Catherine Seita
New Jersey, Massachusetts, Iowa, and Kansas Reports
Draw Congress: Stanford Redistricting Project
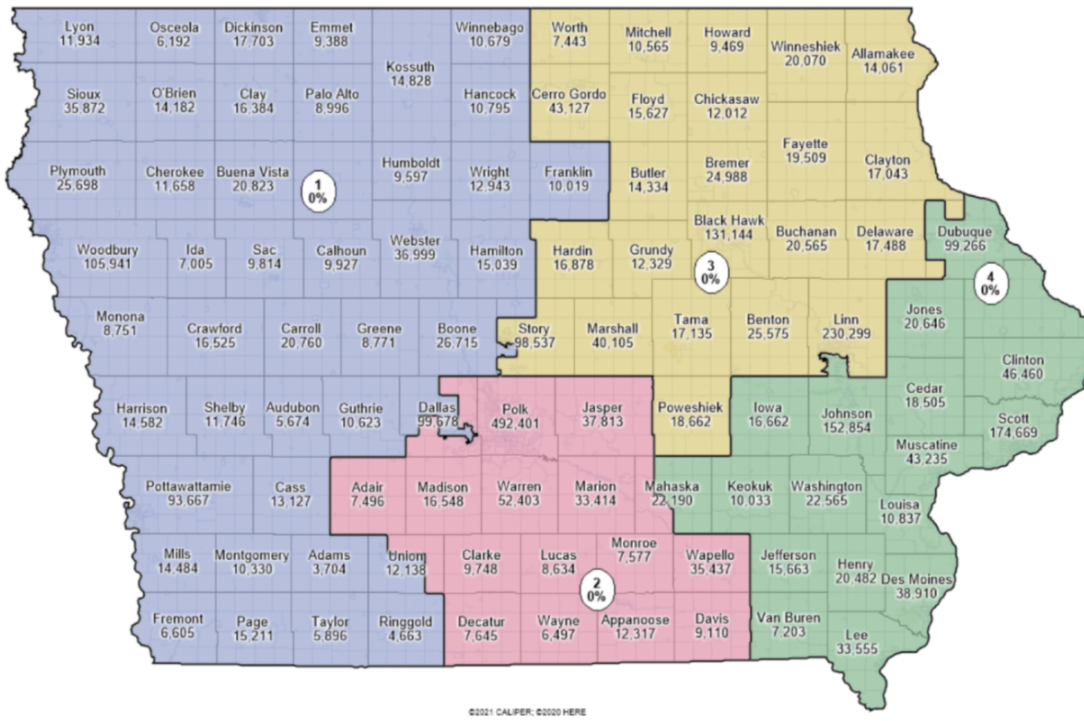Professor Persily, Fall 2021
January 17, 2022

Iowa

Good Government Plan

I.   Introduction

This good government map of Iowa contains districts that generally respect county lines

and other political subdivisions. In addition, this map follows Iowa state law in that it nests the

state legislative districts, which have already been approved and signed into law, within the

congressional districts to the fullest extent possible. Abiding by this law was occasionally at odds

with the aim of keeping counties together, but I tried to balance the competing interests. There

are just six instances of county splits, and in all but two of those instances, the county is split

among only two districts. As for cities and towns, 1,014 are enclosed within a single district,

leaving only 14 divided. The planned districts also achieve perfect population equality, are reasonably compact, and are otherwise in compliance with federal and state law.

II.   Evaluation of Relevant Criteria

    A. Demographic Considerations

Iowa's minority population is very low, and these districts reflect that–the white CVAP in each district hovers around 90%. This was true of the districts in the preexisting plan as well.

    B. Geographic Considerations

The mean compactness of the proposed districts is greater than that of the preexisting ones under the Reock, Area/Convex Hull, Population Circle, and Ehrenberg tests. The preexisting districts are, on average, more compact under the Schwartzberg, Alternate Schwartzberg, Polsby-Popper, and Population Polygon tests. Some of these good government districts could have been drawn in a more compact manner, but I chose to forgo compactness in some instances in order to comply with the Iowa law that requires state districts to be nested in congressional ones, where possible.

    C. Political Subdivisions

Iowa is home to 99 counties, and all but six are fully enclosed in a single district in this map. Those six counties are all split in two. This is close to the preexisting plan, in which all 99 counties in Iowa remained intact. The slight decline in the number of intact counties is the result of nesting state legislative districts and ensuring perfect population equality.

