

REDISTRICTING 101

Why People-Powered Maps?

FAIR representation of all people

PUBLIC input in the process

TRANSPARENCY in government

What's at stake ?

\$500 billion dollars in
Federal money

Make-up of your
representatives at every
level, from local school
boards to United States
Congress

Sanctity of the principle
of One Person, One
Vote

But ...

the process isn't always fair

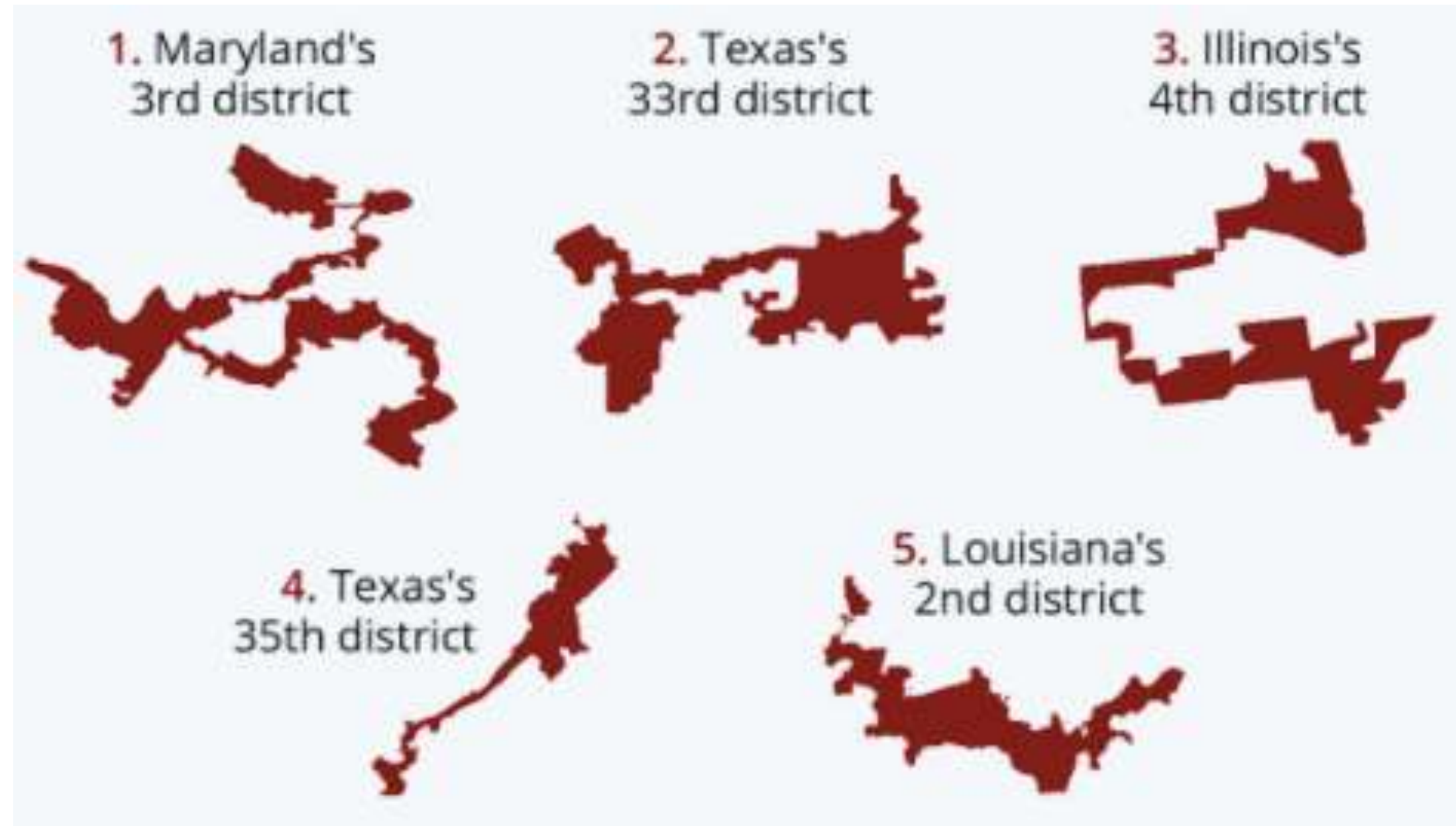
Redistricting's Evil Twin: Gerrymandering

1812 Massachusetts map
of a gerrymandered district

- Favors one political party over another
- Minimizes influence of minority communities
- Provides incumbents with unfair advantage



