
- Politically cohesive majority voting defeating minority candidates + Totality of the circumstances showing diminished minority voting power

Section 2 provides some relief from such tactics. It gives voters the right to turn to the courts if, for example, a district could be drawn to give a minority community the opportunity to elect its candidate of choice, but the district lines instead split the community up into separate districts where its voting power is diluted (aka, “cracking”).

WHEN LITIGANTS CHALLENGE A REDISTRICTING PLAN OR PART OF A PLAN UNDER SECTION 2, ASSERTING THAT DISTRICTS COULD BE DRAWN TO PRESERVE MINORITY VOTING POWER THAT IS OTHERWISE DILUTED, THEY MUST FIRST SHOW THAT:

- a minority population is sufficiently geographically compact (that is, living close together) that it would make sense to draw a district containing it;¹³⁸
- the minority population (usually, the citizen voting-age minority population) is large enough to be more than half of a district-sized number of people;¹³⁹
- the minority population is “politically cohesive” – that is, it would usually vote as a bloc for the same favored candidate; and
- the majority population would usually vote as a bloc for a different candidate, so that it would usually be able to defeat the minority-preferred candidate, if the minority population were fragmented among several districts.

When minority voters and majority voters reliably vote for different candidates, voting is said to be “racially polarized.” This analysis is sophisticated, looking at trends over multiple elections at different levels of government. One election alone--for example, the Presidential election of Barack Obama--will not generally prove or refute whether elections in a region tend to be racially polarized.



If those attacking the plan can show that all of these conditions are satisfied, the court will then consider the “totality of circumstances”: the total context in the area, including the extent of historical discrimination in voting and in other areas, and the extent to which minorities have been able to elect their chosen candidates anyway.

In the past, courts have paid particular attention to the proportion of districts controlled by minorities, compared to the minority percentage of the population--investigating, for example, whether a minority group with 10% of the population controls 10% of the districts in the area.

If the court finds that, given the total context, the power of the minority vote has been diminished, it may demand that a district be drawn to give the minority population the opportunity to elect a representative of its choice.

Such districts are often known as “minority opportunity districts,” or “majority-minority districts,” because minorities in such districts will usually constitute the majority of the voters. These districts do not guarantee that minority-preferred candidates will be elected, but they are drawn so that if the minority citizens all vote together, their candidate--who may or may not be a member of a racial or ethnic minority group--will usually win.

In majority-minority districts, the majority of the voters are from the same minority racial or ethnic group. Some also include minority coalition districts in which more than 50% of the voters are from two or more different minority groups, particularly if the different groups tend to vote in a similar pattern.

In minority opportunity districts, minorities have the opportunity to elect a representative of their choice. These are usually majority-minority districts, but in minority crossover districts, minority voters might comprise less than 50% of the district, and still elect their chosen representatives with support from some “crossover” white voters.

In minority influence districts, minorities constitute a sizable portion of the district, but cannot control the result of an election. There is substantial debate about the extent to which minority voters actually influence policy in such districts.

REDISTRICTING IN LOUISIANA

Almost all of Louisiana’s current political maps at the federal, state, and local levels fall short of the two metrics that we use at Louisiana Progress to define “fair and equitable districts.” Those metrics are:

- Competitiveness
- Racial proportionality (equal representation)

The most obvious example of where our maps lack both competitiveness and racial proportionality is at the congressional level. None of the six Louisiana congressional seats is even remotely competitive between political parties, with five of the seats being Safe Republican and one of the seats being Safe Democrat. And, while the state’s population is roughly 33 percent Black, only one of our six congressional seats (16.7 percent) is majority-minority. Those basic demographics indicate we should have one more majority-minority seat.

While our congressional districts are clear examples of racial disproportionality and lack of competitiveness, they are hardly the only districts in our state where that is the case. The same can be said of our state legislative map, other state political bodies like the Supreme Court, and many parish councils and school boards.

WHY DID LOUISIANA PROGRESS CHOOSE TO FOCUS ON THESE TWO PRINCIPLES?

We chose to focus on competitiveness and racial proportionality because these two factors go the farthest toward objectively measuring the concepts of “fair and equitable.” Fair and equitable are big ideas that can be hard to define. In order for people to advocate for them in our political maps, they need to be able to clearly define, measure, and analyze them.

