

5 THINGS COMMUNITIES OF COLOR SHOULD KNOW ABOUT REDISTRICTING



1.

In the US, the redistricting process happens every ten years and is closely tied to an electoral system called “winner-take-all.”

The Founding Framers intentionally used this system to exclude women, racial and ethnic minorities, illiterate, and non-land-owning individuals from participating in democratic elections.

This system relies on creating single-member districts. District lines must be re-drawn every ten years. This process is known as redistricting.

Most of the redistricting efforts are led by politically motivated individuals who do not prioritize racial or ethnic minority representation.

2.

With only one winner per district, the process of drawing lines artificially pre-determines the outcomes of elections for the vast majority of seats for the entire decade.

Communities of color must advocate for fair district lines every ten years.

If we cannot secure fair representation, then we run the risk of diluted political influence in their government ranging from city council, school board, State House, or the US House of Representatives.

Without fair district lines, there will be no fair representation. No fair representation allows governing bodies to more easily pass bad public policy that put communities of color in harm's way.

3.

Historically, redistricting has been used to undermine governmental representation for communities of color – specifically by “packing” and “cracking” to dilute their voting strength.

Packing means drawing district lines around communities of color. This forces communities to embrace segregation for representation.

Cracking is the process of drawing district lines through communities of color.

Both of these tactics dilute the voting strength for racial or ethnic minorities.

4.

Communities of color must get involved in the redistricting process to advocate for the best lines possible.

Community groups can actively advocate for district lines that create fair representation.

Getting involved is relatively easy. Understanding some of the technology elements is the most difficult part, but this can be easily overcome with some help.

Without explicit advocacy, communities of color leave the redistricting process to chance and politicians. Left to their own devices, politicians will draw lines that best benefit their careers.

5.

At the same time, it is critical to set the stage for a radical transformation of our electoral system that centers the people of color – away from winner-take-all elections toward a more equitable system.

A more equitable system would result in more equitable representation.

Proportional representation electoral systems, such as Single-Transferable Vote, would eliminate political gerrymandering and racially segregated districts. It would also increase community representation in government.

Electoral systems change is possible and necessary for communities of color to have fair representation.

Understanding the redistricting process can help communities understand fundamentally flawed it is.



WHAT NEXT?

REDISTRICTING FOR RACIAL JUSTICE



Join More Equitable Democracy's Redistricting for Racial Justice online course.

At More Equitable Democracy, we know that racial justice advocates want to be experts in the redistricting process. And they want to turn their knowledge into an action plan.

The problem is that technical knowledge in this process isn't easily accessible and can appear complicated.

More Equitable Democracy believes advocates deserve access to the technical skills and abilities needed to influence redistricting outcomes.

We understand that the system makes it hard to advocate for our communities and that the process of drawing fair maps sometimes feels complicated. **That's why we created Redistricting for Racial Justice.**

You'll learn the following:

- Why the redistricting process is so consequential
- Technical knowledge needed to advocate for equitable outcomes
- How to turn your insights into action.

Register today to stop feeling stuck with the status quo and instead have the confidence to change the world.

Learn more at www.equitabledemocracy.org/redistricting