

GEORGIA

Proposed Congressional Redistricting Plan

Maxine Gomez

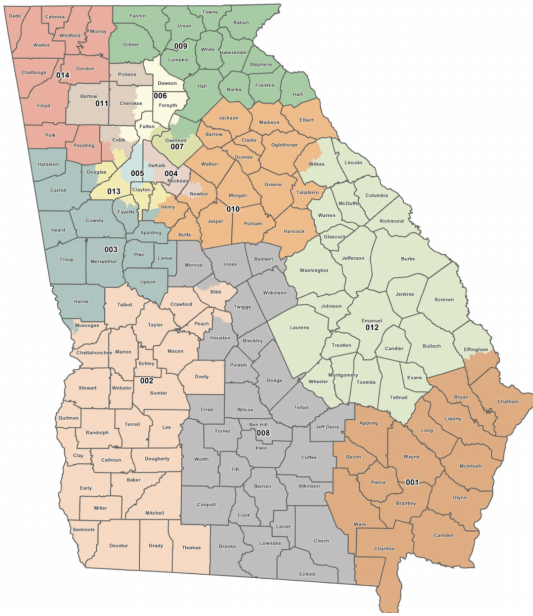
Introduction:

The proposed plan is a hybrid map composed of Community of Interest and Good Governance principles. Using data from *Representable*, a website that allows individuals to self-report their given communities of interest, exactly 562 communities were taken into consideration when creating the map. Categorization of each community ranged from those with cultural significance to communities with activities in common. When the two principles came into conflict, keeping communities together was prioritized over keeping in line with county boundaries. By taking into consideration the interests of the people of Georgia, this plan aims to allow community members to be adequately represented and have a voice in the redistricting process.

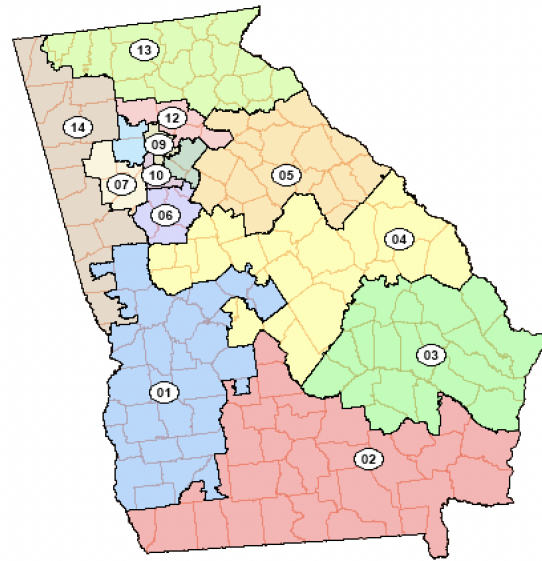
This proposed plan also falls within the parameters of the Voting Rights Act and strives to reflect and account for the changing demographics of Georgia. Black, Latino, Asian, and multiracial Georgians accounted for the majority of population growth the state experienced in the last decade.¹ This population growth allows for the possibility of an additional majority-minority district in Georgia, which is why there are five proposed majority Black districts in the map. When creating these districts, the allegations presented in *Common Cause, et al. v. Raffensperger*, a case which challenges the existing map, was considered greatly.

¹ From *State Redistricting Profile: Georgia* by the Brennan Center for Justice. 2021 (<https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/state-redistricting-profile-georgia>)

The Implemented Plan vs Proposed Plan



Implemented Plan



Proposed Plan

In December 2021 Republican Georgia Governor Brian Kemp signed the Georgia Congressional Redistricting Act (SB 2EX) into law, revising Georgia's congressional district boundaries. Immediately following, two federal lawsuits were filed against the Congressional map alleging that GA 6, GA 13 and GA 14 violate both the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment and Section Two of the Voting Rights Act. In the two court cases, *Common Cause, et al. v. Raffensperger* and *Georgia State Conference of the NAACP, et al. v. State of Georgia*, the plaintiffs allege that by packing and cracking Black communities in the Atlanta metropolitan area, Black Georgians in the state are having their voting power diluted. The plaintiffs support this claim by pointing to the state legislature's long history of using racial discrimination and voter suppression to