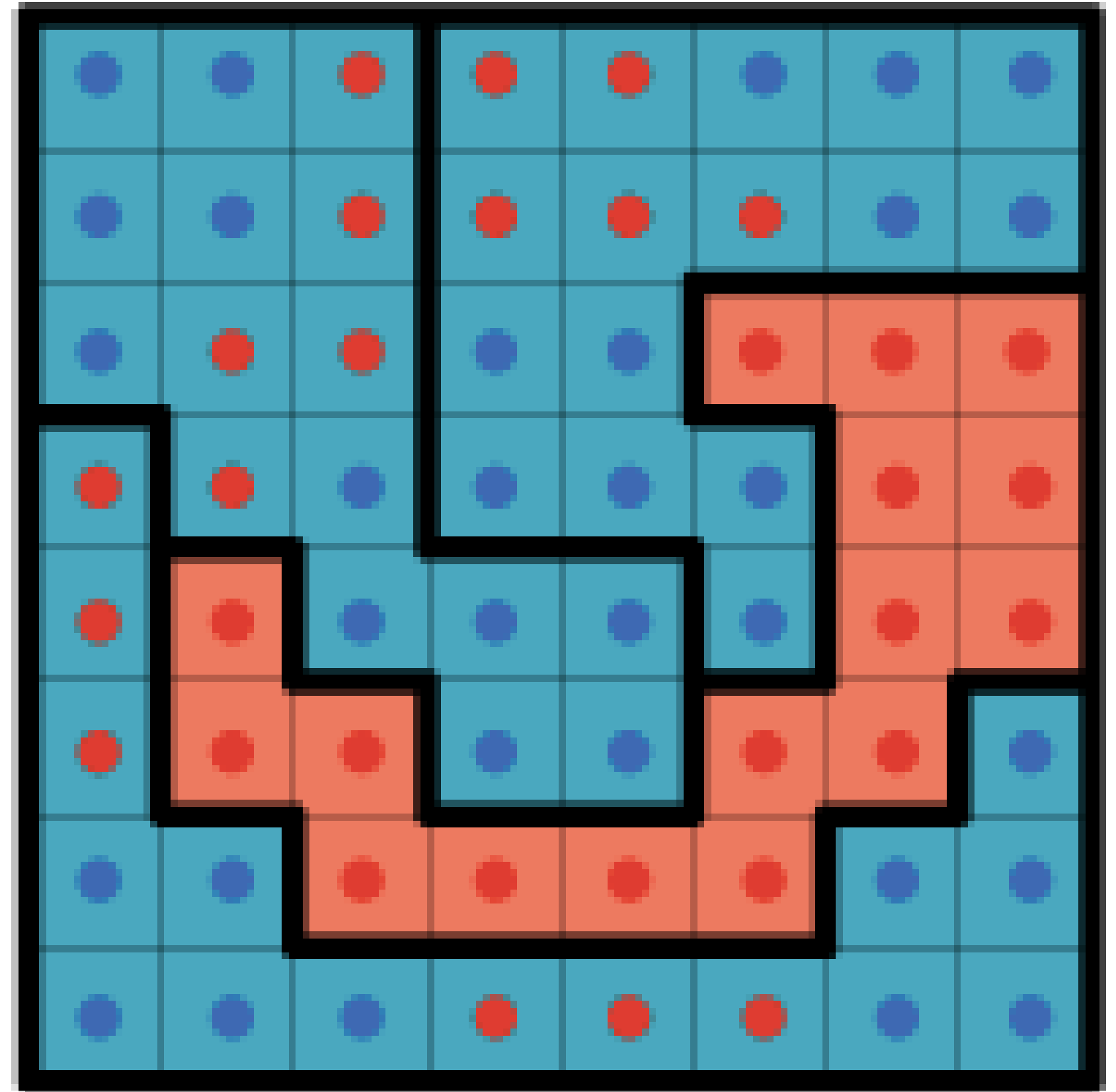
America's most gerrymandered districts



According to 2014 Washington Post piece reported in statista.com

Packing

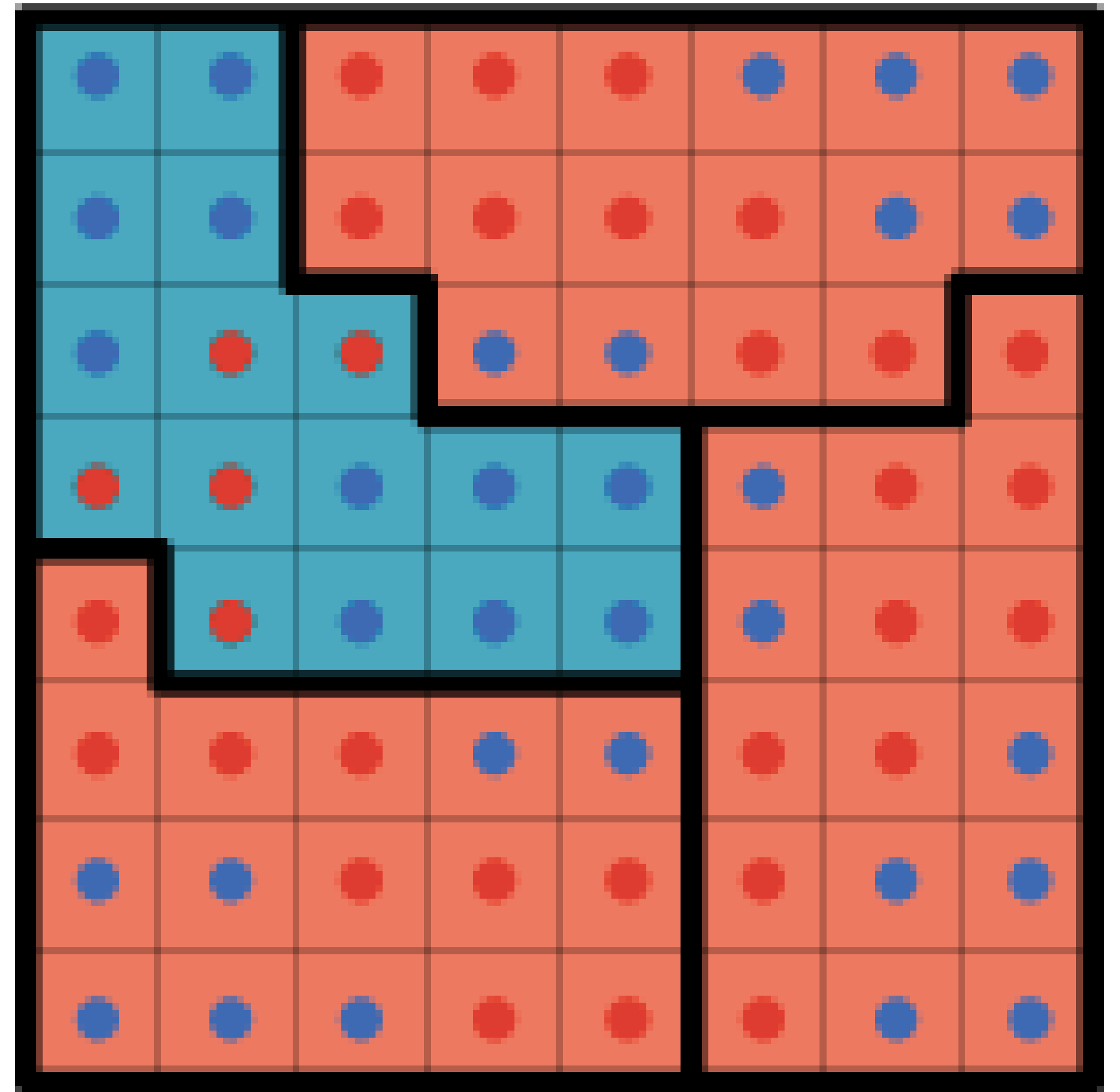
CONCENTRATES LIKE-GROUP
VOTERS TOGETHER TO MINIMIZE
THEIR VOTING POWER IN OTHER
DISTRICTS.



PACKING

CRACKING

DILUTES THE VOTING POWER OF A LIKE-GROUP OF VOTERS BY SPREADING THEM OUT ACROSS MULTIPLE POLITICAL DISTRICTS.



CRACKING

THESE STRATEGIES CREATE GERRYMANDERS
THAT MAXIMIZE THE FUTURE POLITICAL
INFLUENCE OF THE PARTY IN CHARGE OF
DRAWING REDISTRICTING MAPS.



Why Don't Laws Protect Us Against This?

Since 2010 Supreme Court decisions reinforced both discriminatory and political bases for gerrymandering

- In 2013 the Voting Rights Act the formula that required states to get pre-clearance for their election changes was struck down. Thus, freeing states (mostly Southern) to engage in discriminatory practices.
- In 2019 the Supreme Court said it had no authority except in racial gerrymandering.

Protections: Vote Dilution

In 1986 Supreme Court case *Thornberg v. Gingles* established criteria to prove vote dilution

- The minority group must be able to demonstrate that it is sufficiently large and geographically compact to constitute a majority in a single member district.
- The minority group must be able to show that it is politically cohesive.
- The minority must be able to demonstrate that the white majority votes sufficiently as a bloc to enable it usually to defeat the minority's preferred candidate.



Congress can fix this! Urge them to pass:

The For the People Act

-narrower version likely in Senate in September
-filibuster still in discussion

The John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act

-new coverage (practices not geography) pre-clearance formula

Both would help avert implementation of the 30 voting restrictive laws passed in 18 states.



REDISTRICTING IN
TENNESSEE

@LWVTN

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What will redistricting look like in Tennessee?

