



# Redistricting in Minnesota and Duluth: How It Affects Your Voting Power

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# LWV Minnesota Non-Partisan Policy



The League of Women Voters is nonpartisan, neither supporting nor opposing candidates or political parties at any level of government, but always working on vital issues of concern to members and the public.

# 2021 – 2022 Est. Redistricting Timeline



- NLT 4/30/21: Apportionment data to President
- **January – May 2021: Legislative session**  
**(re: Legislation/ Process for map development)**
- NET 7/31/21: Census Block data to states
- **August 2021: MN Legislative hearings on Maps**
- 8/31/21: Special Redistricting panel convened by MN Supreme Court
- **September – November 2021: State Redistricting Panel meetings (input for court maps)**
- 2/15/22: Court Issues Final Redistricting Order
- **February – April 2022: Local Redistricting Hearings**
- 4/16/22: City redistricting complete
- 5/6/22: Other local redistricting complete

# What is Redistricting?



- Following every census, the distribution of Congressional seats across the nation is subject to change – based on population movement. ***This is apportionment.***
- Based on the census and reapportionment states draw the lines for U.S. congressional and state (House & Senate) districts. ***This is redistricting.***
- Many local district lines such as county commissions, and some city councils and school boards are redrawn using decennial census data
- Every state determines its own process.

# Why is Redistricting Important?



- Redistricting is about community representation
- Determines:
  - What voices are heard
  - What (policy) interests are served
- Group or community voices that are diluted or isolated may not be heard and their interests may not be served
- Think Policy not Party

# Federal Laws For Drawing the Maps



- **U.S. Constitution:** requires seats for the U.S. House of Representatives be apportioned to states according to the population count in the federal Census (Article 1, Section 2)
- **Permanent Apportionment Act of 1929** established the procedure and timeline to allocate House seats to states after each decennial census (Title 2 U.S. Code Section 2a Chapter 1)
- *Reynolds v. Sims* (1964): United States Supreme Court determined that the general basis of apportionment should be "one person, one vote". This rule means that, generally, electoral districts must be equal in population according to the most recent census so that each person's vote is equally weighted.
- **Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act** blocks district lines that deny minority voters an equal opportunity "to participate in the political process and to elect representatives of their choice."

# What is Gerrymandering?



- Named for Massachusetts Governor Eldridge Gerry who, in 1812, signed a bill that created a partisan district in the Boston area that was compared to the shape of a salamander.
- Now used to describe manipulation of district boundaries to draw a map that provides a political advantage for a particular party or group.
- Experience shows that when all of the state government branches are dominated by any party, gerrymandering is a risk.

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# The Original Gerry-mander



# Why is Gerrymandering Bad?



- Manipulated voting maps create unfair distribution of political power.
- Unfair distribution of power skews the political process and creates unfair policy outcomes.
- Example: Racial gerrymandering discriminated against voters of color. This made progress on civil rights incredibly difficult. There are still attempts to commit racial gerrymandering today.