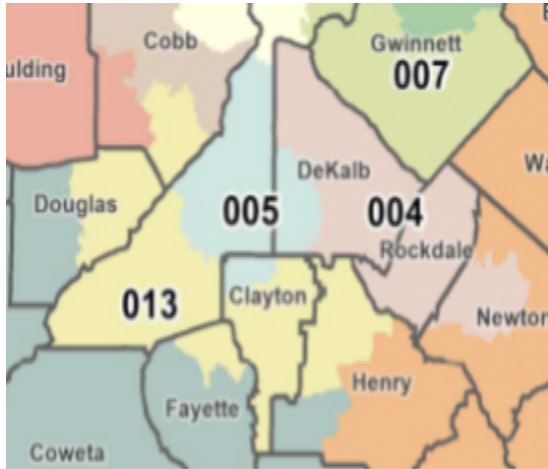
maintain political power.² On February 3, 2022, the two court cases were consolidated for all purposes.³ One month later, a federal judge upheld the map for the 2022 election cycle but allowed for the possibility of litigation in the future. When doing so, the judge acknowledged that there may be portions of the plan that violate federal law but changing it at that point in time would be “disruptive” to the 2022 election cycle.⁴

When creating this proposed plan, I found it important to keep in mind the allegations and evidence presented in *Common Cause, et al. v. Raffensperger*. I sought to resolve the apparent instances of packing and cracking that took place in GA 6, GA 13 and GA 14 to provide Black and Brown voters equal voting power under the law and to satisfy section two under the Voting Rights Act. Under the proposed plan, five districts (GA 1, GA 6, GA 7, GA 8, and GA 10) all possess a Black CVAP (B-CVAP) percentage of over 50%. This is different from the currently enacted plan, where only four of the fourteen districts have a B-CVAP over 50%. This includes GA 2, GA 4, GA 5, and GA 13 in the implemented plan. As seen below, under the proposed plan an additional minority-majority district was added in the Atlanta metropolitan area.

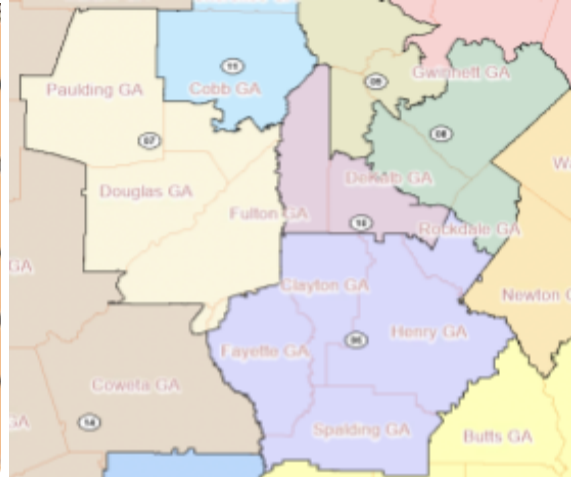
² From *Common Cause, et al. v. Brad Raffensperger, et al.*. Southern Poverty Law Center. (n.d.). <https://www.splcenter.org/seeking-justice/case-docket/common-cause-et-al-v-brad-raffensperger-et-al>

³ From Docket for *Common Cause v. Raffensperger*, 1:22-cv-00090. CourtListener. (n.d.). <https://www.courtlistener.com/docket/62149463/common-cause-v-raffensperger/>

⁴ From *Federal judge allowing New Georgia Congressional, legislative maps to be used in 2022 vote*. Brumback, K. (2022) from <https://www.onlineathens.com/story/news/2022/03/01/judge-allowing-new-georgia-redistricting-maps-used-year/6978741001/>



