

Partisan Gerrymandering: A Glossary

Partisan gerrymandering: Manipulating electoral boundaries to increase the electoral power of one political party at the expense of another. This is the claim being made in *League of Women Voters of South Carolina v. Alexander*.

Racial gerrymandering: Manipulating electoral boundaries to move a substantial number of voters into or out of a district primarily because of their race, except when done to comply with the Voting Rights Act. This was the claim being discussed in *Alexander v. SC NAACP*.

Redistricting: The process of reorganizing political districts every 10 years following the census. Among other things, redistricting is meant to ensure that districts have equal population sizes. Traditionally redistricting has not broken up counties without a compelling constitutional reason to do so.

***Rucho v. Common Cause*:** The 2019 decision in which the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear cases concerning partisan gerrymandering. Writing for the majority, Chief Justice Roberts held that partisan gerrymandering claims are “beyond the reach of federal courts” but wrote that “[p]rovisions in state statutes and state constitutions *can* provide standard and guidance for state courts to apply.”

By the Numbers

55%: The share of South Carolina voters who vote Republican

86%: The share of South Carolina’s congressional seats held by Republicans in non-competitive Republican districts.

2/3: The portion of Americans who say partisan gerrymandering is “a major problem” ([AP-NORC Poll](#), April 2021)

Other Resources

PlanScore analysis of South Carolina's 2022 House Redistricting Plan:

https://planscore.org/south_carolina/#!2022-plan-ushouse-eg

“This plan is more skewed than 91% of the enacted plans we have analyzed nationwide.”

Princeton Gerrymandering Project analysis of South Carolina's Congressional map:

<https://gerrymander.princeton.edu/redistricting-report-card?planId=rec7S8LKomHYMZcbd>

“Partisan Fairness: F. Significant Republican advantage. Advantages incumbents.”

“Competitiveness: F. Very uncompetitive relative to other maps that could have been drawn.”

“The 2018 Primaries Project: The Ideology of Primary Voters,” Brookings Institution:

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-2018-primaries-project-the-ideology-of-primary-voters/>

“In an era when many congressional seats are safe for one party or another—thanks to demographic sorting and sophisticated gerrymandering—**many members of Congress know that the only place they can be defeated is in a primary.** Thus, members of Congress are finely attuned to that electorate—in some instances, more so than to their general election electorate.”

“Biggest problem with gerrymandering,” *The Harvard Gazette*, July 5, 2023:

<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2023/07/biggest-problem-with-gerrymandering/>

“Elections are a way to hold politicians accountable for what their constituency wants,” said Kosuke Imai, professor of government and of statistics as well as leader of the ALARM Project research team,

which uses big data and computational algorithms to study redistricting. “But if many lawmakers are in safe seats, guaranteed to win by a relatively comfortable margin, there’s less incentive to respond to what voters want.”