# Gerrymandering Examples

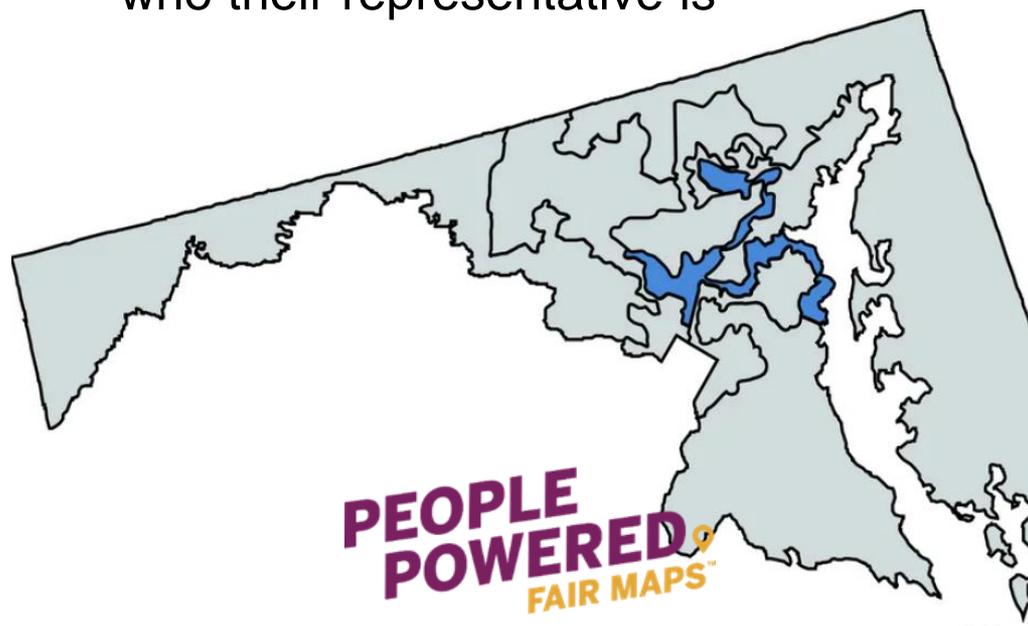


Ohio 9<sup>th</sup> District aka “Snake by the Lake”

- Drawn in 2001 to eliminate 1 Democratic Congressman
- Packs as many Democrats into district as possible
- Significant differences in policy interests across district (Cleveland and Toledo)

Maryland 3<sup>rd</sup> District

- Creates a Democratic district and divides Republicans between multiple districts
- Includes parts of 4 counties and city of Baltimore
- Structure makes it difficult to know who their representative is



# How are Maps Drawn?



# Redistricting Elements



- People – Who make the decisions and draw the maps
  - Includes how individuals are identified and selected (legislators, political appointees, or citizens?)
  - Advisory only or independent and final authority?
- Principles – What needs to be considered (Criteria) to make a map “fair”
- Process – How the maps are drawn
  - What meetings are held; how are they announced?
  - Who is there?
  - What is the engagement of the public (transparency)?

# Redistricting in Minnesota



- People: Legislature draws the maps; Governor approves or vetoes
- Principle: No documented or required criteria beyond federal law and state constitution
  - Equality in Population
  - Must not have the purpose or effect of diluting racial or ethnic minority voting strength
  - “Convenient contiguous territory”
- Process: No legal or administrative process to draw maps

# Minnesota's Redistricting Experience



- No Legislative redistricting between 1913 - 1959
  - No requirement for equal population in districts before 1964 (SCOTUS Reynolds v. Sims decision)
- All Congressional and Legislative maps since 1960 have been rejected or redrawn by the courts
  - Exception: Legislature-approved Congressional (not legislative) redistricting in 1971 (Republican Legislature, Democratic Governor)
- Court drawn maps meet legal minimum requirements
  - Strong focus on equal population; limited changes
  - Process has limited public input and transparency
  - Likely not optimal for state residents

# Minnesota's Redistricting Experience



- ***The current system does not work for Minnesota!***
- No statute or law requiring transparency and/or objective criteria to prevent abuse for partisan advantage
- If split government, then no one agrees and courts draw the maps based on last maps
- If one party controls state government (trifecta) then maps likely to be drawn to benefit the governing party
- Federal Courts = No help (*Rucho v Common Cause*)
- MN Constitution = No help?
- Relying on divided government = **Russian Roulette**