*Implemented Plan
Majority-Minority Districts 4, 5, and 13
(not shown - District 2)*



*Proposed Plan Majority Minority
Districts 6, 7, 8, and 10
(not shown - District 1)*

It is important to acknowledge that when creating these minority-majority districts to comply with the Voting Rights Act, the process came into conflict with keeping communities of interests or county lines intact multiple times.⁵ Particularly in District One, nine counties and thirteen communities of interest were split up in the process of reaching a B-CVAP percentage of over fifty. In District Six, two counties and two communities of interest were split up in the process. In District Seven, three counties and eight communities of interest were divided. In District Eight, three counties and three communities were split. And finally in District Ten, two counties and twelve communities of interest were split. I found it vital that the standards of the VRA were upheld, which is why these five districts were created first in the process of developing the proposed map . In the end, the proposed map continues to comply with federal and state guidelines while adding an additional majority Black district.

⁵ See Appendix A for a close up of each Majority-Minority District, complete with county lines and their respective communities of interest.

Legal Compliance

This plan complies with federal and state requirements. The state of Georgia has nine general principles for drafting the plans.⁶ This includes...

1. Each congressional district should be drawn with a total population of plus or minus one person from the ideal district size.
2. Each legislative district should be drawn to achieve a total population that is substantially equal as practicable considering the principles listed below
3. Adopted plans must comply with Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965
4. Adopted plans must comply with the United States and Georgia Constitutions
5. Adopted plans must be contiguous districts
6. Adopted plans must have single-member districts
7. The Committee should consider the boundaries of counties and precincts, compactness, and communities of interest
8. Efforts should be made to avoid the unnecessary pairing of incumbents.
9. The identifying of these criteria is not intended to limit the consideration of any other principles or factors that the Committee deems appropriate.

Starting with the first two principles, this proposed plan complies with the “one person, one vote” principle. All fourteen districts presented in the proposed map have a zero percent population deviation. Four of the fourteen districts (GA 7, GA 9, GA 11, and GA 12) are over the population by a singular person, which is allowed under Rule One of the Georgia Congressional District Guidelines.

⁶ From the GA 2021-2022 Guidelines for the House Legislative and Congressional Reapportionment Committee (2021)

This proposed map also complies with Section Two of the Voting Rights Act. Taking into consideration the growth of minority populations in the state of Georgia, this proposed plan includes five minority-majority districts with a Black Citizen Voting Age Population of over 50%: GA 1, GA 6, GA 7, GA 8, and GA 10. As mentioned previously, the creation of these districts stems from the allegations that arose in *Common Cause, et al. v. Raffensperger* and *Georgia State Conference of the NAACP, et al. v. State of Georgia*. The creation of an additional majority-minority district adequately reflects the growing number of people of color in the Atlanta metropolitan area, and allows these members to have equal power in the voting process. The proposed map also shows that the ability to create a newly proposed majority-minority district is possible in the state of Georgia.

In terms of the other requirements, each of the proposed districts are contiguous and compact, as well as single-member districts. The map also puts special interest on prioritizing keeping communities of interest and county lines intact per the two principles guiding this map. In total, 27 counties were split in the process.

Partisan Effects

Moving on to the impact of each map on partisan outcomes, it is important to bring attention to the effect of the 2020 election on Georgia. In 2020, the state saw the election of two Democratic Senators and a Democratic Presidential nominee. It was the first time in twenty years a Democrat won the Senate in the state, and the first time since 1992 a Democratic Presidential candidate won the state. Following this historical election, the state of Georgia was one of many to pass stricter voting laws, many of which “curtailed ballot access” in suburban and urban counties and increased the power of the

legislature in the election process.⁷ This is particularly harmful to voters of color, who make up a significant portion of the urban areas in Georgia. Paired with the effect of the recently installed congressional map, which dilutes the power of Black voters through packing and cracking communities of color, the effects of these laws will have a significant impact on the upcoming 2022 election. The partisan outcomes in particular will be affected as historically, Black voters in the state of Georgia tend to align with the Democratic Party in elections.