Redistricting boundary lines change to reflect population changes

“One person-one vote”

TN Congressional districts will each need to cover 767,871 people – an increased of 62,750

Tennessee's Legislature Determines Districts

- They draw the district maps for
 - 9 US House seats
 - 99 State House seats
 - 33 State Senate seats
- The Governor can veto the maps

Fewer than 20% of states have some form of independent commission involved in redistricting

Current TN Congressional Districts

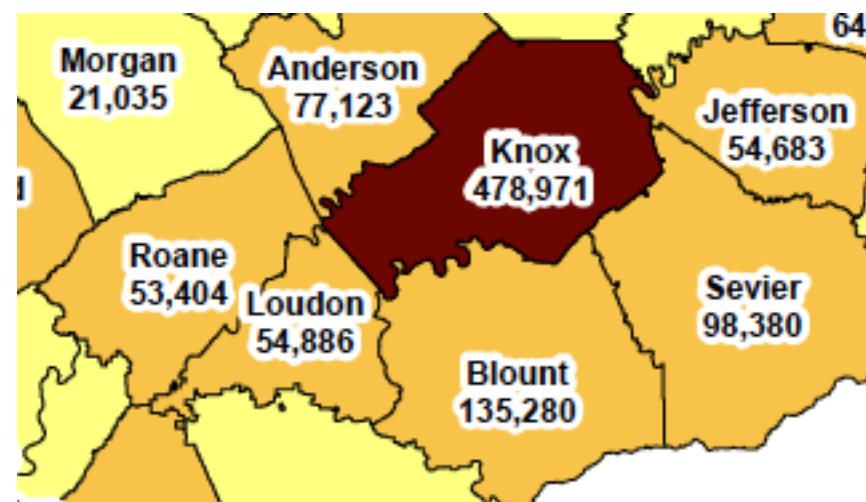
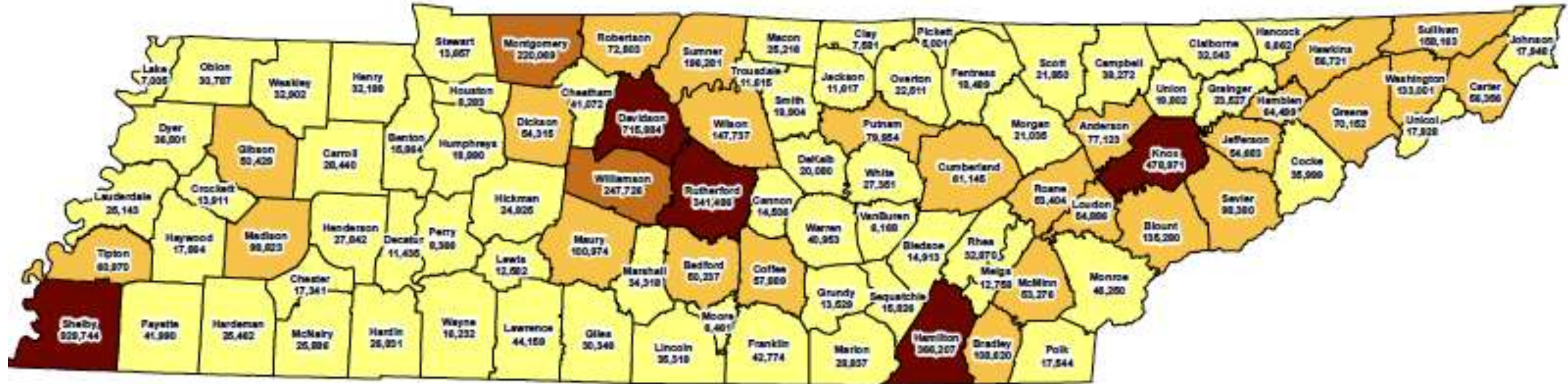


