

## **Redistricting Illinois**

### **Introduction**

This memorandum contains a redistricting plan for Illinois' congressional districts following the 2020 Census and resulting population changes. This plan attempts to prioritize a Good Government Plan, which refers to a plan that attempts to draw compact districts based on political subdivisions lines, such as counties and cities.

While Good Government serves as the integral principle for this redistricting proposal, I have carefully applied all conventional redistricting principles, such as compactness and contiguity, in compliance with federal law and Illinois' state law. This memorandum offers insight into the explanation of how this plan minimizes political subdivision splits and includes comparison to existing and drafted plans. Further, this paper will detail the various components of the proposed plan, including legal compliance, measures of political fairness, and other challenges accounted for throughout the redistricting process.

## **2020 Census and Changes**

Following the [2020 U.S Census](#), the state of Illinois holds a population of 12,812,508 people. In 2010, the state held approximately 12,830,632 people. That is a loss of about 18,000 people, making it the third largest population drop since the 2020 U.S Census. Accordingly, Illinois was apportioned 17 congressional districts, a 1 seat reduction from the 2010 apportionment cycle. Regardless, Illinois still holds Chicago, which is the third-largest city in the nation and witnessed a population [growth over 1.9%](#) in this census cycle. While the state lost voters, its largest city continues to grow and data indicates that the state remains quite diverse. In this cycle, people identifying as only white dropped nearly 14% in the state and people identifying as white and another race grew by almost 330% to 820,879 people.

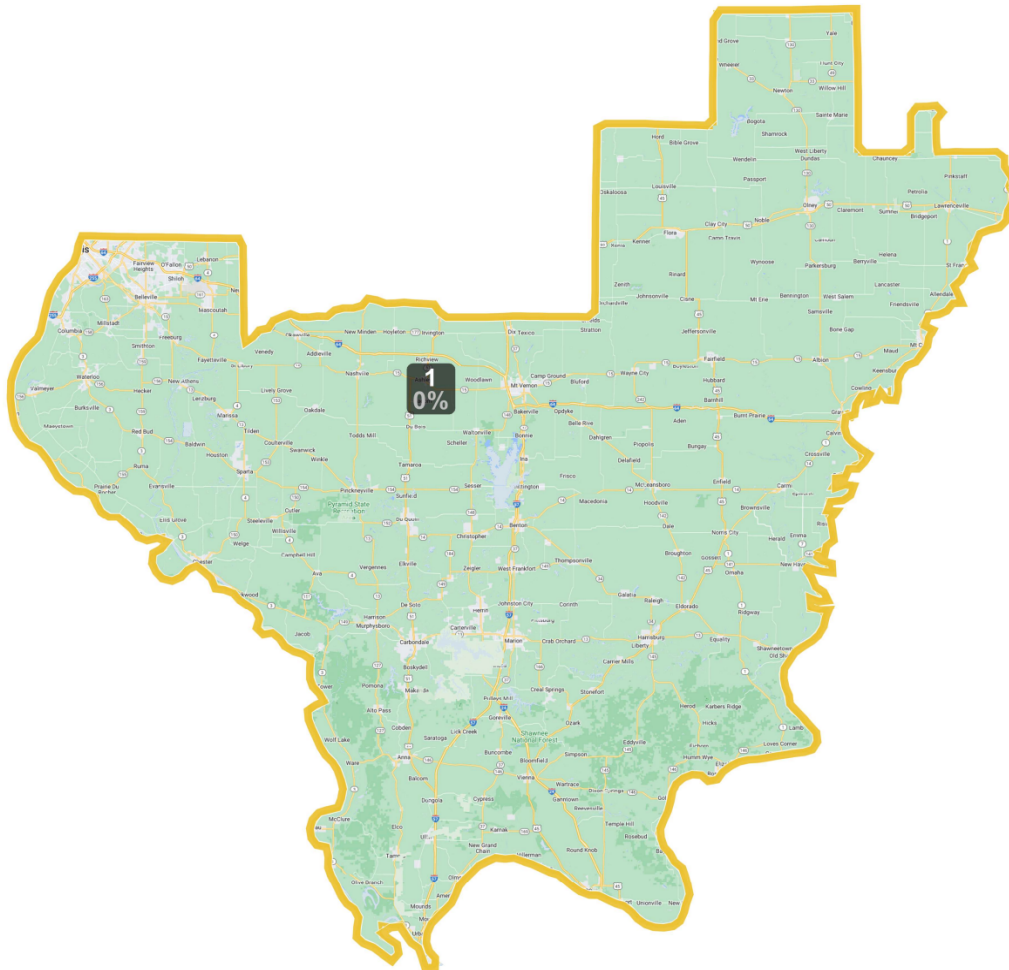
## **Plan Summary: Good Government**

Given these changes, my redistricting plan attempts to appropriately account for population changes while respecting political subdivision lines and other geographical boundaries, such as cities and towns. In my redistricting plan, I began redistricting by placing entire counties into 17 districts irrespective of population in order to minimize the number of counties being split in the later stages of redistricting. While maintaining county lines was an important principle to this plan, I defaulted to preserving towns and cities when it was necessary to break counties to reach a perfect population. An effective Good Government plan attempts to keep county splits below the number of congressional districts in the plan, which this plan achieves. This plan has 12 county splits spanning for all 17 districts. Additionally, this plan

includes two Black and one Hispanic majority-minority district. This paper discusses the legal implications and further challenges faced in constructing these districts and the overall plan.