To bring attention to this, it is important to highlight the differences between the enacted and proposed plan. SB 2EX has an Efficiency Gap leaning 11.8% Republican, and Partisan Bias of 13.2% Republican. This is increased from the 2020 Georgia Congressional map, where the existing efficacy gap was 8.5% R.⁸ In contrast, the proposed plan has a 3.0% Republican Partisan Bias and a Republican leaning Efficiency Gap of 2.1%. It is a significant decrease from the currently enacted plan. When comparing the two maps on Planscore, there are noticeable differences in the predictive results of each map as well. Seen below, if the implemented plan were in place in 2020 and 2016, the electoral and senatorial results would more than likely be vastly different from the current reality. Looking at the predictions, one can see that the Republican Party's inefficiency rate was at least 9% lower than the Democrats in three out of the four predictions.

⁷ Pulled from "What Georgia's voting law really does". The New York Times. Retrieved March 29, 2022, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/02/us/politics/georgia-voting-law-annotated.html#link-3c31d135>

⁸ See Appendix B for four tables showcasing the Efficiency Gap and Partisan Bias of the proposed and implemented plans

U.S. President 2020: 14.5% R	U.S. President 2016: 9.0% R	U.S. Senate 2020: 12.5% R	U.S. Senate 2016: 0.1% D
Under this plan, votes for the Republican candidate were inefficient at a rate 14.5% R lower than votes for the Democratic candidate.	Under this plan, votes for the Republican candidate were inefficient at a rate 9.0% R lower than votes for the Democratic candidate.	Under this plan, votes for the Republican candidate were inefficient at a rate 12.5% R lower than votes for the Democratic candidate.	Under this plan, votes for the Democratic candidate were inefficient at a rate 0.1% D lower than votes for the Republican candidate.

Implemented Plan Predictions for the 2016 and 2020 cycle

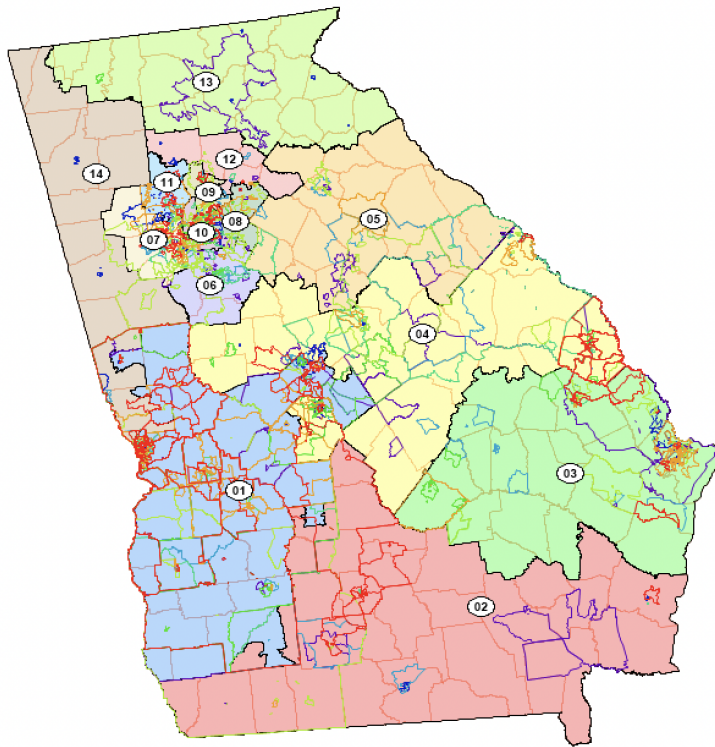
U.S. President 2020: 7.4% R	U.S. President 2016: 1.8% R	U.S. Senate 2020: 5.3% R	U.S. Senate 2016: 0.1% D
Under this plan, votes for the Republican candidate were inefficient at a rate 7.4% R lower than votes for the Democratic candidate.	Under this plan, votes for the Republican candidate were inefficient at a rate 1.8% R lower than votes for the Democratic candidate.	Under this plan, votes for the Republican candidate were inefficient at a rate 5.3% R lower than votes for the Democratic candidate.	Under this plan, votes for the Democratic candidate were inefficient at a rate 0.1% D lower than votes for the Republican candidate.

