

High Frequency Ratio Redistricting

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Concept Description: High Frequency Ratio Redistricting employs concepts of transparency and more rule-driven method for the establishment of Legislative Districts. Broadly speaking, it is a system where voters decide the broad parameters (or rules) by which district maps are drawn; then, a bipartisan panel of experts periodically executes several options based on those criteria, whereby voters cast the final decision for a new map.

More specifically, every six years a transparent and publicly available set of population and geography-based ratio rules will be applied by a bipartisan panel tasked to draft state district maps based on Population: Area: Perimeter ratios appropriate for the state. At the initial stage, these perimeter ratios will produce a predefined number of potential maps of legislative districts for a given state based on population and area-based objective criteria tasked to the bipartisan panel by the voters. At the second stage, the maps will be announced to the public for review before the general election of the following year to allow for comment and debate. During the primary process of the respective increment year, voters will select their top three choices of which the votes will be tallied to select the top two maps to be voted on during the general election. The selection by the public would be in effect the following election cycle for the following six years (e.g., the inaugural panel could convene in December 2020 to produce the potential maps for the 2021 primary/general voting cycle to then be implemented as part of the 2022 elected candidate cadre through 2028). A unique copy would be delivered to each voter as a simple mailer detailing his or her new district in the coming year.

Objective & Payoff: The objective of the process is to produce a transparent and bipartisan redistricting system that complies with state laws and increases voter confidence that no single person's vote is deliberately being marginalized for political ends. The payoff to our society will be political dialogue concerned about constituent wellbeing in the representative's district as well as in neighboring districts while mitigating exaggerated incumbency rates that, in effect, will reduce lobbying impact on entrenched representatives. When districts change in a manner outside the direct control of the representatives themselves, they have greater accountability to more potential voters, providing greater incentive to favor policies that benefit more people.

What current problems does this project address?

1. **Perpetuating polarization.** Established or set districts drawn (intentionally or otherwise) with highly partisan populations create the environment where primary elections routinely decide a district's representative. This undermines the intent of a general election while it drags general debate to the fringes of the political spectrum as each candidate seeks not to vie for the support of the entire community, but for the support of the community aligned with the dominant political party's base voter. The effect is marginalized minority party views and further entrenched policy debate in topics relevant to only the dominant party's base.
2. **Corrupt redistricting process.** Redistricting currently is non-scientific and ad hoc. There is no transparency or predictability in its outcome beyond it being designed to benefit the legislature in power at the time of redistricting, leaving the entire process vulnerable to corruption, manipulation, and unintentional error.

3. **Entrenched political class.** Incumbents often remain in office for decades, creating stale policy vision and low incentive for compromise where it does not benefit their current base voters and financial backers (politically or economically).
4. **Marginalized political minorities.** Established districts with predictable outcomes of the general election provide little incentive to the elected official to seek approval from the minority party constituents and enables incumbents to develop strong relationships with a limited number of political and financial supporters to remain in control of the seat with extremely high rates of reelection observed across the country.

How will this concept solve the above problems?

1. **Incentivizing bipartisanship.** This method for redistricting emanates from the fundamental concept that political representatives generally wish to remain in power via re-election the following cycle. Regularly changing district boundaries will force partisan representatives to consider the potential for being redistricted into an opposing partisan district or more split district. This insecurity will create a general trend towards moderation of public discussions and policy decisions as candidates vie to address a broader public opinion rather than simply motivating their base. The resulting legislation and spending approved by elected officials will be more likely to broadly benefit sections of both the representative's home district as well as the neighboring districts' constituents to which the representative could be beholden to in future redistricting cycles. Without confidence that catering only to the base of their respective party, elected officials will be forced to consider both the primary and the general election in their policy decisions and voting record, or else find themselves too far from their party and from the potential general constituency when districts change. This would make it more likely for narrowly focused incumbents vulnerable to defeat, incentivizing legislators who wish to be re-elected after redistricting to consider more bipartisan legislation.
2. **Guardrails for democracy, scientifically executed.** The strict population: area: perimeter ratios applied by bipartisan panels undermine partisan influences on the redistricting process and enables the community to engage with and shape the results rather than relying on a system that is only as honest as the individuals appointed to the panel. This will take away the power of elected officials to "stack the deck" and create districts that maximize their personal and party's potential for reelection.
3. **Curtailling political entrenchment.** Without predictable outcomes of district composition, the representative is left with a lack of confidence in reelection. Without stability, this new system will address incumbent tenure concerns without denying individuals the ability to vote for the person they desire most in their community to represent them while maintaining some degree of stability for familiarity with elected officials.
4. **Reduce lobbying influence from the fringes.** It will mitigate long standing financial ties with businesses and lobbying efforts as different candidates become viable in different districts forcing political lobbying of local businesses and interest groups to support more centrist policies that enable their preferred candidate to be elected and re-elected.

Benefit to the Individual: When redistricting is done along the lines of this proposal, fewer individuals can be ignored, as anyone could be part of the majority voice in any respective representatives' *future* district, as redistricting is done more often and in a way outside the direct control of representatives themselves. This creates greater accountability of our legislatures in the

spirit of the hypothetical society of Socrates and the root of ancient democratic ideals, where every child could be anyone's offspring, any person could be a representative's constituent. Each person will be able to select the individual within their district running for election that best suits their ideal for representation, rather than the unopposed or secure incumbent who is beholden to the voter's individual voice.

Funding / Cost: District design can be completed by a small team of individuals dedicated to creating the rules would only need to assemble every six years to update the rules and redraw the districts. Cost of the process would dramatically reduce current expenditures outside of the ratio and process development. Votes by the public can coincide with regular elections. The above amount is a minimal cost compared to the huge potential gains to our democracy.

Metrics/Measures of Success:

1. 10% Lower delta in general election races between top two candidates across the state.
2. 30% Lower incumbent rate year over year.
3. 10% Increase in voter confidence of both the state and federal bodies.
4. 40% Reduction in district Area: Perimeter ratios.
5. 5% Increase in voter confidence and voter participation.
6. 10% Reduction in legislation that impacts projects affecting a single district.

Potential Transition Plans to Action: This must be rolled out on a state by state basis and its non-partisan value to every voter regardless of party to improve the strength of their vote. Washington, Texas, Florida, California, Maryland, Virginia, Wisconsin, etc are all examples of states that have different but relevant incentives to either continue with political reform or have shown a history of gerrymandering that demands improvement.

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