Racial proportionality is measurable because the Census provides us with relatively accurate statewide, regional, and local racial demographics. We can measure competitiveness by looking at past election results and shifting demographics to objectively determine whether a district will be competitive or not.

Competitiveness is important because:

- We live in extremely divisive times, socially and politically, and non-competitive maps with overwhelmingly safe seats incentivize elected officials to tuck to their political extremes, and avoid compromise, thus fueling that division.
- It's nearly impossible to hold elected officials in safe seats accountable by voting them out, or even running a viable challenger against them.
- Competition breeds innovation. Our politics have become stagnant, with systemic problems going unaddressed for far too long. More competitive districts will force more elected officials to come up with creative solutions to those problems.
- Citizens are robbed of the chance to see candidates participate in a broad discussion of ideas and perspectives--i.e., the "marketplace of ideas"--which reinforces our political and social bubbles.

Racial proportionality is important because:

- Every community should have voice, vote, and political power that is commensurate with their share of the population--It's one of the keystones of democracy.
- Throughout Louisiana's history, Black and Brown communities have been enslaved, oppressed, and politically disenfranchised. Redistricting is one way to rectify some of that past harm and ensure that our state is more equitable going forward.
- When communities are disenfranchised, they see it and feel it in their everyday lives. That leads to justifiable resentment toward the system that is disenfranchising them, which creates a whole other set of societal and political conflicts

LOUISIANA MALAPPORTIONMENT

Our current maps are also significantly malapportioned, meaning their populations deviate from legal standards that govern how many people need to be in a district. That malapportionment is largely due to population shifts over the past decade (since the last Census and redistricting process).

For Congress, districts in Louisiana need to be as close as possible to the ideal number of 776,292 people. Our legislative districts can't deviate by more than 5 percent from their ideal numbers, which are 44,360 people for a State House district and 119,430 people for a State Senate district. Other statewide bodies are also currently malapportioned, as outlined below.

PACKING & CRACKING IN LOUISIANA

Many of the competitiveness and racial proportionality problems we have in our current political maps are a product of what's known as "packing and cracking."

Packing occurs when an inordinate number of minority voters are packed into one majority-minority district, going well beyond the threshold needed to create a secure majority-minority district. That threshold is different for U.S. Congress, state government, and local government. In the state legislature, for example, any majority-minority district where minority voters account for more than two-thirds of the population is likely packed.

Cracking occurs when minority communities are spread out across multiple districts in one region, with their share of the population in all of those districts falling below the threshold necessary for those minority communities to be determinative voting blocs.

Again, that threshold is different for each level of government, but for the state legislature a district usually needs to be at least one-third minority to become competitive between political parties. So if several districts in a region are all in the 20-25 percent minority range, then cracking is likely taking place.

Packing and cracking primarily occur in urban and suburban areas, and we provide some Louisiana-specific examples later in this document.

TOOLS FOR EVALUATING & DRAWING LOUISIANA POLITICAL MAPS

If you would like to draw your own maps and/or evaluate current and proposed maps, our friends at [Fair Districts Louisiana \(fairdistrictsla.org\)](http://fairdistrictsla.org) provide all of the mapping tools you need to become an amateur demographer, including current maps for the [state legislature and other statewide political bodies](#) and for [parish councils, police juries, and school boards](#).

With these mapping tools, which utilize [Dave's Redistricting App](#), you can do your own analysis of competitiveness, racial proportionality, malapportionment, and any other factor you think is important in redistricting. You can also start drawing your own new maps that you can submit to local and/or state redistricting authorities in the coming weeks and months.

COMPETITIVENESS ANALYSIS

There are many ways to measure competitiveness and/or predict whether a district(s) in a new map will be competitive. At Louisiana Progress, our competitiveness analysis is mainly based on looking at local demographics and voting patterns.

For instance, for state legislature districts, usually at least one-third (33 percent) of a district's residents need to be non-white for it to be theoretically competitive between political parties. For local parish councils and school boards, though, that number normally needs to be higher, more in the 40+ percent range.