Proposed Plan Predictions for the 2016 and 2020 cycle

Now let us compare the predictions that come from the proposed plan. While there remains a partisan lean to the right, the percentages predicted for Republican inefficiencies are almost half that of the implemented plan. Through this proposal, the inefficiency gap between the two parties would close more sharply.

Communities of Interest

Exactly 562 Communities of Interest were reported on *Representable*. The data was downloaded from the site and uploaded as an additional layer to Mapitude, each separate community being shown in a different color. Some of the communities reported overlapping with one another. Of the 562 communities reported, the vast majority of them were centered in the urban areas of the state. This included in the Atlanta Metropolitan area, Savannah, Macon, and Columbus regions.⁹ When considering each community, I found it important to try to keep communities together based on their color.



GA Communities of Interest (562 Total)

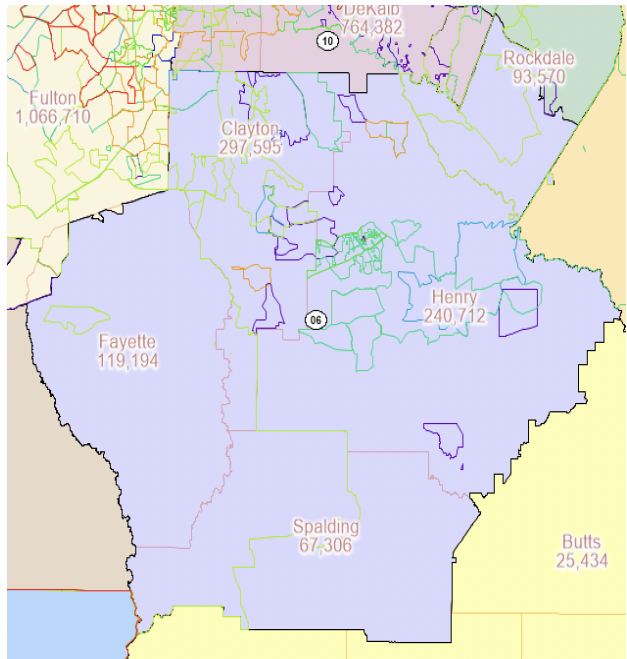
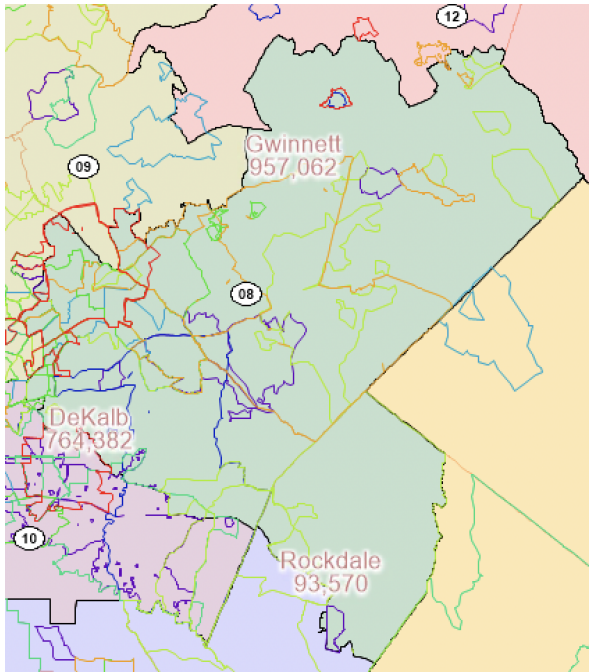
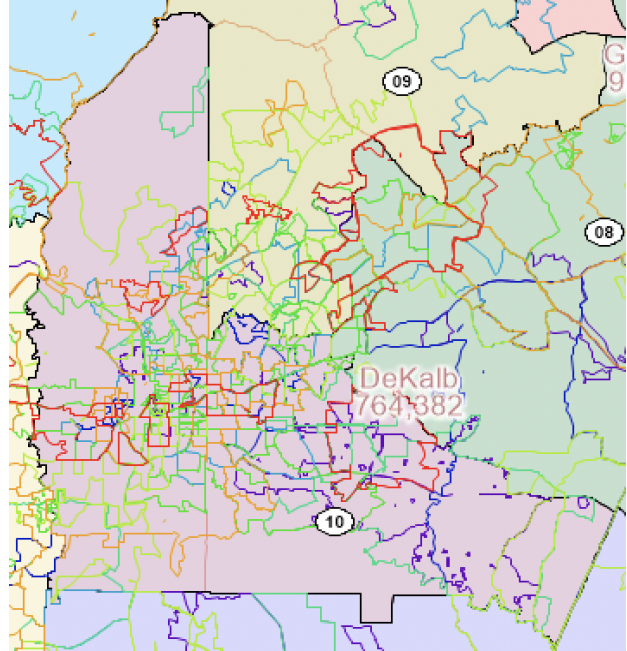
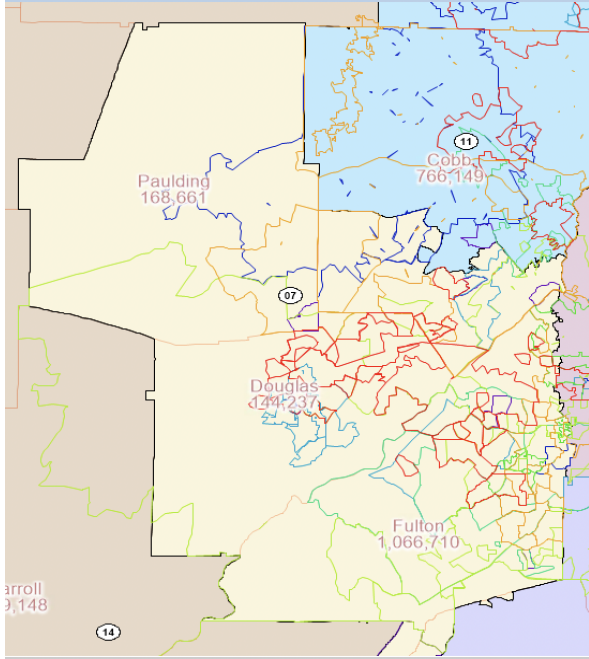
⁹ To see an expanded photo of each of the four urban areas, view Appendix C

