

November 13, 2025

Politics

Redistricting Round 1 Concludes



Issue

Like with the recent Federal government shutdown, Republicans and Democrats have spent millions of dollars, countless hours of recrimination, and ginned up partisanship to their own supposed advantage, but in the end, the fight over redistricting will leave neither party with a clear advantage. The status quo will more or less remain in place.



Impact

While neither side has garnered a large advantage so far through mid-cycle redistricting efforts, state redistricting efforts are not over.

7 states have completed redistricting, with the 7th, Utah, being decided by a state judge only on Tuesday and costing Republicans a current seat. Those 7 seats and the relative party gains are shown below in Table 1.

Table 1: Redistricting Complete		
	Democrats	Republicans
California	+4-5	
Missouri*		+1
North Carolina		+1
Ohio		+1-2
Texas		+4-5
Utah	+1	
TOTAL	+5-6	+7-9

**May be overturned by ballot*

In essence, current redistricting efforts are essentially a draw.

There are another 6 states contemplating redistricting, but those efforts face an uncertain future ranging from opposition by the courts in New York and Maryland to opposition by the legislature in Indiana and Kansas, and requiring a state Constitutional amendment in Virginia.

Table 2: Redistricting Contemplated		
	Democrats	Republicans
Florida		+2-3
Indiana		+1-2
Kansas		+1
Maryland	+1	
New York	+1	
Virginia	+2-3	
TOTAL	+4-5	+4-6



Next Steps

The charts above do not take into account another round of potential redistricting which could follow from a decision in [Louisiana v. Callais](#), argued before the Supreme Court October 15th. That case concerns whether racially gerrymandered districts are permissible to preserve minority representation under *The Voting Rights Act* (VRA). Some Progressive grounds argue that as many as 19 districts, predominantly in the South, could be at stake, although this number may overstate the case.

If the Supreme Court does rule against racial gerrymandering on Equal Protection grounds, the question is whether the decision will come in time for next year's midterm elections. The answer in most states is probably no.

More Information Below

Faulty Reapportionment Costs Republicans House Seats

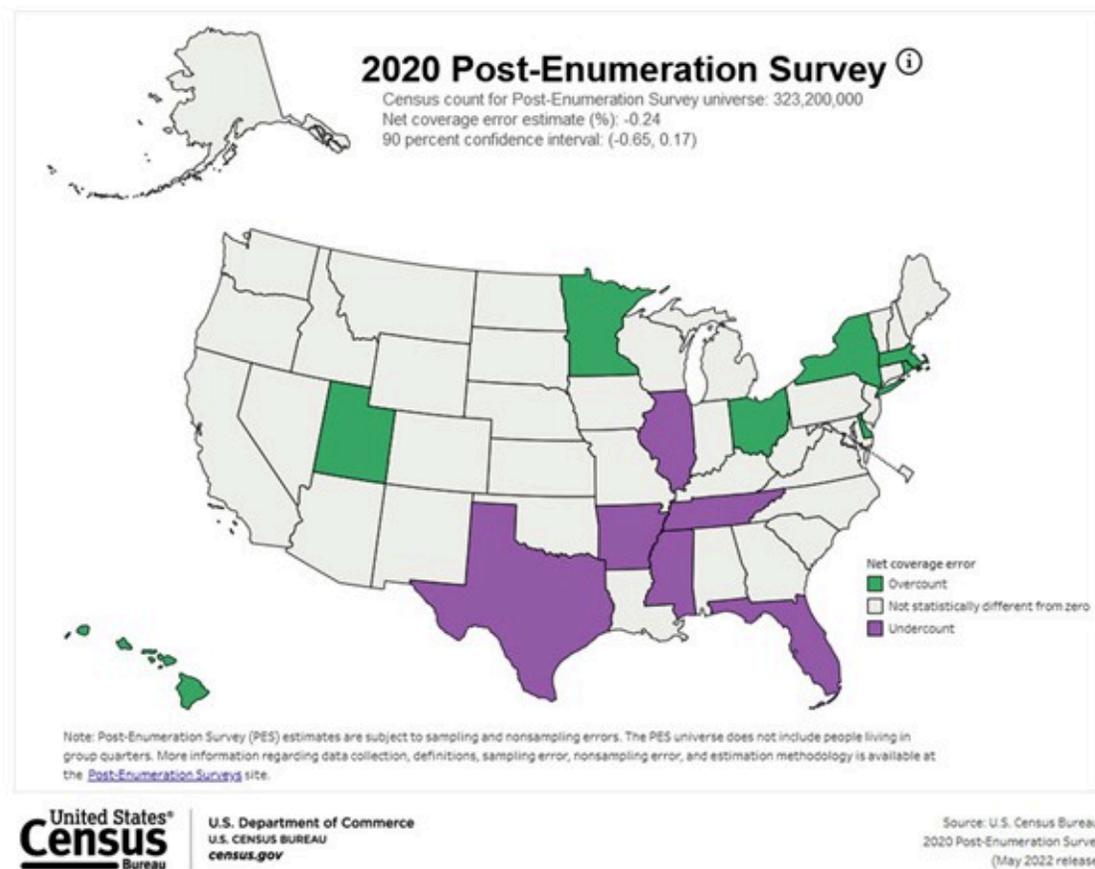
With recriminations of partisanship and “*the end of Democracy*” being cast liberally by both parties, the question might be asked about our unusual mid-Census redistricting: *How did we get here?*