Current TN State Senate & House Districts



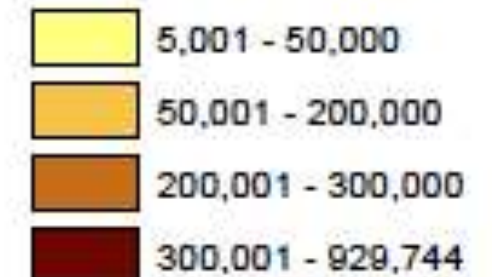
Population, 2020 Census

2020 COUNTY POPULATION



Legend

2020 Total Pop

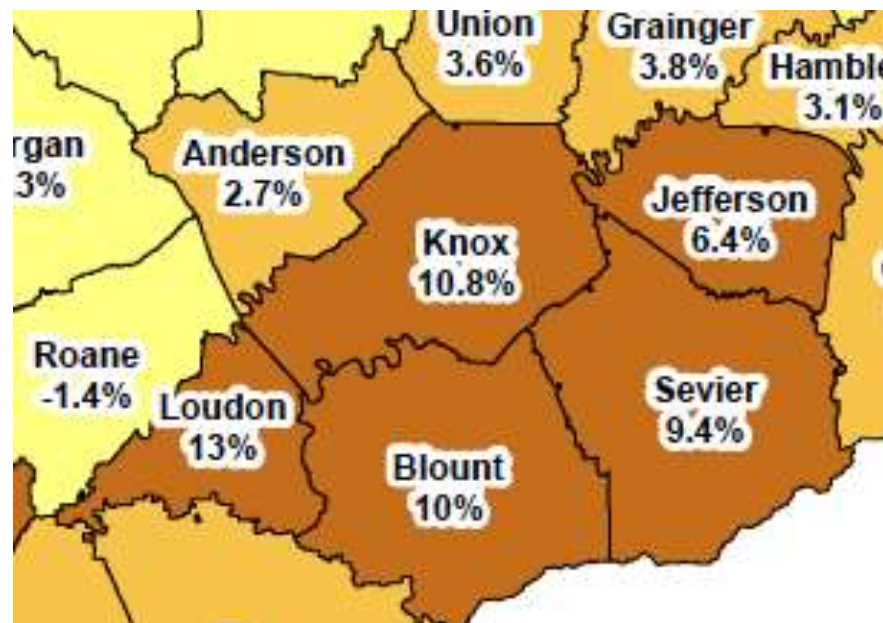
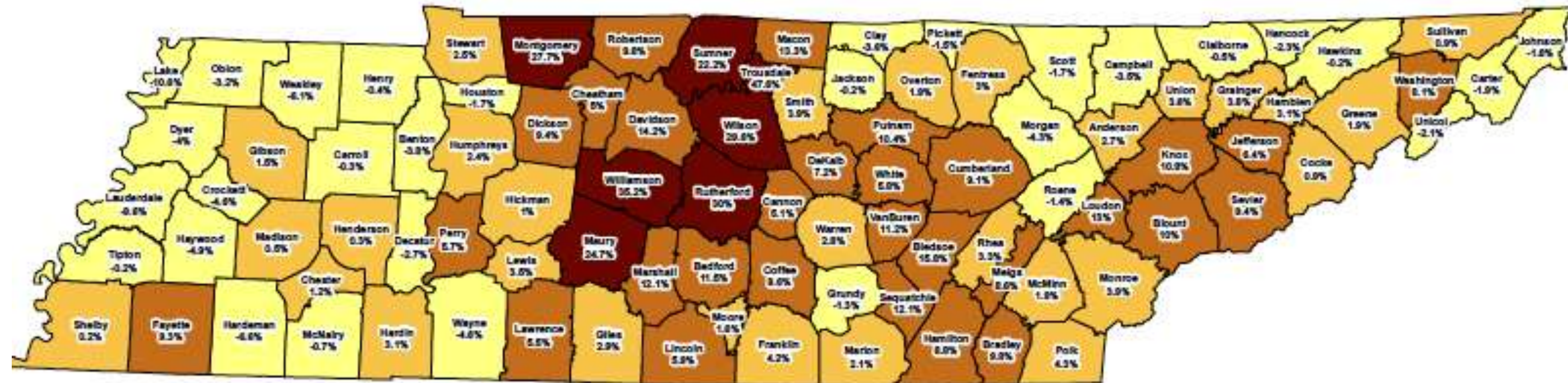


Cardell Hull Building
425 Rep. John Lewis Way N | Nashville, Tennessee 37243-1402
P: 615-401-7773 | F: 615-532-5279