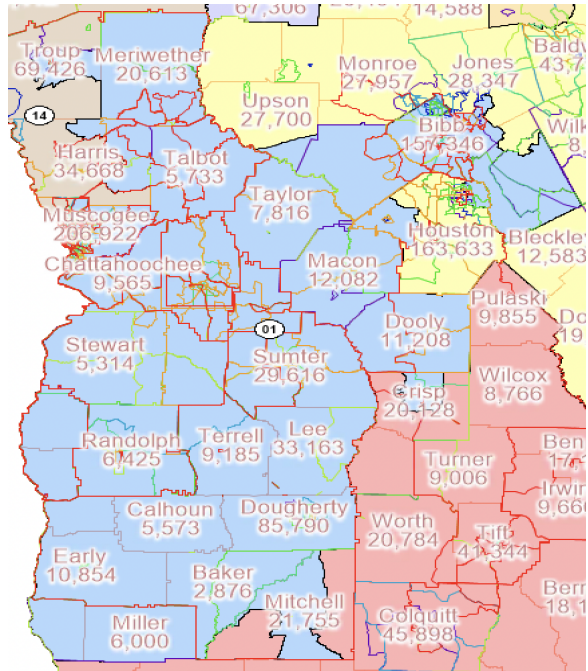
In total, of the 562 communities, around 32 communities of interest were split up. The exact number cannot be confirmed as mapitude did not have a way to calculate the communities split up under this new layer added. Each county was individually hand-counted twice to confirm, but communities may have been missed or over-counted in the process. The sole reason communities were broken up was to comply with the creation of majority-minority districts under Section two the Voting Rights Act.