Election results are also instructive in analyzing voting trends, but they are hardly definitive, since those results are strongly influenced by the relative strengths and weaknesses of particular candidates. That's why we look at multiple previous election cycles, identify broad trends in parishwide voting patterns (e.g., how did the whole parish vote in the gubernatorial race in 2015 as compared to 2019), and dive deeper into precinct-level data to understand municipal and even neighborhood voting trends.

STATE COMPETITIVENESS ANALYSIS

As described above, Louisiana's congressional maps are completely non-competitive, and that's essentially true in the state legislature as well. Of the state's 144 legislative districts (105 House seats and 39 Senate seats), only a handful can be potentially considered competitive between political parties.

For example, in the 2019 legislative elections, only one seat flipped from an incumbent in one party to a challenger from another party. Just as alarming is that many candidates failed to even draw a challenger, since the current maps so heavily favor safe seats for incumbents that it's nearly impossible to launch a successful challenge to an incumbent candidate.

Those uncontested districts were:

State Senate: 1, 4, 7, 8, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 27, 34

State House: 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 19, 23, 25, 27, 29, 41, 42, 44, 47, 49, 52, 53, 56, 57, 59, 60, 61, 64, 65, 79, 81, 85, 86, 92, 93, 101, 102, 103, 104

LOCAL COMPETITIVENESS ANALYSIS

Local gerrymandering has created some severe disconnects between the demographics and overall voting trends in parishes and the eventual outcomes of local elections. East Baton Rouge Parish and Jefferson Parish are two clear examples, and there are many more across the state.

East Baton Rouge, along with being slightly majority-minority, is also majority-Democrat. Yet, of the 12 Metro Council seats, six are Safe Republican, five are Safe Democrat, and only one is competitive (and that one has been represented by Republicans for the past decade).

Jefferson Parish, traditionally a Republican stronghold, has been getting more diverse both racially (it's now the most racially diverse parish in Louisiana) and politically over the past decade. Jefferson Parish voters slightly favored Gov. Edwards for re-election in 2019, but also went for Donald Trump 54-46 in 2020. However, five of their Parish Council's seven members are in Safe Republican seats, one is in a Safe Democrat seat, and only one is competitive.

RACIAL PROPORTIONALITY ANALYSIS

Ensuring that the number of majority-minority seats accurately (proportionally) represents the population of an area is necessary for legal, moral, and political reasons.

Legally, an unfounded decrease in minority representation is the only justifiable legal action that can currently be taken against a political map. Morally, we need to rectify the problems Louisiana has had with disenfranchising certain communities, particularly communities of color. Politically, when communities don't have representation that is proportional to their share of the population they tend to, justifiably, resent the system where they are underrepresented, which leads to a whole raft of other societal problems.

STATE RACIAL PROPORTIONALITY ANALYSIS

The problem of racial disproportionality in Louisiana's political maps extends well beyond its six congressional districts. Of Louisiana's 105 House districts, only 29 (27.6 percent) are majority-minority. Only 10 out of 39 (25.6 percent) Senate districts are majority-minority. And only one of the seven (14.3 percent) Louisiana State Supreme Court (LSSC) districts is majority-minority, only two of the eight Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) seats (25 percent) are majority-minority, and only one of the five Public Service Commission seats (20 percent) is majority-minority.

To achieve racially proportional representation at the state level, there would need to be six more majority-minority House districts, three more majority-minority Senate districts, one or two more majority-minority LSSC districts, and at least one more majority-minority seat on each of BESE and the PSC (that analysis changes, of course, if seats are added to any of those bodies during redistricting).

LOCAL RACIAL PROPORTIONALITY ANALYSIS

Jefferson Parish and East Baton Rouge Parish also present two examples of racial disproportionality on local councils and/or school boards, and there are several other parishes with similar problems across the state, including Pointe Coupee and Tangipahoa.

For example, only one of Jefferson Parish's seven parish council districts is majority-minority, even though the parish itself is nearly majority-minority. The East Baton Rouge Parish Metropolitan Council represents a Parish that is slightly majority-minority, yet only five of the 12 seats on the council are majority-minority.