## District Breakdown

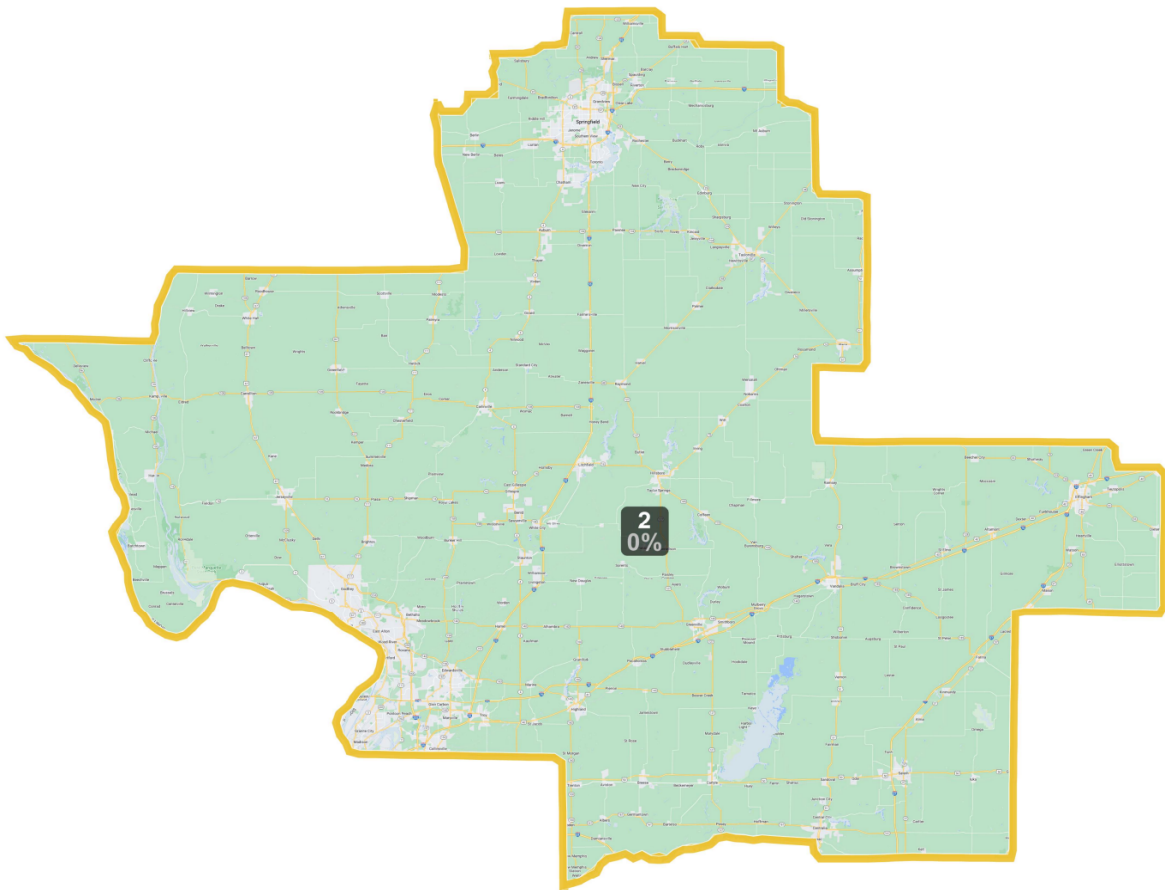
### District 1:



This district is located in the southernmost point of Illinois, including west to east from St. Clair to Lawrence County and north to south Jefferson to Alexander County. This district protrudes into Crawford County in order to satisfy the perfect population equality rule and has a

compactness Reouk score of .5. This district contains a supermajority of White voters and is predicted to be a Republican district.

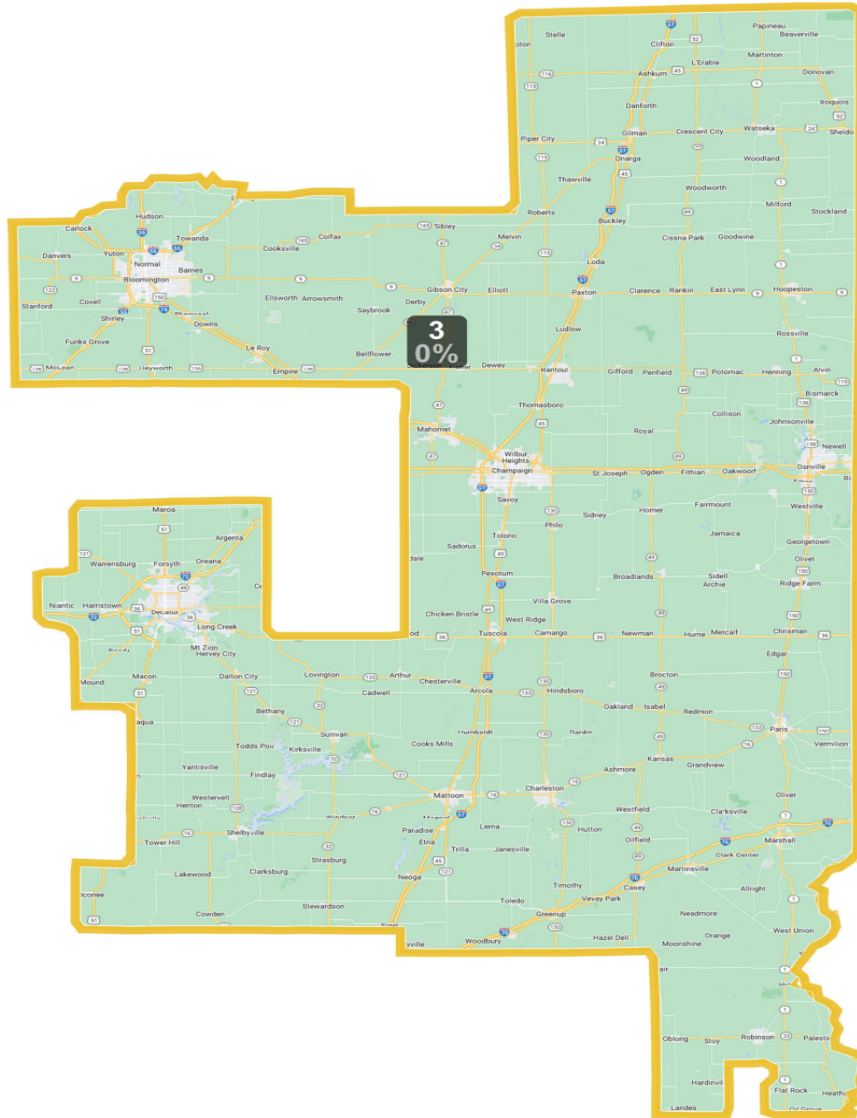
### **District 2:**



This district is located in the southern part of Illinois, including west to east from Calhoun to Effingham County and north to south Sangamon to Clinton County. This district loses part of Sangamon County to District 4 in order to satisfy the perfect population equality rule and has a compactness Reouk score of .49. This district contains a supermajority of White voters and is predicted to be a Republican district.