The answer is the failed 2020 Census and the consequential reapportionment of House seats which took place against the backdrop of the pandemic.

In 2022, the Census Bureau, under President Biden, admitted to overcounting and undercounting states, “[Census Bureau Today Releases 2020 Census Undercount, Overcount Rates by State](#),” but by then the damage was done. Of the 6 states the Census Bureau undercounted, 5 were Republican. Of the 8 states the Census Bureau overcounted, 6 were Democratic states.

Although the faulty Census survey does not directly translate into House seat district lines, it could have cost President Trump the 2024 election because its effects are first felt in the Electoral College where Democratic states received 7 more votes than that to which they were otherwise entitled.

7 electoral votes is more than the electoral votes of 21 other states (22 counting DC) and is the equivalent of eliminating Connecticut or Oklahoma from the map.



By comparison, there are swing states like Nevada and New Hampshire which have been critical in recent past Presidential contests which have a smaller number of seats—6 in the case of Nevada, 4 in the case of New Hampshire.

While it is impossible to translate an apportionment error directly into House seats in all cases, Republicans were almost certainly cheated out of at least 4 House seats.

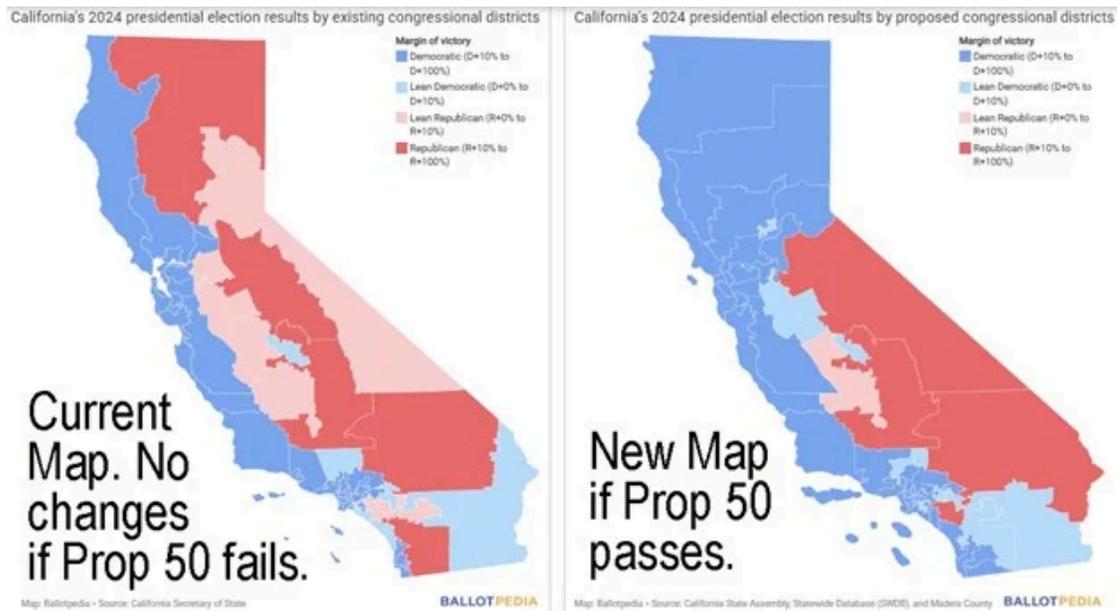
Florida was denied out of 2 additional seats it should have gotten, Texas out of 1. Instead, Minnesota and Rhode Island together kept 2 Representatives they should not have; and Colorado was awarded 1 new seat.