    D. Communities of Interest

Under this plan, 1,014 of Iowa's 1,028 cities and towns are undivided between districts. All of the 14 divided cities and towns were split in two, leaving a total of 28 splits overall. Again, these numbers come close to those of the preexisting plan, where 1019 cities and towns

were left undivided, and the nine split cities and towns were all split in two. The slight difference here also results from adhering to state map lines and maintaining perfect population equality.

E. Partisan Considerations

Currently, three of Iowa's four districts have elected Republicans, while one has elected a Democrat. According to the PlanScore Assessment[1] of this good government plan, one district will remain reliably Republican, while the other three districts will lean Republican. The efficiency gap and declination of this map both favor Republicans over Democrats, but not to the extent that those of the preexisting plan do.[2]

III. Legal Compliance

A. One Person, One Vote

In 1964, the Supreme Court applied the principle of "one person, one vote" in *Wesberry v. Sanders*, holding that Article I, Section 2 of the United States Constitution commands that "one [person]'s vote in a congressional election is to be worth as much as another's" to the extent practicable.[3] In 1983, the Court further clarified in *Karcher v. Daggett* that, while precise mathematical equality may be impossible, even insignificant deviations in population between districts are unacceptable when avoidable and unjustified.[4] In *Karcher*, the Court rejected the state of New Jersey's argument that a population deviation of 0.7% between districts should be excused as *de minimis*.[5]

This plan complies with the "one person, one vote" requirement. Each district is home to 797,592 people (plus or minus one person), resulting in perfect population equality.

B. Voting Rights Act

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[1] Available at https://planscore.campaignlegal.org/plan.html?20211123T030216.306566396Z.
[2] *See* https://planscore.campaignlegal.org/plan.html?20220104T070139.953132060Z.
[3] *Wesberry v. Sanders*, 376 U.S. 1, 8 (1964).
[4] *Karcher v. Daggett*, 462 U.S. 725, 734 (1983).
[5] *Id.* at 732.

Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act disallows congressional maps that deny minority voters an equal opportunity to "participate in the political process and to elect representatives of their choice."[6] Under *Thornburg v. Gingles*, challenges to district lines on the basis of this provision must first pass a three-part test to prevail. First, the minority group must "demonstrate that it is sufficiently large and geographically compact to constitute a majority" in a district in the state; second, the minority group "must be able to show that it is politically cohesive"; third, the minority group "must be able to demonstrate that the white majority votes sufficiently as a bloc to enable it … usually to defeat the minority's preferred candidate".[7]

There is no minority population in Iowa large and geographically compact enough to create a majority-minority district while retaining population equality, and thus no Section 2 requirement.

C. *Shaw v. Reno*

Although Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act requires that states draw districts that provide minority groups a chance to elect their own candidates where feasible, the Supreme Court has also made it clear that districts drawn with race as the predominant factor must be evaluated with skepticism. In *Shaw vs. Reno*, the Court held that plaintiffs can be granted relief under the Equal Protection Clause when challenging a plan that is "so extremely irregular on its face that it rationally can be viewed only as an effort to segregate the races for purposes of voting, without regard for traditional districting principles and without sufficiently compelling justification."[8] Two years later, the Court further developed this idea, holding in *Miller v. Johnson* that strict scrutiny is triggered when the predominant factor motivating the drawing of

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[6] 52 U.S.C. §10301(b) (1982).
[7] *Thornburg v. Gingles*, 478 U.S. 30, 50-51 (1986).
[8] *Shaw v. Reno*, 509 U.S. 630, 642 (1993).

district lines was race.[9] Also in *Miller,* the Court determined that bizarrely-shaped districts may indicate that race was in fact the predominant factor.[10]

Because it was not feasible to create any majority-minority districts, there is no reason to fear a *Shaw* claim.

D. Iowa State Law

Iowa state law requires that state House and Senate districts be nested within congressional districts where possible and not in conflict with requirements regarding political subdivision preservation and compactness.[11] After plans[12] for Iowa's state districts were approved, I updated this good government plan to nest those state districts within congressional ones, to the extent reasonable. The resulting map still leaves nearly all county, city, and town lines unbroken.

IV.   Comparison to the Approved Plan

The plan approved by the Iowa state legislature and signed into law by the Governor[13] keeps more counties intact than does this proposed plan, but as a byproduct of this achievement, the plan fails to nest as many state Senate and House districts within congressional ones.