MALAPPORTIONMENT ANALYSIS

Due to population shifts over the past decade, Louisiana's political maps are significantly malapportioned, which means that upcoming redistricting will likely result in some relatively radical changes to our current state and local maps. That also provides state and local officials, and redistricting advocates, with an opportunity to address the problems in our current maps.

*All of the images in the Malapportionment section below are courtesy of the Louisiana Legislature.

CONGRESSIONAL MALAPPORTIONMENT

U.S. congressional seats legally need to be as close to the ideal population number established for each state. In Louisiana, that number is 776,292 people per district. Currently, at least four of our six districts are malapportioned (Districts 1, 4, 5, and 6).

MALAPPORTIONMENT IN CONGRESS				
Districts	Total Pop	Ideal	Difference	Percent
1	812,585	776,292	36,293	4.68%
2	775,292	776,292	-1,000	-0.13%
3	785,824	776,292	9,532	1.23%
4	728,346	776,292	-47,946	-6.18%
5	739,244	776,292	-37,048	-4.77%
6	816,466	776,292	40,174	5.18%

STATE LEGISLATURE MALAPPORTIONMENT

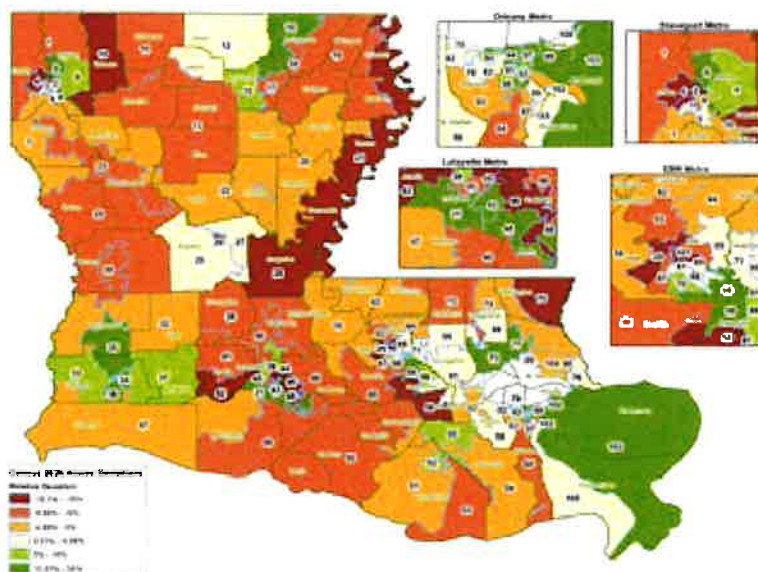
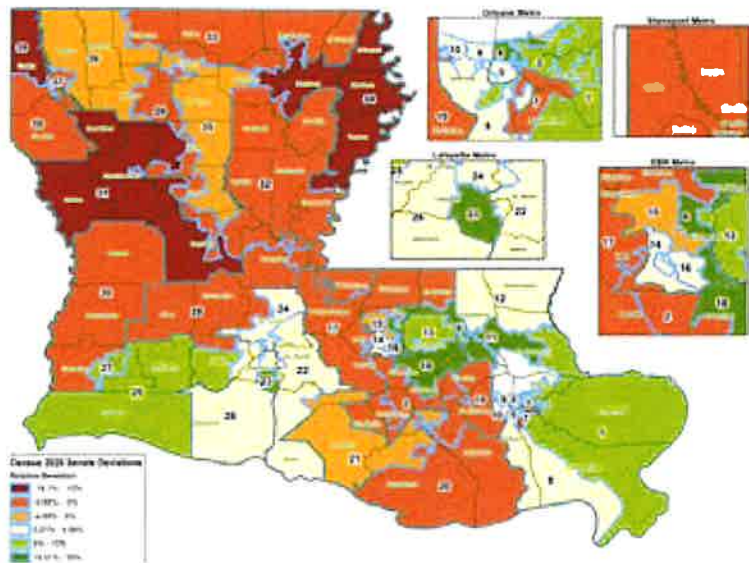
There are 39 State Senate Districts and currently 25 of those districts are out of compliance based on population data.

- Districts above deviation: 10
- Districts within deviation: 14
- Districts below deviation: 15

There are 105 districts in the Louisiana House of Representatives and currently 66 of those districts are out of compliance based on population.