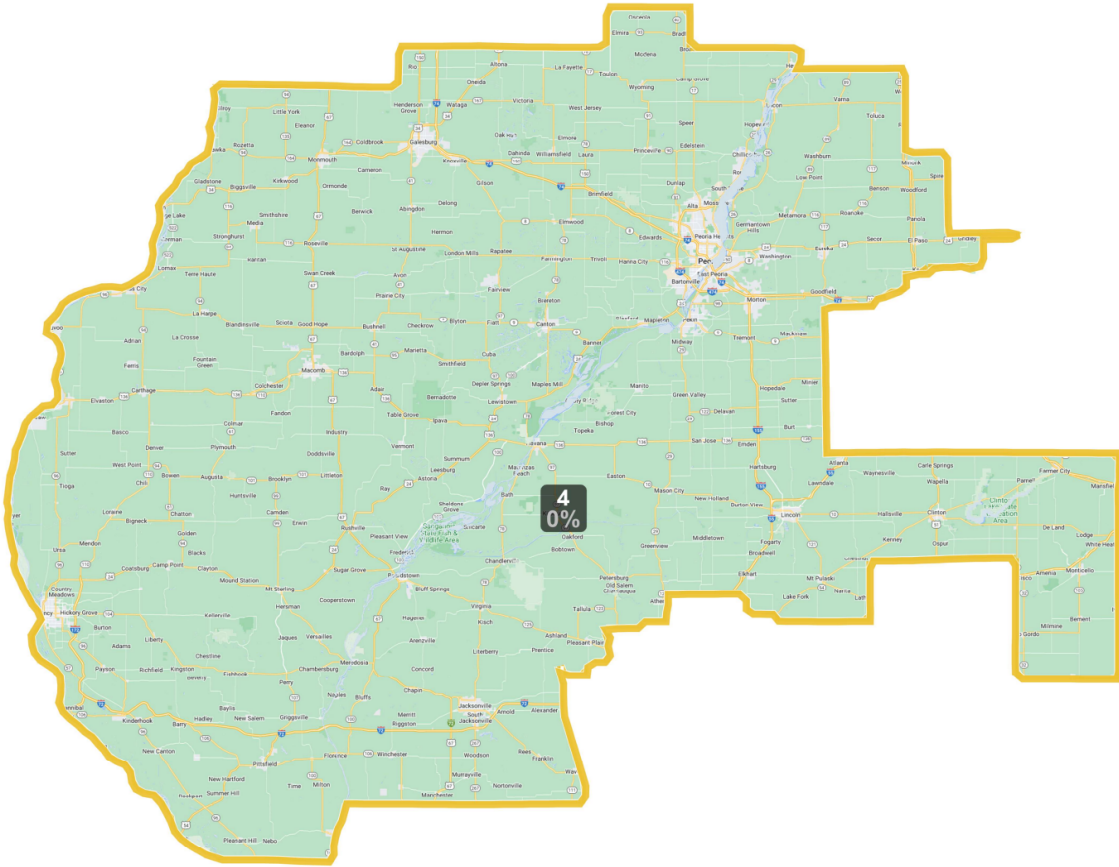


### District 3:



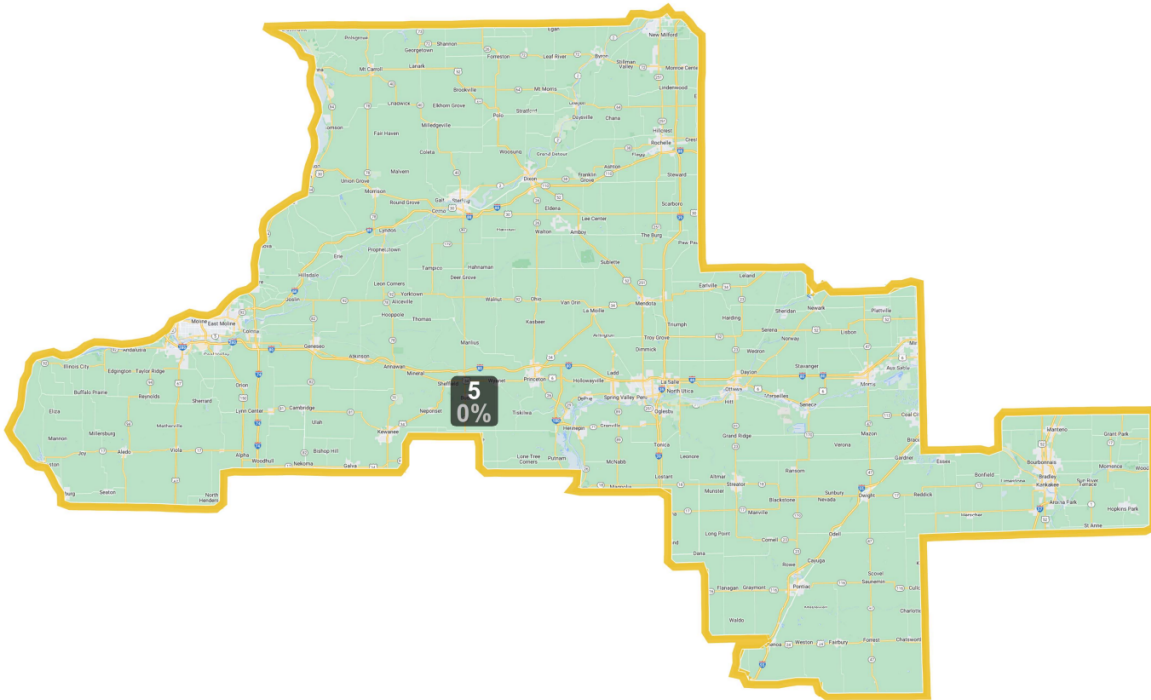
This district is located in the southeast point of Illinois, including west to east from Mclean to Vermilion County and north to south Crawford to Iroquois County. This district loses part of Mclean County to District 4 and Crawford County to District 1 in order to satisfy the perfect population equality rule and has a compactness Reouk score of .46. This district contains a supermajority of White voters and is predicted to be a Republican district.

## District 4:



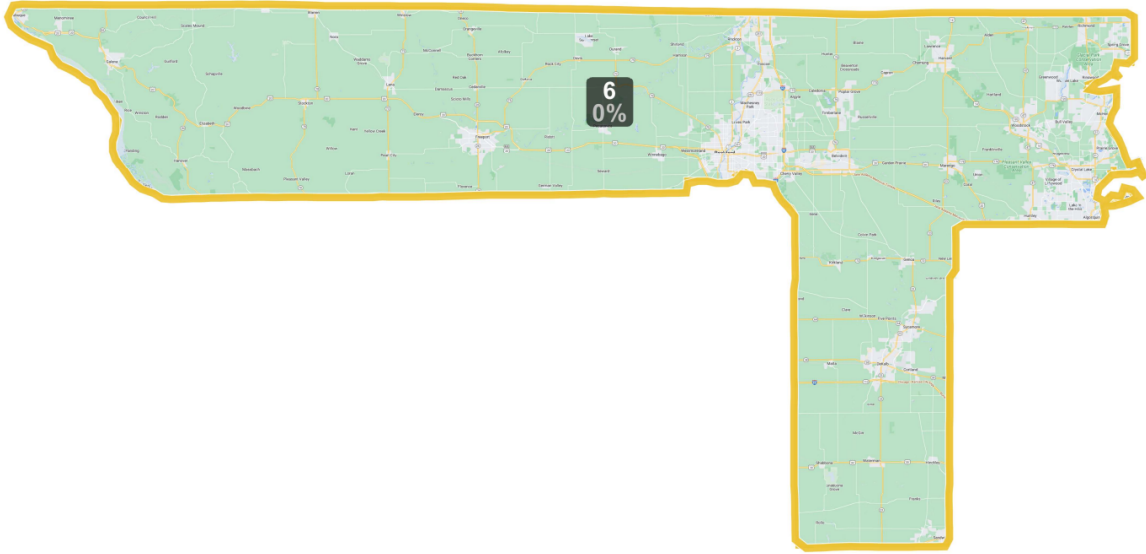
This district is located in the center point of Illinois, including west to east from Hancock to Woodford County and north to south Stark to Pike County. This district protrudes into McLean County in order to satisfy the perfect population equality rule and has a compactness Reouk score of .59. This district contains a supermajority of White voters and is predicted to be a Republican district.