# Local Redistricting Overview



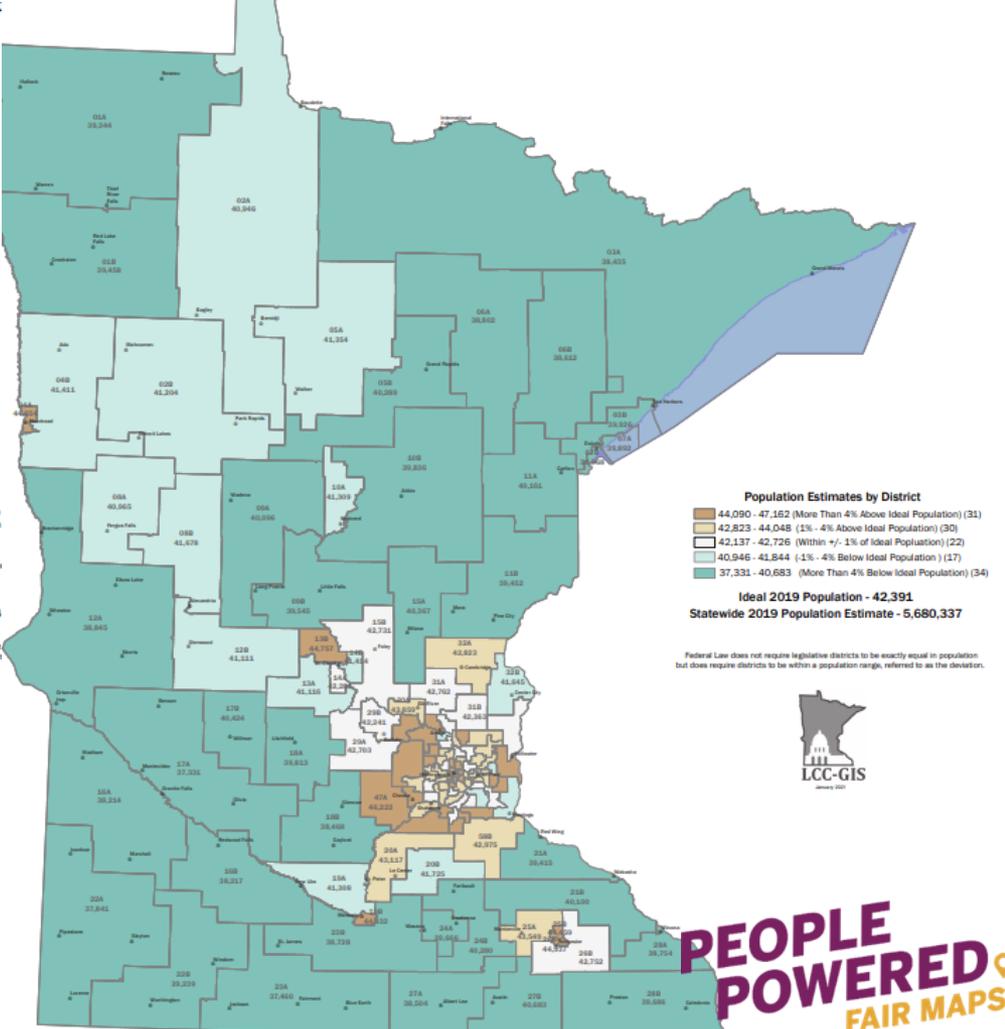
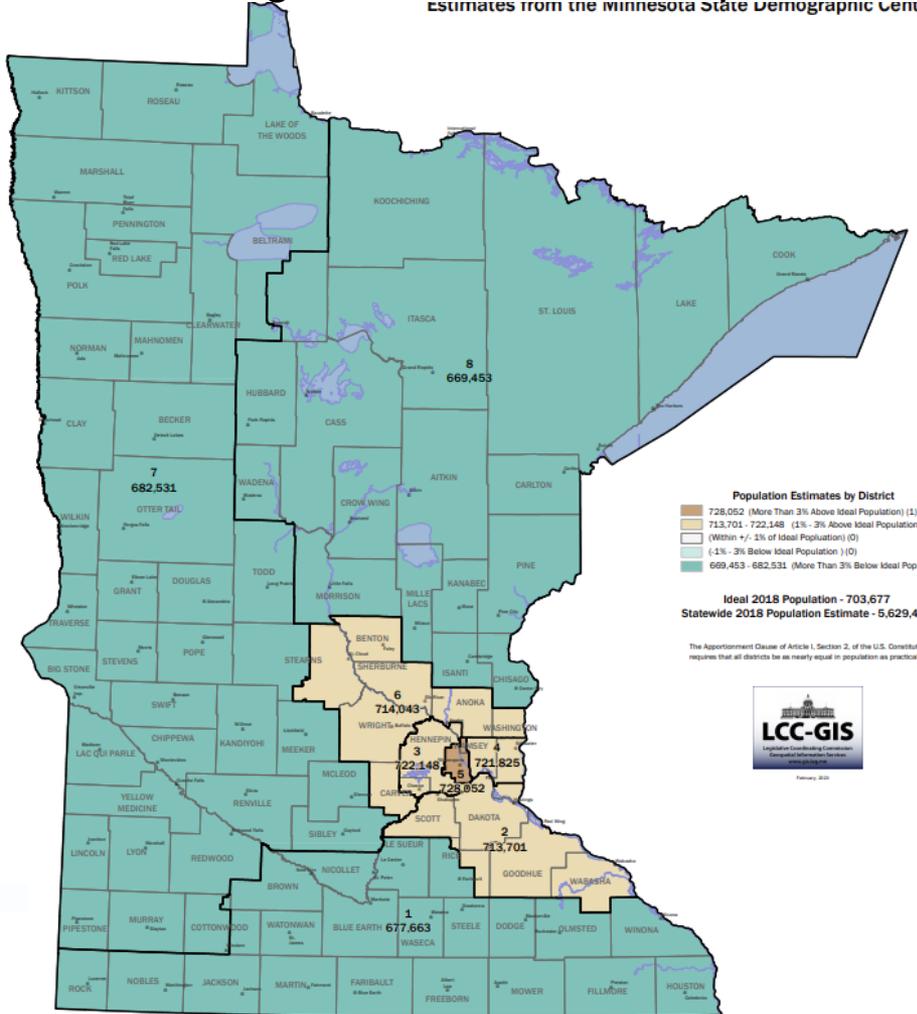
- Required by Minnesota state law after legislative maps are drawn
- Required for any government with people elected by “district” or “ward”
  - All Counties for County Commissioner Districts
  - Many cities (Minneapolis, St Paul, Rochester, Bloomington, Plymouth, Duluth and others)
  - Some school boards (Minneapolis, Duluth)
- Process and requirements are established by the local officials who also draw the maps
  - County Commissioners
  - Charter commission (typically) in charter city