SOURCE: CENSUS 2020

Population Changes, 2020 Census

COUNTY POPULATION PERCENT CHANGE 2010-2020

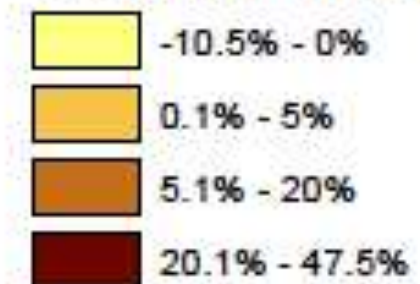


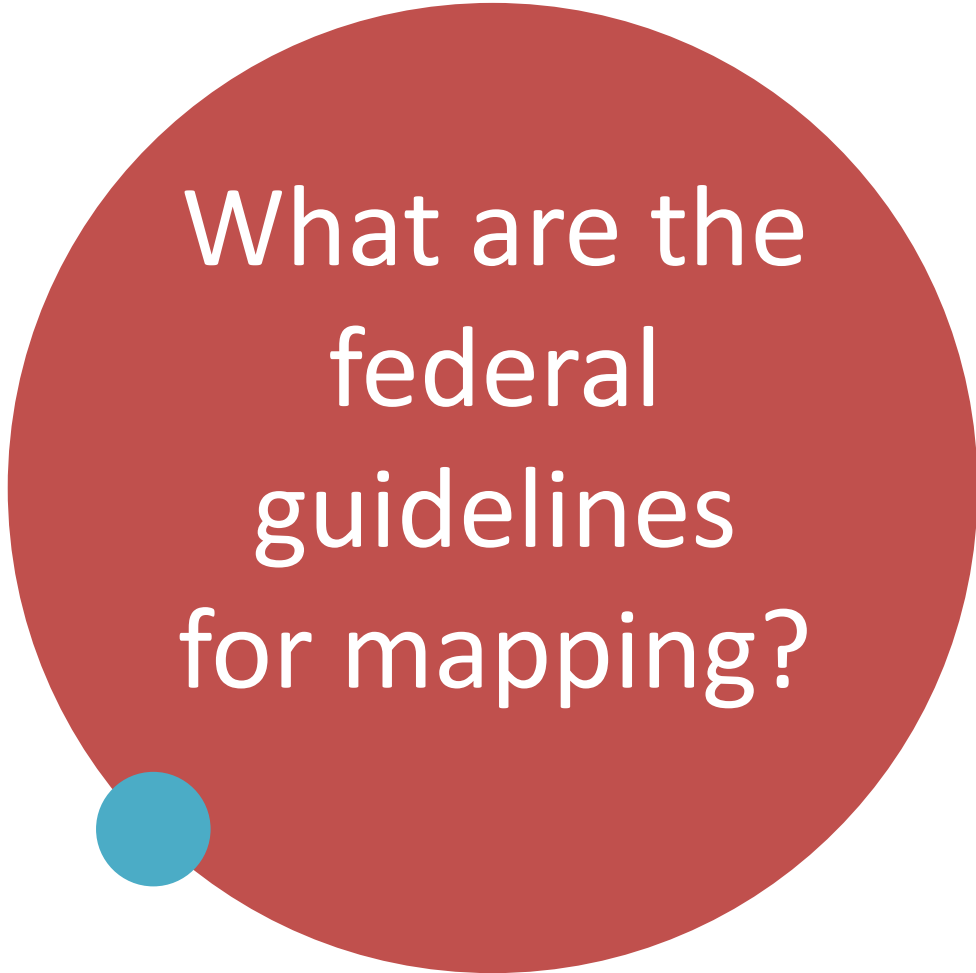
Gordell Hull Building

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Legend

% CHANGE SINCE 2010





What are the
federal
guidelines
for mapping?

- 
- Districts must be compact and contiguous
 - Close to equal population among districts
 - The Voting Rights Acts of 1965 requires that minority community cannot be *intentionally* diluted by dividing minority populations in different districts

What are the state guidelines for mapping?

Counties should be kept together as much as possible. No more than 30 of the 95 counties can be split.

Nest house districts inside senate districts as often as possible

Keep cities and counties together if possible

Pass the “eyeball test” if possible

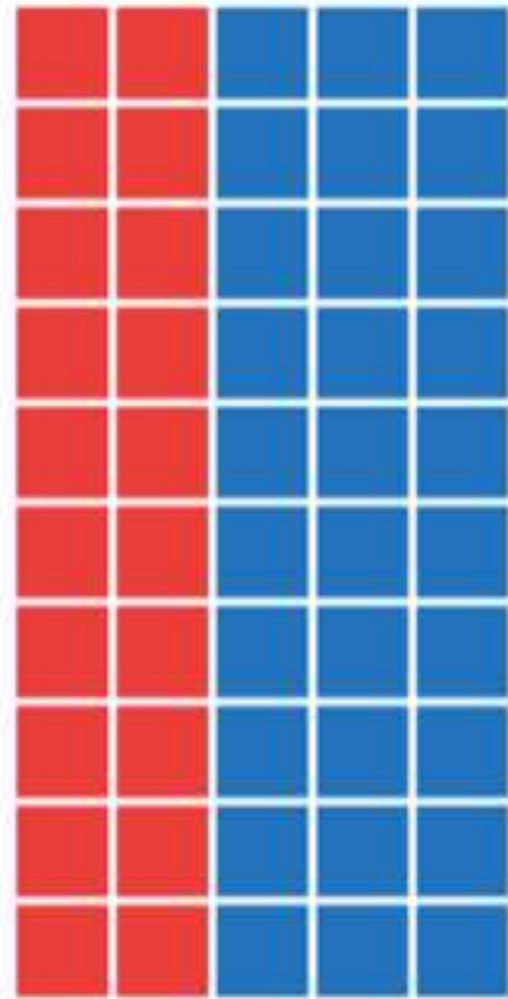
Preserve Minorities' Strength

- Minority communities mandated by Federal law to have fair representation (Voting Rights Act of 1965)
- As the United States has grown more diverse, the importance of this has increased
- As communities become more diverse, this is also harder to achieve, i.e., not as obvious geographically how minorities are clustered