## District 5:



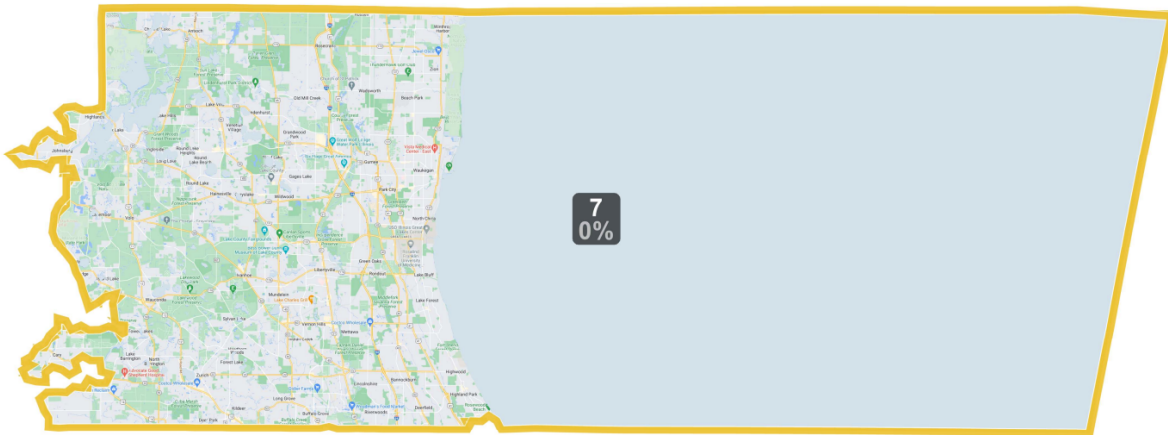
This district is located in the northern point of Illinois, including west to east from Rock Island to Kankakee County and north to south Ogle to Livingston County, with a tail in the eastern direction. This district protrudes into Winnebago County in District 6 and Mclean in District 3 in order to satisfy the perfect population equality rule and has a compactness Reouk score of .33. This district contains a supermajority of White voters and is predicted to be a Republican district.

## District 6:



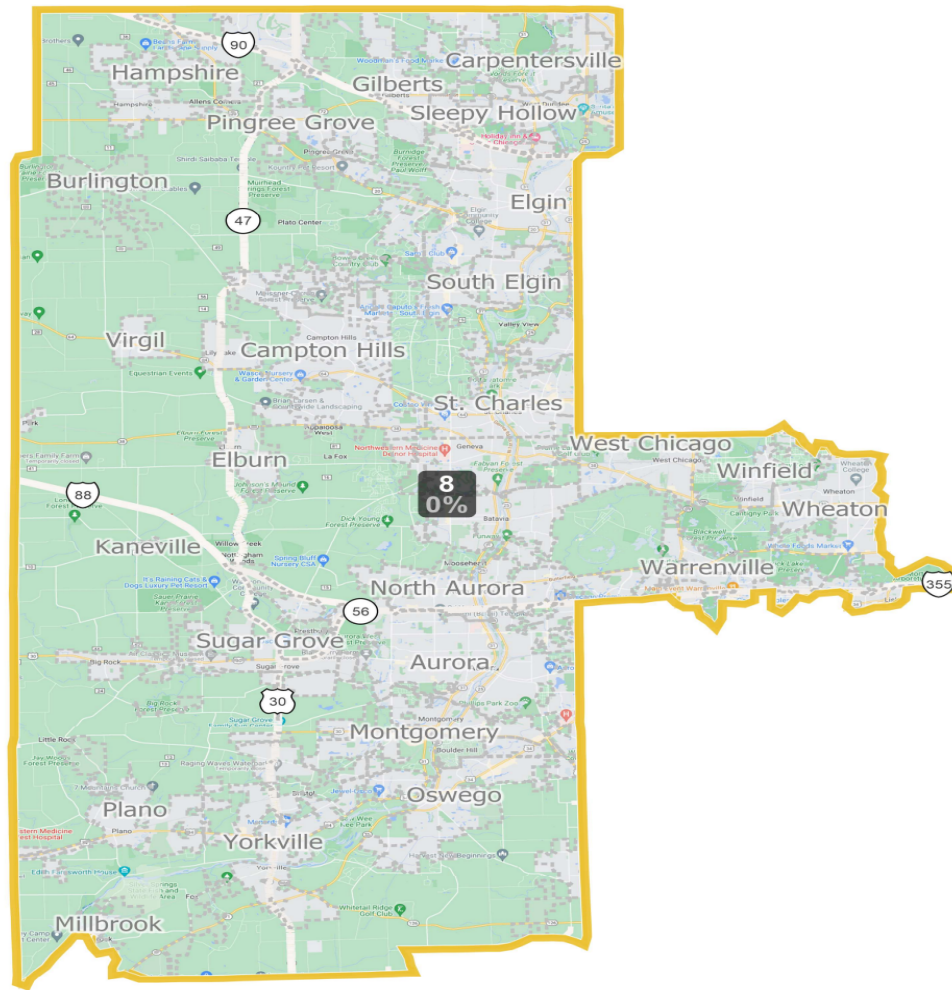
This district is located in the northernmost point of Illinois, including west to east from Jo Daviess to McHenry County and north to south Boone to Dekalb County. District 7 protrudes into District 6 in order to satisfy the perfect population equality rule and has a compactness Reouk score of .29. This district contains a supermajority of White voters and is predicted to be a lean Republican district.

## District 7:



This district is located in the northeastern point of Illinois, including Lake County and part of the body of water. This district protrudes into District 6 in order to satisfy the perfect population equality rule and has a compactness Reouk score of .39. This district contains a majority of White voters and is predicted to be a Democratic district.