In a House divided by only 4 votes, those 4 lost seats have major ramifications for party control.

Mid-Census Redistricting Aftermath

In order to rectify what they perceived as the injustice of not having Republican seats to which they might otherwise be entitled, so to speak, Republicans fired the initial salvo in pursuing mid-Census redistricting.

Democrats fired back, last week even overturning a widely popular state Constitutional ballot amendment in California to neutralize Texas' gains.



The new California map, assuming it survives court challenge, shows how radically California's partisan composition will shift geographically and how few competitive seats will remain in California's 52-member delegation.

The problem for Democrats fighting back against Republicans is that they have been redistricting more aggressively and have fewer states to redistrict.

Many Texas Republicans cracked a wry smile when Democratic Texas state legislators fled to Chicago, IL and Boston, MA to nationalize their case before sympathetic Democratic officials.

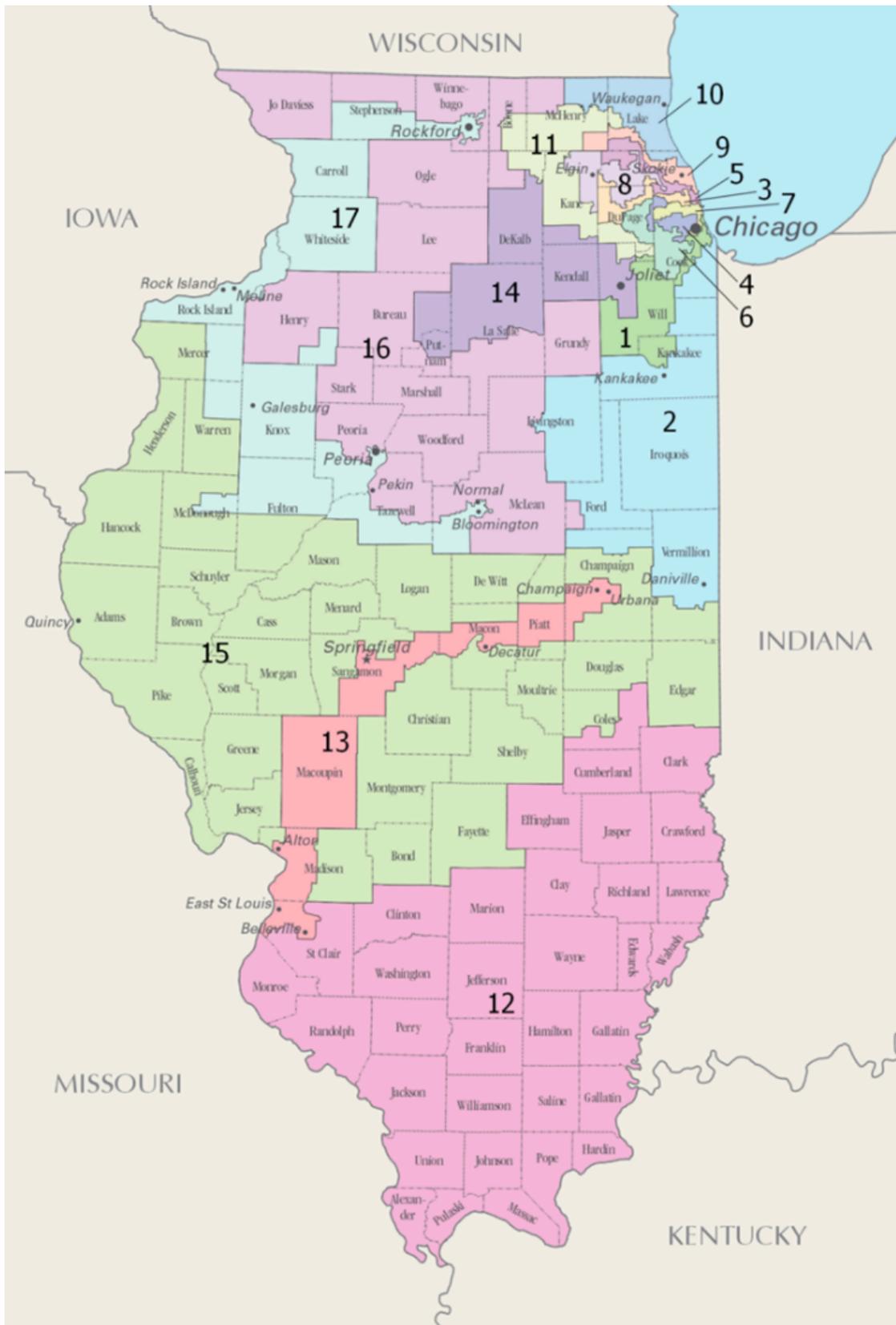
Because of aggressive gerrymandering, Massachusetts has no Republican House Members in their 9-member delegation and has not since the 2000 Census even though Western Massachusetts has more than enough Republicans to field at least 1 Republican to Congress. Indeed, there are no Republicans in the 6 states which comprise New England.