V.   Conclusion

This plan was intended to keep political subdivisions together, achieve perfect population equality, comply with state and federal laws, and strive for a reasonable degree of compactness. These goals occasionally worked against each other, but the end product at least somewhat satisfies all of these aims.

VI.   Appendix

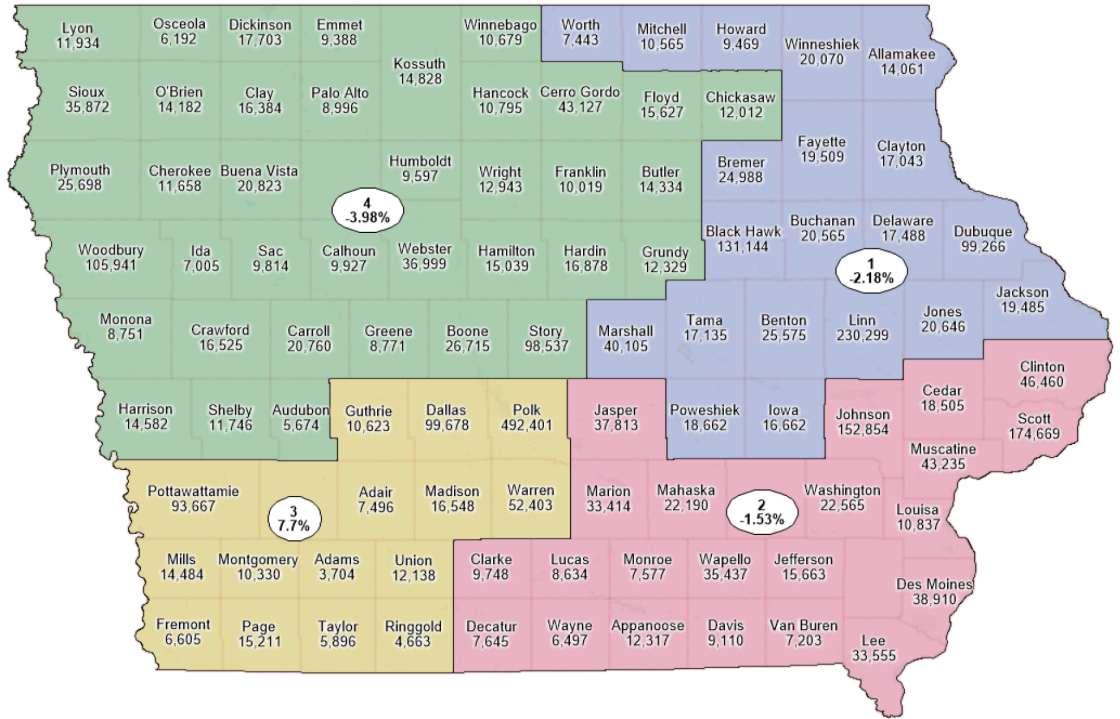[9] *Miller v. Johnson*, 515 U.S. 900, 920 (1995).
[10] *Id.* at 913.
[11] Iowa Code § 42.4(6).
[12] *See* state Senate map at https://gis.legis.iowa.gov/Plan2/Plan2Senate8x11_color_2021.pdf.
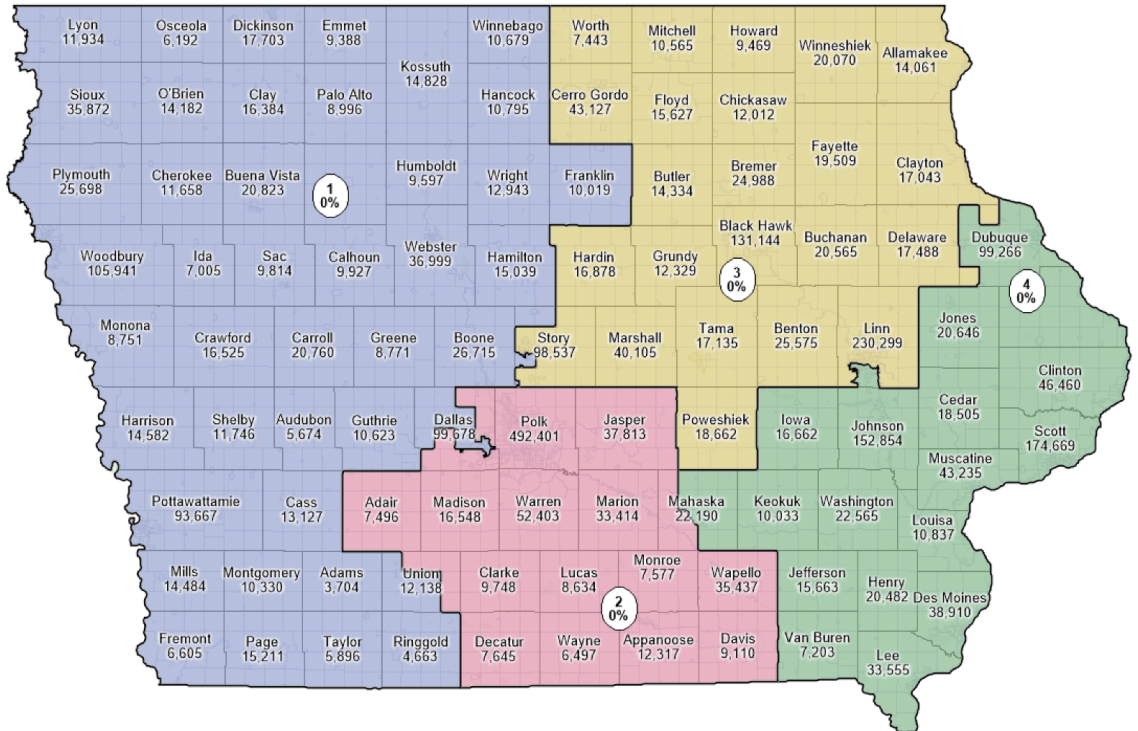[13] Available at https://gis.legis.iowa.gov/Plan2/Plan2Congress8x11_color_2021.pdf.