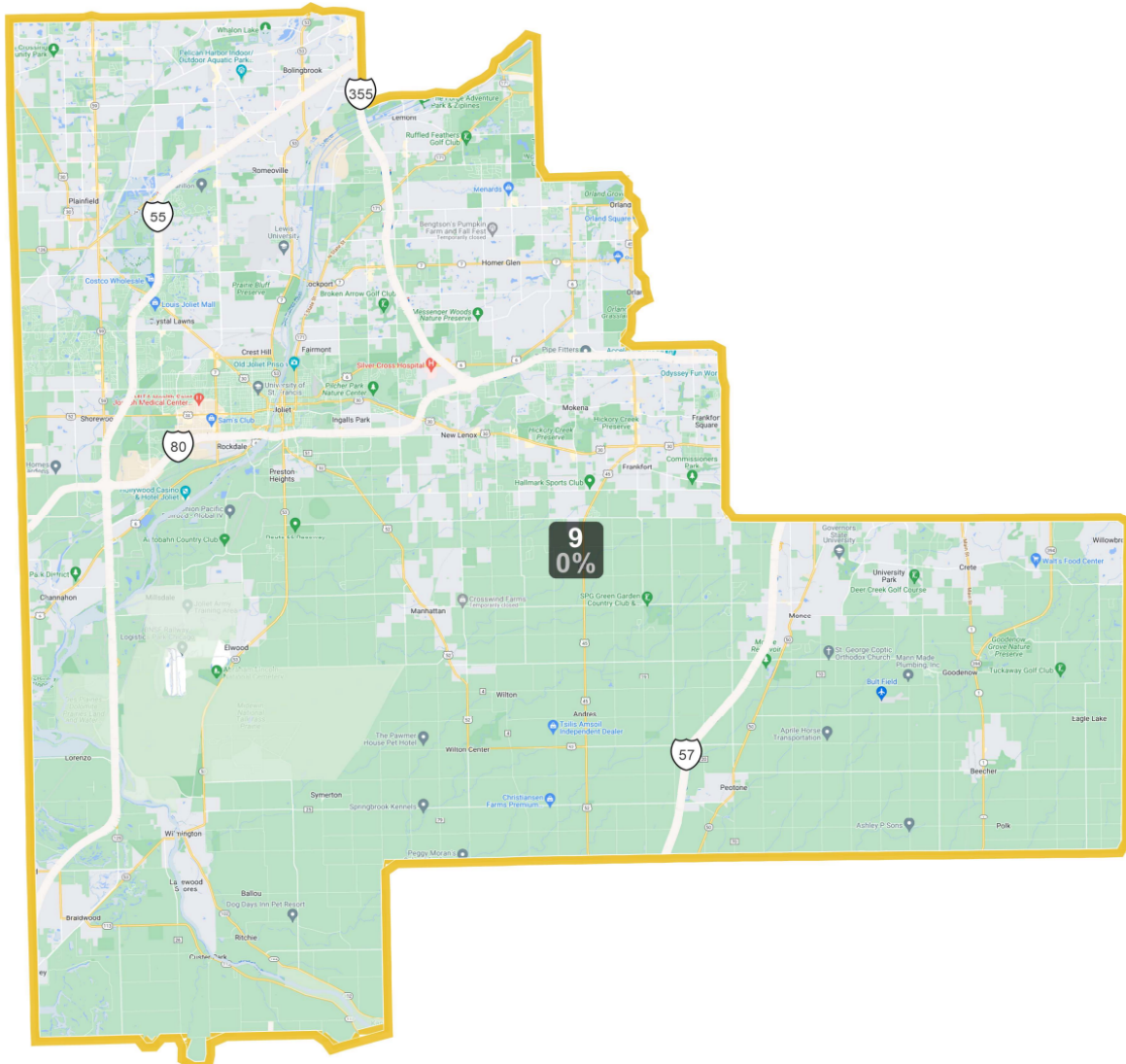
## District 8:



This district is located in the southernmost point of Illinois, including Kane and part of Kendall County. This district protrudes into DuPage County in order to satisfy the perfect population equality rule and has a compactness Reouk score of .49. This district contains a majority of White voters and is predicted to be a Democratic district.

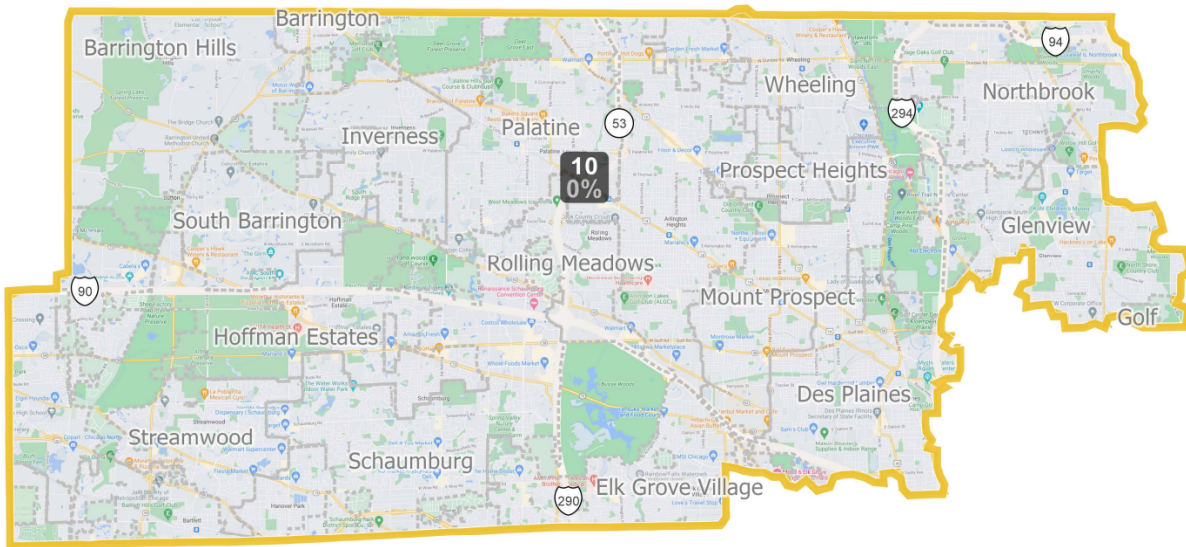


## District 9:



This district is located in the northeastern part of Illinois, consisting of Will County. This district protrudes into District 12 and 17 in order to satisfy the perfect population equality rule and has a compactness Reouk score of .48. This district contains a majority of White voters and is predicted to be a Democratic district.