- Districts above deviation: 29
- Districts within deviation: 39
- Districts below deviation: 37

STATE SENATE



STATE HOUSE

STATEWIDE POLITICAL BODY MALAPPORTIONMENT

The State Supreme Court, Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, and Louisiana Public Service Commission have similar malapportionment problems as other political bodies. Unfortunately, the state legislature, which is responsible for redistricting these bodies, often skips them, allowing the previous maps to stay in place even as malapportionment grows.

The State Supreme Court is a little different than other political bodies because there is no requirement that it meet the “one person, one vote” principle, and the legislature hasn’t officially redistricted it in approximately 80 years. That has caused extreme malapportionment.

SUPREME COURT MALAPPORTIONMENT				
Districts	Total Pop	Ideal	Difference	Percent
1	752,775	665,393	87,382	13.13%
2	638,062	665,393	-27,331	-4.11%
3	733,573	665,393	68,180	10.25%
4	586,849	665,393	-78,544	-11.80%
5	838,610	665,393	173,217	26.03%
6	631,334	665,393	-34,059	-5.12%
7	476,554	665,393	-188,839	-28.38%

Malapportionment isn’t quite as bad for BESE or the PSC, but there are still some alarming population deviations in those bodies.

BESE MALAPPORTIONMENT				
Districts	Total Pop	Ideal	Difference	Percent
1	582,428	582,219	209	0.04%
2	566,858	582,219	-15,361	-2.64%
3	540,723	582,219	-41,496	-7.13%
4	573,149	582,219	-9,070	-1.56%
5	581,559	582,219	-660	-0.11%
6	658,313	582,219	76,094	13.07%
7	630,876	582,219	48,657	8.36%
8	523,851	582,219	-58,368	-10.03%

PSC MALAPPORTIONMENT

Districts	Total Pop	Ideal	Difference	Percent
1	1,008,478	931,551	76,927	8.26%
2	967,517	931,551	35,966	3.86%
3	896,082	931,551	-35,469	-3.81%
4	888,916	931,551	-42,635	-4.58%
5	896,764	931,551	-34,787	-3.73%

PACKING & CRACKING ANALYSIS

The lack of competitiveness and racial proportionality in Louisiana's maps, and even our problems with malapportionment, is largely due to packing and cracking, where minority votes are essentially "wasted" because they either make up an inordinate percentage of a district's population (packing), or they are split up across multiple districts so that they don't make up a large enough voting bloc in any one of those districts to have political influence (cracking).

Creating and keeping majority-minority districts is essential, but those minority voters don't need to account for 70 or 80 percent of the district's residents in order to ensure that those districts are majority-minority. At Louisiana Progress, we consider almost any majority-minority district that is more than two-thirds minority voters to be packed.

On the other side of the equation, cracking is apparent when you see several districts in one geographical region with 20-25 percent minority populations. Louisiana legislative districts tend to need at least one-third (33 percent) of their population to be minority voters in order to be competitive between political parties.

CONGRESSIONAL PACKING & CRACKING

Our entire congressional map is an example of packing and cracking. Since congressional districts are so large, a bare minimum, i.e., 50+ percent, of a district's residents need to be minority for it to be a relatively safe majority-minority seat. Yet our one majority-minority district, District 2, is 73 percent minority (61 percent Black).

At least 40 percent of a district's residents need to be Black for it to be competitive. Not surprisingly, we have two districts in one general region that come in slightly below that threshold--Districts 4 and 5, which each cover parts of North and Central Louisiana--clearly indicating that cracking is taking place.

STATE PACKING & CRACKING

In the Louisiana legislature, packing and cracking is mainly used in our urban and inner suburban areas. As stated above, the general rule of thumb is that any district with a population that is more than two-thirds minority is probably packed. And, since the minimum threshold to create a competitive district is usually one-third of the population being minority voters, when there are multiple districts in one region that come in just below that threshold, cracking is likely taking place.

At Louisiana Progress, we call this the two-thirds/one-third principle.