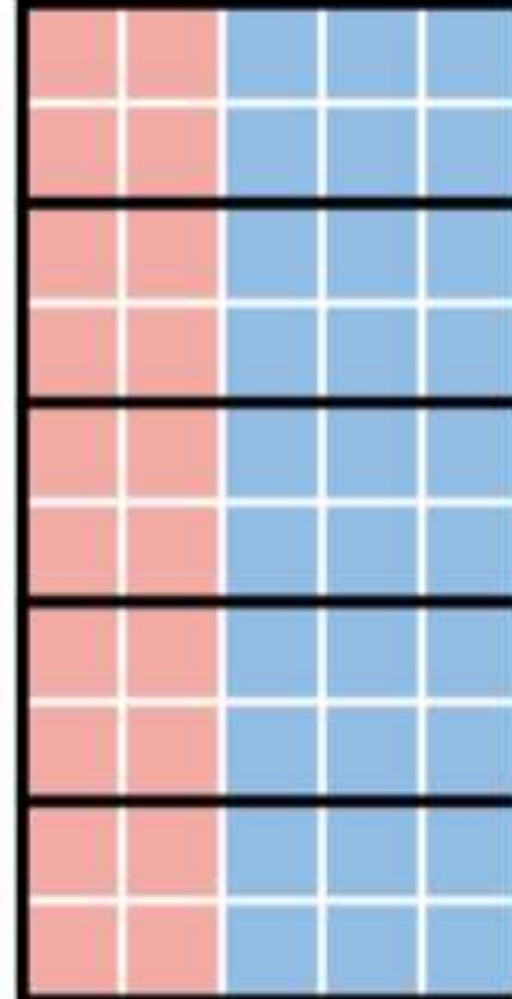
Create Competitive Districts

Avoid partisanship and protection of incumbents

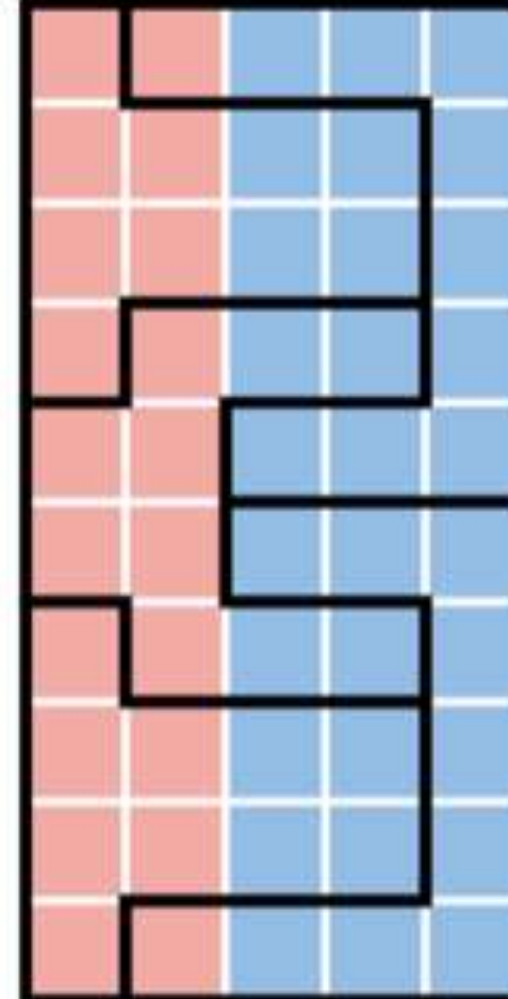
HOW TO STEAL AN ELECTION



50 PRECINCTS
60% BLUE
40% RED



5 DISTRICTS
5 BLUE
0 RED
BLUE WINS



5 DISTRICTS
3 RED
2 BLUE
RED WINS

Communities of Interest

- People who share economic, ethnic, geographic or cultural interests
- Where they live, work, pray, play
- Systems they share: schools, resources/utilities
- Benefits and hazards: environment, jobs





The Knoxville-Oak Ridge Economic Corridor —

A perfect example of a
community of interest

How does Tennessee do?

Public Involvement

40th among all states in openness



One of 26 states where transparency is not legally or constitutionally required



Zero announcements to hold public information sessions or receive public comments

Lessons from 2012

- No published criteria
- Rushed process in TN Legislature
 - Bills without census data
 - First plans put up for vote within days
 - Requests for delays denied
- Alternate plans and most amendments denied
- No meaningful public comments opportunity

LWVTN Recommendations:

01

Share info about the timeline and opportunities for public participation

02

Open meetings for the Select Committee on Redistricting

03

Host public meetings before the maps are drawn

04

Opportunities for public input after the draft maps created

What is the process for local commissions?

“One person, one vote” but a greater—10%—variance.

Compact & Contiguous. Try to keep cities together—annexation can change things.