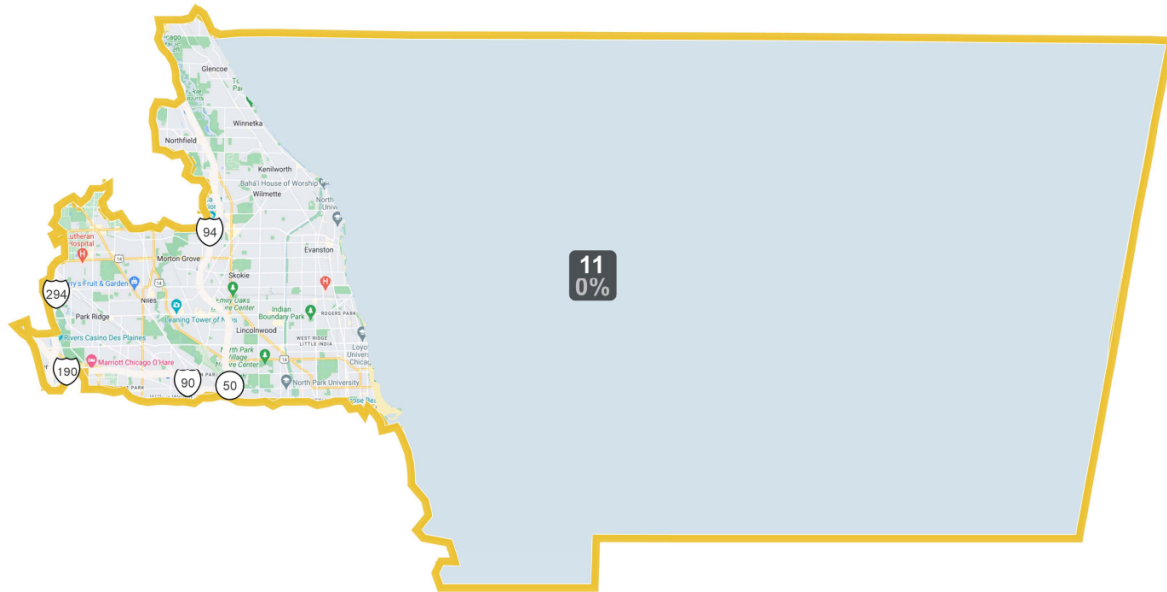
## District 10:



This district is located in the northerneastern part of Illinois, including Cook County that is split into multiple districts. This district protrudes into Cook County in order to satisfy the perfect population equality rule and has a compactness Reouk score of .44. This district contains a majority of White voters and is predicted to be a Democratic district.

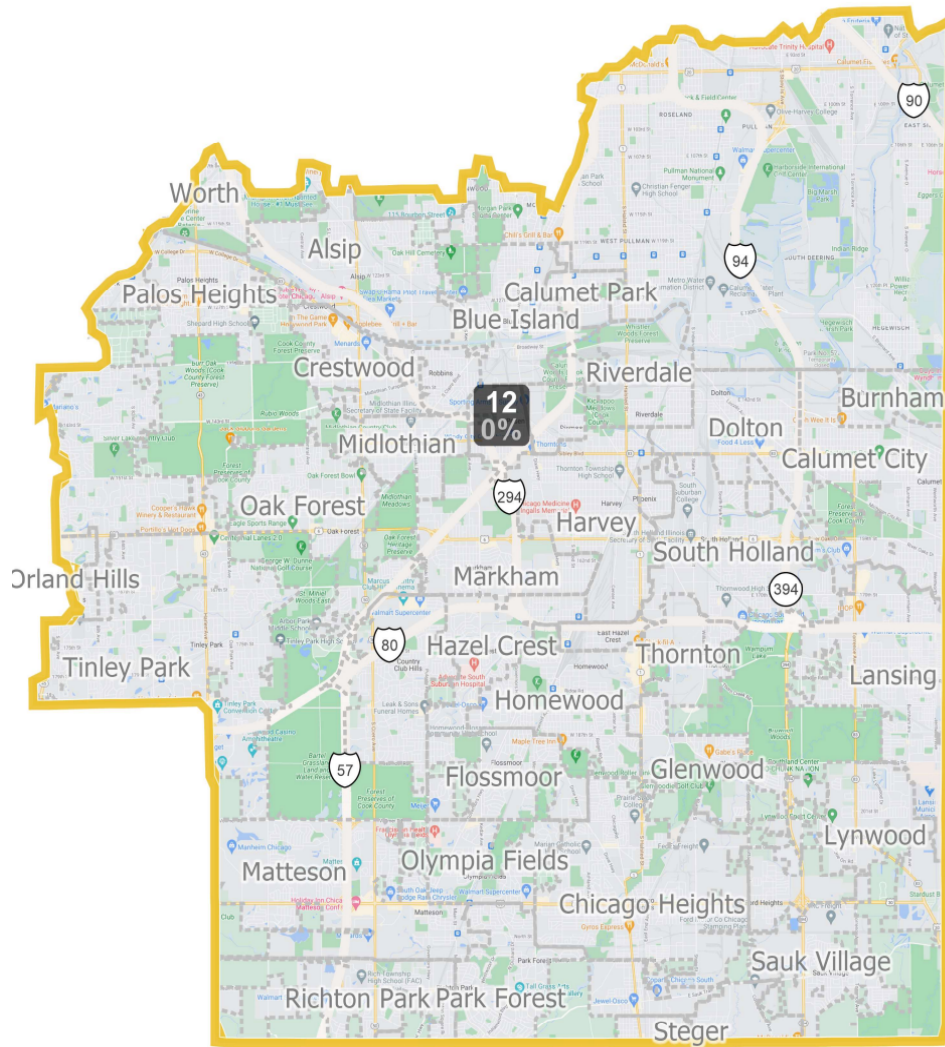


## District 11:



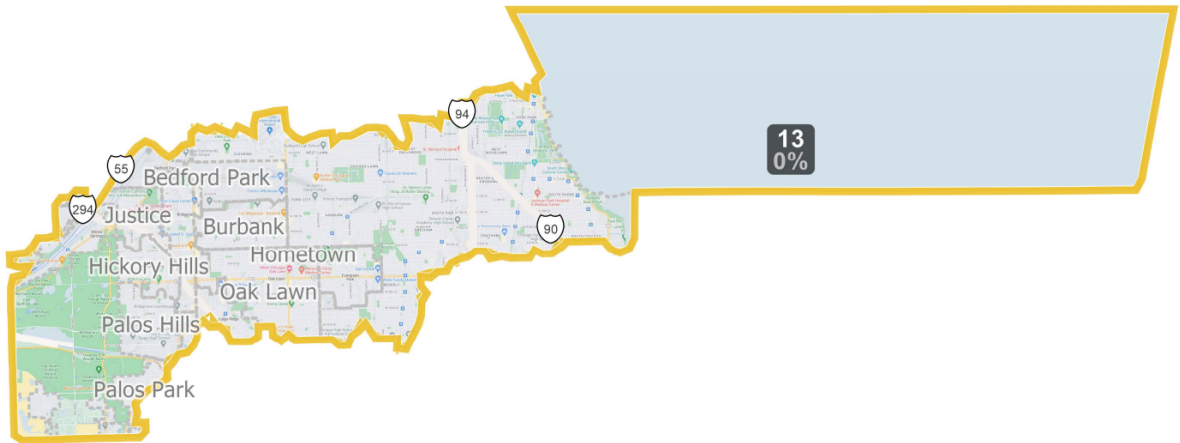
This district is located in the northeastern part of Illinois, including Cook County that is split into multiple districts. This district protrudes into Cook County in order to satisfy the perfect population equality rule and has a compactness Reouk score of .43. This district contains a majority of White voters and is predicted to be a Democratic district.