Every urban and inner suburban region in our state demonstrates packing and cracking to some extent, but one of the most obvious examples is the Shreveport area. All three Shreveport-area majority-minority districts are packed. In each of Districts 2 and 4, more than 75 percent of the population is minority, while in District 3 more than 90 percent of the population is minority. Many of the districts surrounding those appear to be cracked. Districts 1, 5, and 7, in particular, show evidence of cracking, with their minority populations coming in just below the one-third threshold. This same exercise can essentially be repeated in every other major population center in the state.

*Image courtesy of the Louisiana Legislature



As for other statewide offices, the only majority-minority district on the State Supreme Court, District 7, is packed (and significantly malapportioned), while Black populations are cracked across the other six districts. Similar problems are apparent in the BESE and PSC maps.

LOCAL PACKING & CRACKING

It's a little bit harder to apply a rule of thumb to determine packing and cracking in parish councils, police juries, and school boards, since the number of people they represent can change so much from place to place. Nonetheless, a deeper dive into the numbers in some areas can make it clear. Once again, East Baton Rouge and Jefferson Parish are obvious examples.

*Images included in the following section are by Louisiana Progress College Fellows Mary Smith (EBR) & Ryan Castellon (JP)

All five of the majority-minority Metro Council districts in East Baton Rouge Parish are packed, with Districts 2 (92 percent minority), 5 (96 percent minority), 6 (83 percent minority), and 7 (80 percent minority) being the most egregious examples. On the other hand, it appears that a district needs to be at least 45 percent minority to become competitive, and several Metro Council districts come in below that threshold, a couple of them by just a few percentage points.

WHAT IS THE POPULATION CHANGE IN EBR?		
	2010	2020
White	44%	45.7%
Black/African American	47.2%	47%
American Indian	0.3%	0.2%
Asian	3.4%	3.4%
Hispanic/Latino	4.4%	4.5%
Pacific Islander	0%	0.03%
Two or More Races	1.6%	1.8%

DISTRICT BREAKDOWN				
District	White	Black	Other	Total
1	51.57%	41.99%	6.43%	40,702
2	10.91%	85.29%	3.80%	31,267
3	56.66%	24.11%	19.22%	45,381
4	60.15%	25.38%	14.47%	38,602
5	4.79%	89.65%	5.55%	34,277
6	20.98%	64.97%	14.04%	34,541
7	22.01%	72.51%	5.48%	33,966
8	43.96%	37.54%	18.49%	38,229
9	63.19%	20.96%	15.85%	42,402
10	34.61%	57.82%	7.58%	37,392
11	63.47%	22.98%	13.54%	40,805
12	61.07%	25.78%	13.15%	39,117

According to the 2020 Census, Jefferson Parish is now a majority-minority parish, with 52 percent of its residents identifying as non-white. It is the most racially diverse parish in the state, and it has the largest population of non-Black minorities, with large Hispanic, Southeast Asian, and Arabic communities. However, only one of its council districts, District 3, is majority-minority, with an 82 percent minority population.

WHAT IS THE POPULATION CHANGE IN JP?

	2010	2020
White	52%	47.3%
Black/African American	28.3%	26.3%
American Indian	0.6%	0.3%
Asian	4.3%	4.4%
Hispanic/Latino	14.9%	17.9%
Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.0%
Two or More Races	1.8%	3.2%

DISTRICT BREAKDOWN

	District 1	District 2	District 3**	District 4	District 5
White	39%	60%	18%	53%	63%
Black	36%	22%	64%	14%	13%
Am. Indian	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Asian	7%	5%	4%	6%	5%
Hispanic/ Latino	17%	12%	15%	26%	19%
Pacific Is- lander	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

** denotes a majority-minority district

TAKEAWAYS

Louisiana's current maps have serious problems when it comes to competitiveness, racial proportionality, malapportionment, and packing and cracking. Understanding how all of these problems work is key to solving them during this round of redistricting.

There are numerous tools and resources that citizens, advocates, and elected officials can use to identify and correct these problems, including the mapping tools at Fair Districts Louisiana and applying ideas like our two-thirds/one-third principle to state legislative maps.

For those who want to go beyond that, there are many strategies and tactics you can use to build out a redistricting advocacy campaign in your city or parish, and even for statewide offices. We lay those strategies and tactics out in Part 4 of our Redistricting Guide, which lays out strategies and tactics for redistricting advocacy campaigns.

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