# Duluth Area Redistricting Maps



2018 Congressional District Population  
estimates from the Minnesota State Demographic Cent

2019 MN House District Population



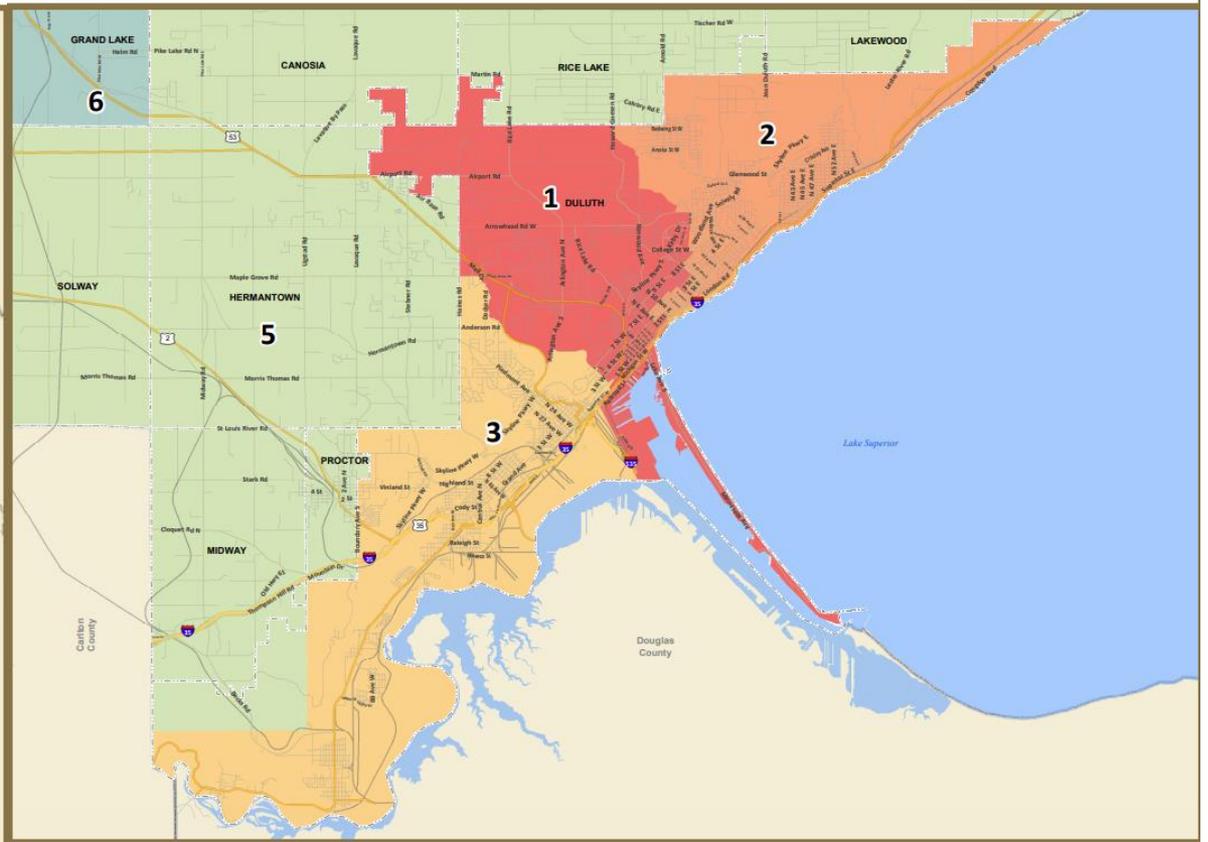
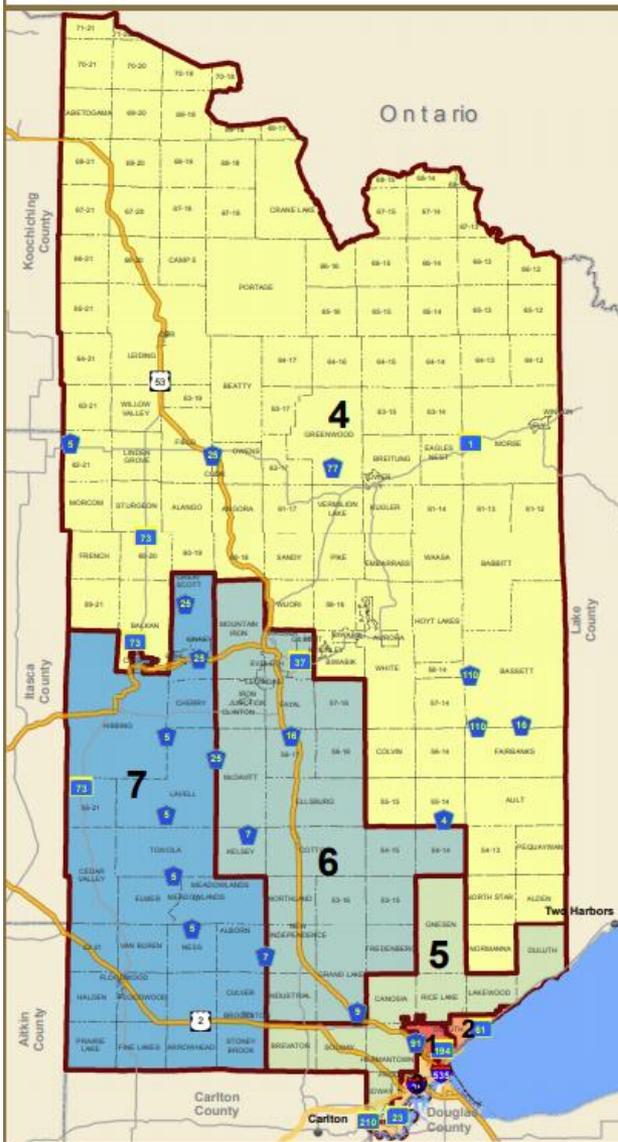
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# Duluth Area Redistricting Maps



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# St Louis County Redistricting Map



St Louis County Pop: 199,070  
Duluth Population: 85,618

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# Why Focus on Local Redistricting?



- Provide individuals and community groups an opportunity to engage and act within their community
- Emphasizes the importance of community voices in government participation; create local partnerships
- Opportunity to engage people in action that is more likely to yield immediate and observable results
- Provides incremental, ground level change now to build on for future changes
- More relevant and important to daily lives of residents
- Opportunity to learn about and emphasize the role of local government

- Engage local communities to influence state and local elected representatives to create maps that reflect needs and interests of their communities
  - City Maps (where there are wards)
  - County Maps
  - Legislative Maps
  - Congressional Maps
- Advocate for legislation to change the redistricting process to minimize political influence and maximize public engagement and transparency
- Engage legislative and legal processes with testimony and alternative maps to influence the final maps