Conclusion:

The proposed plan contains both Communities of Interest and Good Governance principles. It aims to keep the 562 communities of interest uploaded through the site *Representable* intact and limit the number of county and city lines broken. In times of conflict, upholding communities of interest was prioritized over the other. The proposed plan also took into consideration the litigation surrounding the implemented map for the GA Congressional Districts. The plaintiffs in the case *Common Cause, et al. v. Raffensperger* claims that the existing map dilutes the voting power of Black voters by both packing and cracking the Black population in the Atlanta metropolitan area. In this proposed map, five majority Black districts were created in the state.

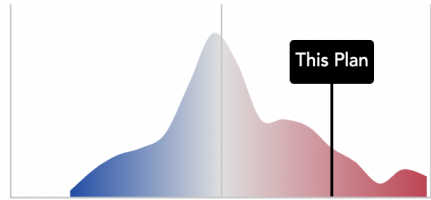
Appendix A: Proposed Plan Majority Minority Districts (*Counties and Communities of Interests in the area are shown. Showcased in order of appearance: GA 7, GA 10, GA 8, GA 6, and GA 1*)





Appendix B: Partisan Bias and Efficiency Gap of the Implemented and Proposed Plans

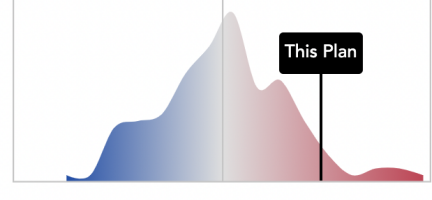
Partisan Bias: 13.2% R



+25% D Balanced +25% R

Republicans would be expected to win 13.2% R extra seats in a hypothetical, perfectly tied election, favoring Republicans in >99% of predicted scenarios.* [Learn more >](#)

Efficiency Gap: 11.8% R

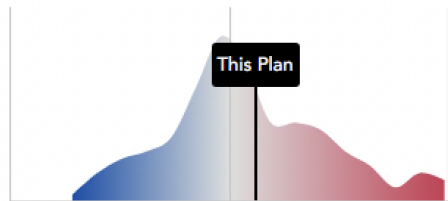


+25% D Balanced +25% R

Votes for Republican candidates are expected to be inefficient at a rate 11.8% R lower than votes for Democratic candidates, favoring Republicans in >99% of predicted scenarios.* [Learn more >](#)

Implemented Plan - Partisan Bias and Efficiency Gap

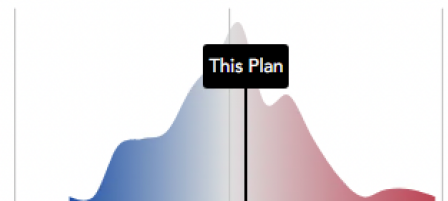
Partisan Bias: 3.0% R



+25% D Balanced +25% R

Republicans would be expected to win 3.0% R extra seats in a hypothetical, perfectly tied election, favoring Republicans in 78% of predicted scenarios.* [Learn more >](#)

Efficiency Gap: 2.1% R



+25% D Balanced +25% R

Votes for Republican candidates are expected to be inefficient at a rate 2.1% R lower than votes for Democratic candidates, favoring Republicans in 69% of predicted scenarios.*

Proposed Plan - Partisan Bias and Efficiency Gap

Appendix C: Communities of Interests in the urban areas of Georgia *(In order of appearance from left to right (Top Row: Atlanta Metropolitan area, Columbus, Bottom Row: Macon, and Savannah regions))*