If # districts/commissioners remain the same, start with current districts. If not, start with census blocks or voting precincts.

County districts due January 1, 2022 and can be reapportioned anytime (not just at ten years) if there's a population change

What you can do!

Define & Protect Your Community of Interest

1

Demand that census data and proposed maps are accessible.

2

Determine what matters to you and your “community”. What are the issues that need to be represented?

3

Make sure your common interests are reflected in new district boundaries so that you get adequate political representation.

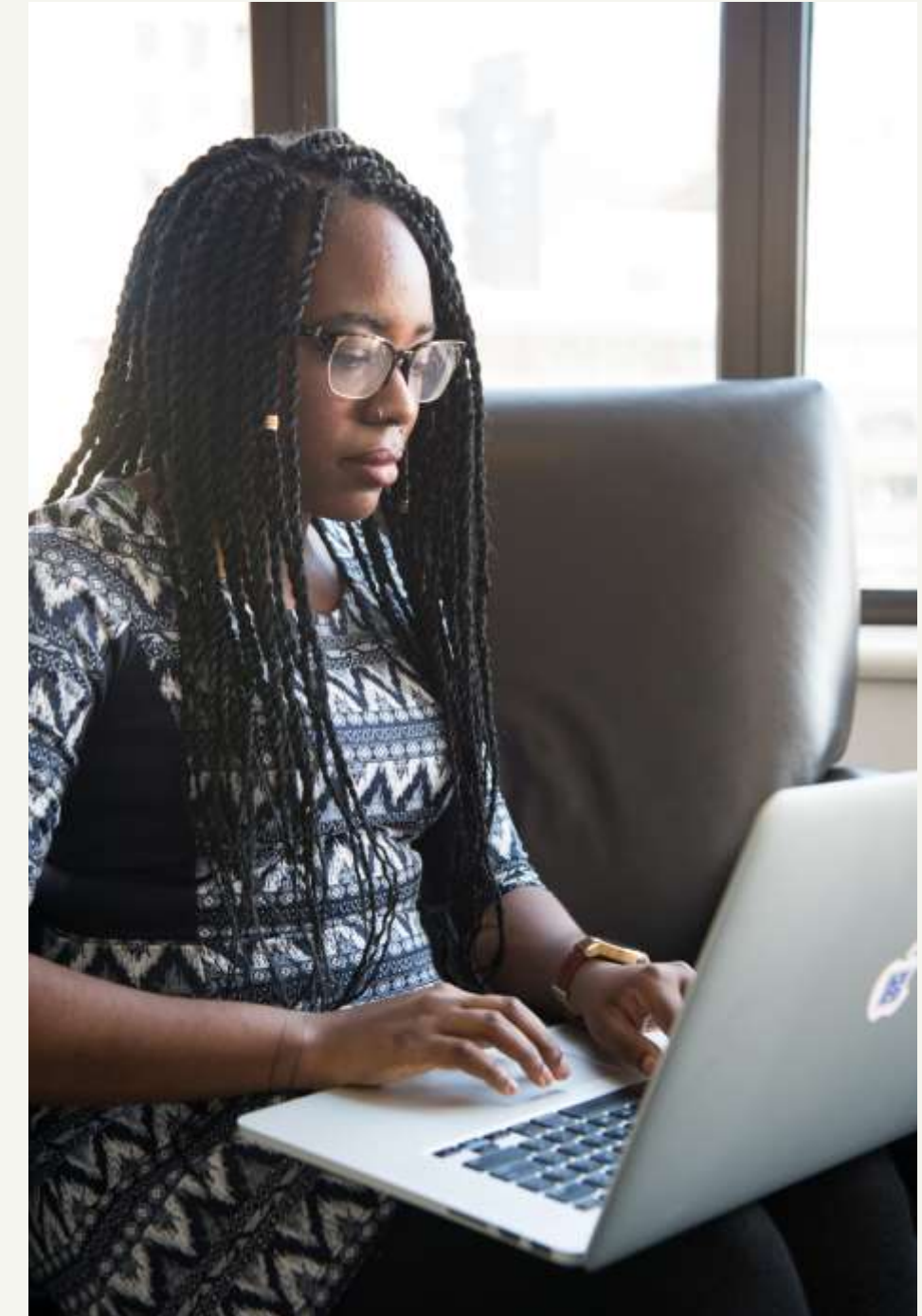
Public Involvement Matters

- Call for open meetings and then attend virtual TN General Assembly meetings on redistricting.
- Demand public hearings in the three parts of the state.
- Participate in BOTH statewide and local redistricting processes.
- Hearings are not usually mandated, unless by local regulations. However, meeting notes are required.



Speak Out!

- Write or call your legislators
- Send Letters to the Editor
- Pen an Op-ed piece
- Post on Social Media



Join Us!

We need your help to have fair people-powered district maps