## District 12:



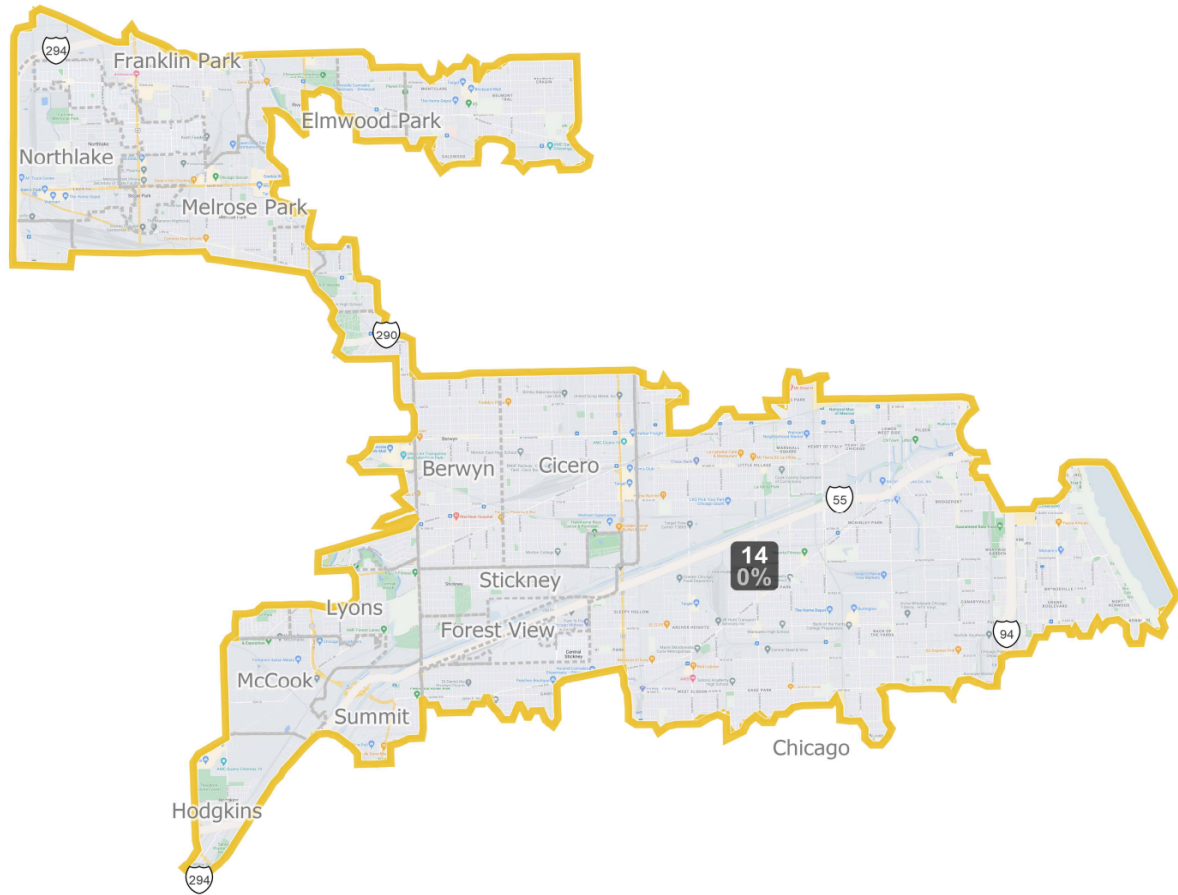
This district is located in the northeastern point of Illinois, including Cook County that is split into multiple counties. This district protrudes into Cook County in order to satisfy the perfect population equality rule and has a compactness Reouk score of .61. This district contains a majority of Black voters and is predicted to be a Democratic district. It is also one of the two Black majority-minority districts.

### District 13:



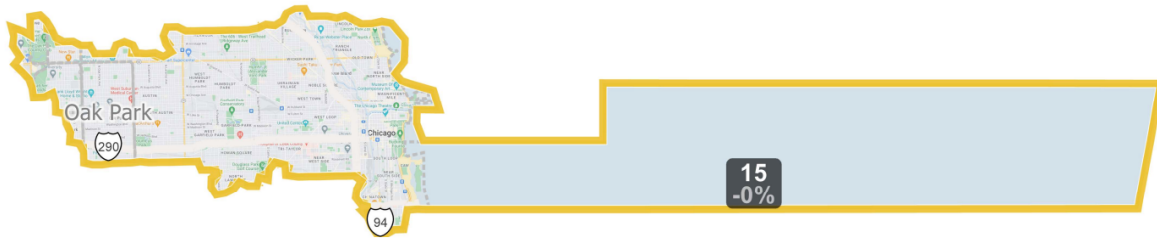
This district is located in the northeastern part of Illinois, including Cook County and a tailing body of water. This district protrudes into Cook County in order to satisfy the perfect population equality rule and has a compactness Reouk score of .19. This district contains a majority of Black voters and is predicted to be a Democratic district. It is the second Black majority-minority district in the plan.

## District 14:



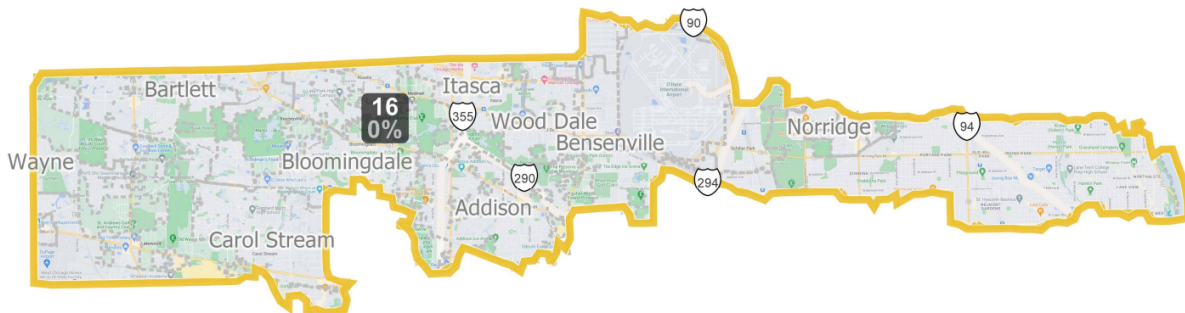
This district is located in the northeastern point of Illinois, including Cook County. This district takes an elongated shape in order to satisfy the perfect population equality rule and create an eligible majority-minority. It has a compactness Reouk score of .26. This district contains a majority of Hispanic voters and is predicted to be a Democratic district. It is the Hispanic majority-minority district.