# LWV Minnesota PPFM Tracks (How we'll do it)



- Public Outreach and Education
  - Redistricting and Gerrymandering familiarization
- Local Mapping
  - Organize, support and facilitate workshops on maps, mapping and defining communities of interest (COI)
  - Work with local groups on examples of maps, mapping tools, how to create map
- Engaging local elected officials
  - Advocate for local resolutions to establish criteria and transparency in redistricting
  - Propose/support alternative local district maps or input
  - Attend/observe local government redistricting activities

# Duluth Redistricting Environment



- Duluth City Council
- Duluth School District
- St Louis County
- State Senate/House Districts 19 and 23
- Congressional Districts (Likely to lose the 8<sup>th</sup> seat)

# Potential County/City Redistricting Actions



- Start Early on Everything!
- Ask County Commissioners, City Council and School Board about process for redistricting now
  - Are Criteria established and approved by resolution or ordinance?
  - Does the process include public hearings on criteria and public comment?
  - Provisions for public input for mapping considerations?
- Attend County Commission, City Council, School Board redistricting meetings
- LTEs to local media on need for transparency and public input to redistricting

# Options for Local Action



- Enable local Leagues and individuals to engage in those aspects of redistricting that most interest them, in a way and to a degree that works for them
- General: Postcard/letter campaign
- Legislative: Advocate for legislation to change existing redistricting process (People/Principles/Process)
- State Maps:
  - Let legislators and local officials know you expect residents to have input
  - Define Communities of Interest (COI) in your community and submit maps
- Local Maps
  - Engage local elected officials on preparation and structure for local redistricting
  - Define COI maps to present to elected officials for redistricting
- All:
  - Develop alternative maps for submission to elected officials for consideration
  - Partner with local groups that were also Census partners

# Other Things You Can Do!



- Goal is to enable local Leagues and individuals to engage in those aspects of redistricting that most interest them, in a way and to a degree that works for them
- Sign up for the LWVMN Action Alert program to receive Action Alerts on redistricting ([lwvmn.org/subscribe](http://lwvmn.org/subscribe))
- Consider joining our state-wide PPFM Task Force
- Use our PPFM Action Kit ([lwvmn.org/ppfm-action-kit](http://lwvmn.org/ppfm-action-kit))
  - Ask your legislator for their position on redistricting
  - Promote PPFM presentations to your local community groups
  - Hold a house party about PPFM with your friends (can be virtual)
  - Send an LTE to your local paper for public input and transparency
  - Send PPFM postcards to you legislators, the Governor and other local elected officials (There is local redistricting!)
- **Contact Paul Huffman ([phuffman@lwvmn.org](mailto:phuffman@lwvmn.org)) to focus in depth on one area**

# Next Steps



- Consider forming a local League Redistricting team to learn more and review options for action
- Meet as a local League Program or Advocacy Team or Board to consider what type and degree of involvement works best for your League
- Find local groups to partner with on redistricting (Census Partners)
- Assess your level of interest and where and how you want to be involved
- Contact Paul Huffman ([phuffman@lwvmn.org](mailto:phuffman@lwvmn.org)) for support on additional information, education, or to support local League meetings or discussions

# Questions?

## U.S. Experience on 2010 Map Performance

- Independent Commissions (Partisan Balanced): 1 of 9 maps struck down (11%) (ID in 2012)
- Independent Commissions (Partisan Unbalanced): 1 of 1 maps struck down (100%)
- Legislatures: 24 of 70 maps struck down (34%)
- Political Commissions: 5 of 11 struck down (45%)

Who Drew?	Number of States	Number of Maps	Number of Maps Challenged	Maps Struck Down	Percentage of Maps Requiring Court Intervention
Independent Commissions (balanced)	5	9	7	1	11.1%
Nonpartisan Staff	1	2	0	0	0.0%
Independent Commissions (unbalanced)	1	1	1	1	100.0%
Politician Commissions (balanced)	5	8	6	4	50.0%
Politician Commissions (unbalanced)	3	3	3	1	33.3%
<b>State Legislature</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>34.3%</b>
Everything Except Balanced Independent Commissions	50	84	55	30	35.7%
Politicians (State Legislatures + Politician Commissions)	48	81	54	29	35.8%