Illinois, where most of the Democratic Texas lawmakers fled, is another case in point: Illinois is as Republican as Texas is Democratic.

In 2024, Illinois Republicans won 47% of the votes cast to 53% for Democrats, while in Texas Democrats won 46% of the votes cast to 53% for Republicans. Yet

Republicans won only 17% of Illinois' House seats (3), while Democrats won 83% (14). That makes Illinois—before the contemplated redistricting—twice as partisan as Texas where Democrats won 34% of the seats (13) whereas Republicans won 25 in the 38-member delegation.

Illinois gets to gerrymander in such a partisan way largely by having districts reach into Chicago. Whereas Chicago would get 5 seats in its own right, another 6 of Illinois' 17 seats representing either moderate Chicago exurbs or otherwise rural districts reach into Chicago. In other words, 11 of the 17 seats in Illinois are functionally based in Chicago.

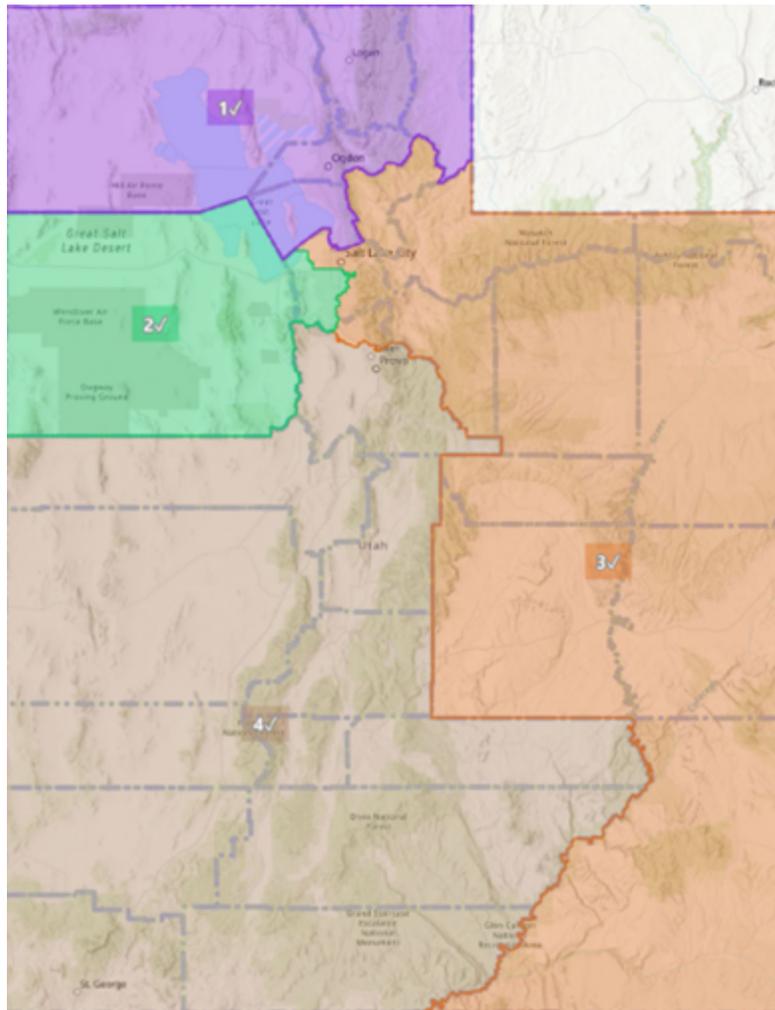


As the then-Minority Leader in the Illinois Senate [wrote](#) after the current Illinois lines were drawn:

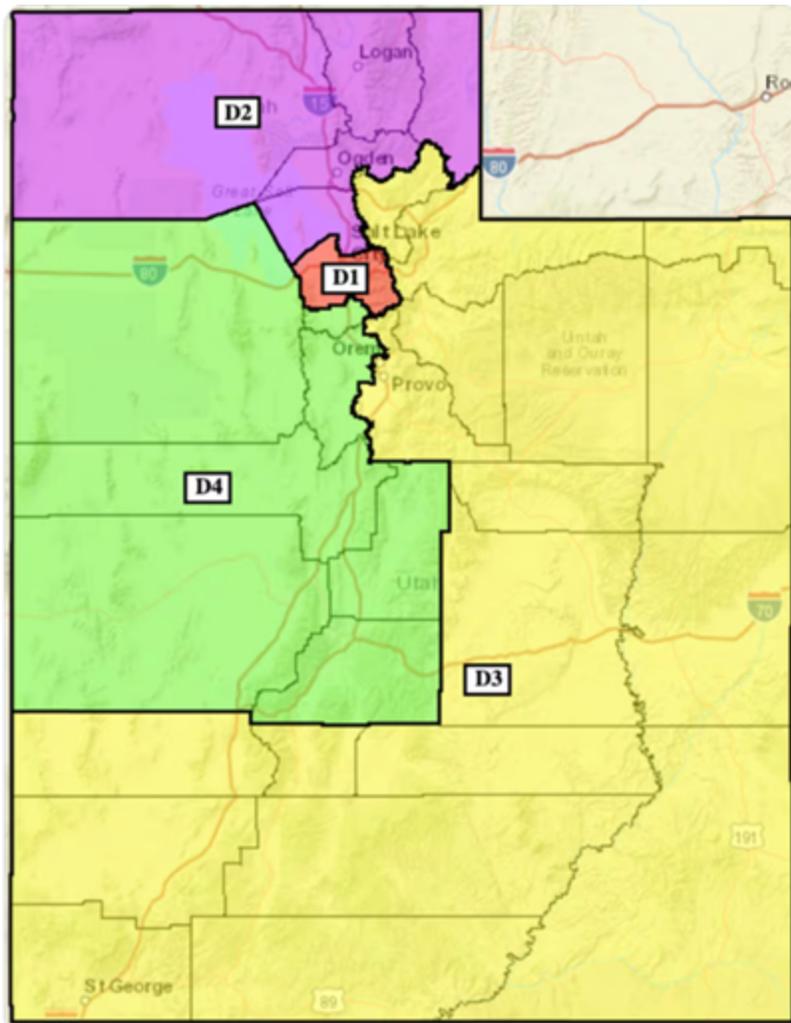
“In his last year in office, President Obama made a trip to the Illinois State Capitol, where he had served as a state senator from 1997 to 2004. In an address to his former legislative colleagues, he advocated for independently drawn legislative maps. ‘Once the next census rolls around and we have the most up-to-date picture of America’s population, we should change the way our districts are drawn,’ he said, before delivering his applause line: ‘In America, politicians should not pick their voters; voters should pick their politicians.’”

Despite President Obama’s former position on the matter, in essence, Illinois does on a much grander scale what a court in Utah said Tuesday Utah cannot do: apportion Salt Lake City and its environs to other districts.

Map selected by the Utah Legislature:



Map selected by a Utah Court:

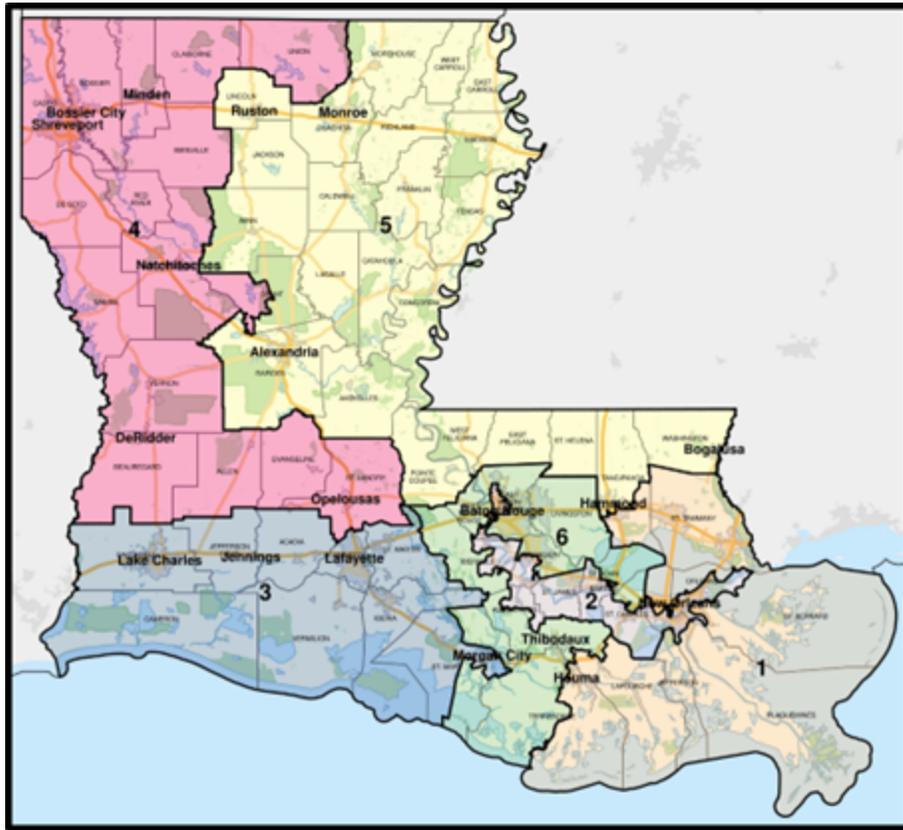


Racial Gerrymandering In Play

As in many states across the South (and elsewhere), courts have required more Democratic districts based on an interpretation of *The Voting Rights Act*, the Constitutionality of which is now before the Supreme Court.

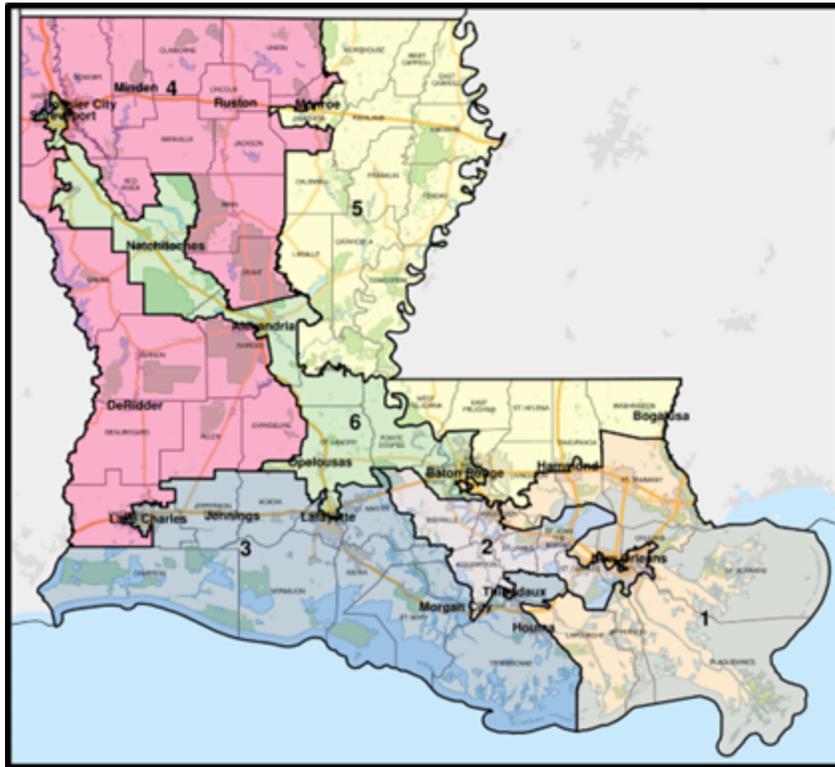
Louisiana's 6th district—the legality of which is now specifically before the Court—is a good example of an explicit racial gerrymander enacted by the largely Republican Louisiana Legislature in *response* to lower court rulings.

Here is Louisiana's 6th District *before* the racial gerrymander:



Essentially, the district carves around New Orleans (2nd District) and its suburbs to encompass the more rural environs outside of the New Orleans metro area.

Here is the 6th District now, after the explicitly racial gerrymander required by the courts:



As one can see, the new (and current) 6th District stretches across the state almost to the border with Texas, bifurcates the 5th District, and ends up just outside the New Orleans metro area.

In Conclusion

Aside from court challenges, mid-Census “*Redistricting Round 1*” has concluded, but there is a potential Round 2 under way. Round 3 may come—perhaps not in time for next year’s midterms—after the Supreme Court renders a decision on racial gerrymandering. After that will be Round 4 after the next Census in 2030 when as in the 2020 Census, Democratic states lost seats to Republican ones—although not as many as even the Census Bureau itself admits should have been transferred from Democratic to Republican states. Reapportionment will also have implications in the Electoral College which governs Presidential Elections, the next one after the 2030 Census being in 2032.

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