Comparison to Preexisting Plan:

Preexisting

Proposed

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District Composition (Preexisting):[14]

District	Population	Deviation	W-CVAP	B-CVAP	H-CVAP	%D ('20)	%R ('20)
4	765,862	-31,730	92.4%	1.7%	3.7%	36.3%	67.7%
3	858,974	61,382	89.4%	3.9%	3.8%	49.9%	50.1%
1	780,180	-17,412	92.3%	3.6%	2.2%	48.3%	51.7%
2	785,353	-12,239	90.2%	3.7%	3.8%	48.0%	52.0%

District Composition (Proposed):

District	Population	Deviation	W-CVAP	B-CVAP	H-CVAP	%D ('20)	%R ('20)
1	797,592	0	92.6%	1.5%	4.0%	33.9%	66.1%
2	797,592	0	89.3%	4.1%	3.6%	49.8%	50.2%
3	797,592	0	92.2%	3.3%	2.4%	48.5%	51.5%
4	797,593	1	90.0%	4.0%	3.5%	50.8%	49.2%

Measures of Compactness (Preexisting):[15]

District	Reock	Schwartz-berg	Alternate Schwartz-berg	Polsby-Popper	Population Polygon	Area/ Convex Hull	Population Circle	Ehren-burg
4	0.49	1.40	1.53	0.43	0.85	0.88	0.43	0.48
3	0.47	1.40	1.44	0.48	0.97	0.83	0.78	0.37
1	0.39	1.83	1.85	0.29	0.73	0.67	0.65	0.37
2	0.31	1.68	1.71	0.34	0.71	0.73	0.34	0.25
Mean	0.42	1.58	1.63	0.39	0.82	0.78	0.55	0.37

Measures of Compactness (Proposed):

District	Reock	Schwartz-berg	Alternate Schwartz-berg	Polsby-Popper	Population Polygon	Area/ Convex Hull	Population Circle	Ehren-burg
1	0.54	1.65	1.81	0.31	0.54	0.83	0.47	0.57
2	0.49	1.54	1.55	0.41	0.90	0.83	0.77	0.46
3	0.60	1.66	1.70	0.35	0.85	0.81	0.73	0.55
4	0.46	1.75	1.81	0.30	0.75	0.74	0.70	0.32
Mean	0.52	1.65	1.72	0.34	0.76	0.80	0.67	0.48

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[14] District 4 under the preexisting plan is called District 1 under the proposed plan, and so on; all population data is from 2019.
[15] Numbers closer to 1 indicate a higher degree of compactness.