### District 15:



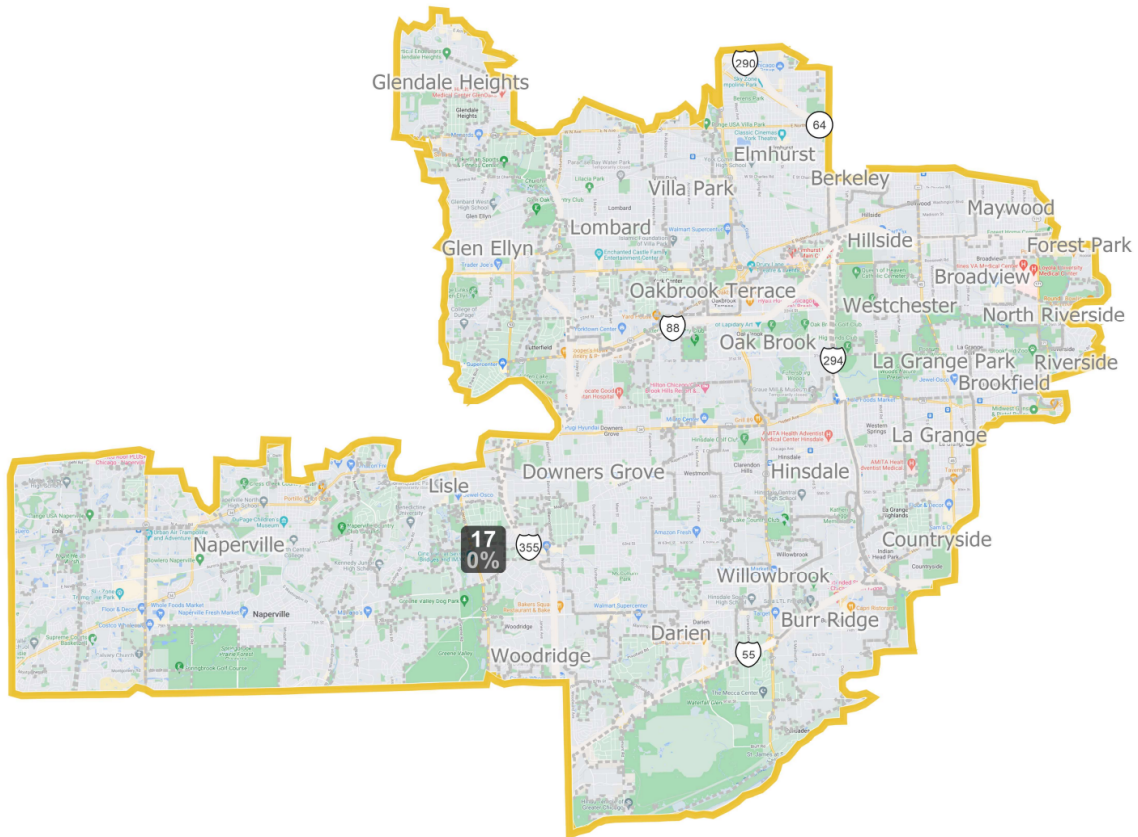
This district is located in the northeastern part of Illinois, including Cook County and the tailing body of water. This district forms a narrow tail-like shape in order to satisfy the perfect population equality rule and has a compactness Reouk score of .13. This district contains a plurality of white voters and is predicted to be a Democratic district.

### District 16:



This district is located in the northeastern part of Illinois, including DuPage and Cook County. This district protrudes into two counties in order to satisfy the perfect population equality rule and to create compact majority-minority districts below. It has a compactness Reouk score of .17. This district contains a majority of white voters and is predicted to be a Democratic district.

## District 17:



This district is located in the northeastern point of Illinois, including DuPage and Cook County.

This district protrudes into two counties in order to satisfy the perfect population equality rule and has a compactness Reouk score of .42. This district contains a majority of white voters and is predicted to be a Democratic district.

## Federal and State Laws

### *Federal Law*

#### One Person, One Vote

One of the crucial requirements of redistricting law is the “**one person, one vote**” rule. Under Article I, Section 2 of the U.S Constitution it is required that Congressional districts “be apportioned among the several states...according to their respective numbers...” In *Karcher v. Daggett*, the Supreme Court held that any deviation from perfect population equality in congressional districts must be justified with respect to traditional districting principles, including respect for political subdivisions, compactness, and avoiding contests between incumbents. Hence, a population deviation of 0% is regarded as the effective standard when drawing congressional lines. This rule is often known as the perfect population rule, in which population deviation ideally should not exceed more or less 1 person in each congressional district.

However, in *Tennant v. Jefferson County Commission*, it was determined that a state can deviate from this rule if they can demonstrate that it was done to respect political subdivisions. The concerned state would have to prove there was no alternate way to draw the congressional district without having a greater population deviation. As of the 2020 census, Illinois has a population of 12,812,508 placing the ideal population for each district at about 753,677 people. All districts in this plan meet this criteria. This plan fulfills the perfect population equality rule as all proposed districts have a population deviation of 0% and most hover at perfect equality or a difference of one person.

#### *Shaw v. Reno*



In *Shaw v. Reno*, the Supreme Court affirmed that a plaintiff could challenge a redistricting plan under the 14th Amendment's Equal Protection Clause if they believed that the legislature had used race as the controlling factor in drawing a plan. The court applies a strict scrutiny in regards to Shaw claims meaning that the Court will directly weigh the constitutionality of the law and action. Thus, a plan that is devised to draw congressional districts simply on the basis of race would be deemed illegal—unless intentionally required by the VRA. Illinois is a diverse state and has a large population of African Americans and Hispanics spread throughout the state. Nonetheless, I have applied traditional redistricting principles to ensure that districts are compact and respect political subdivisions rather than any other extraneous factors, besides the districts required for the VRA.

### Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act

Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act necessitates the creation of majority-minority districts when these three conditions are present:

- (a) the minority is large enough to constitute a majority of the citizen voting age population in a potential district;
- (b) the minority community is politically cohesive (meaning they vote together);
- (c) whites vote sufficiently as a block to prevent the minority from electing its candidate of choice. (In addition there needs to be some history of discrimination under what is known as the Senate Factors.)



This three pronged test originates from *Thornburg v. Gringles*. Illinois consists of a large population of Black and Hispanic voters that could easily form a minority-majority district. Additionally, these voters tend to be politically cohesive, meaning they tend to vote similarly. Lastly, there are vast amounts of historical evidence of disenfranchisement in that state that cause Illinois to fall under the VRA clause. Given these conditions, Illinois is required to draw three majority-minority districts, including two Black and one Hispanic. District 12 and 13 are both Black majority; and District 14 is a Hispanic majority district. They hold a majority of 54.43%, 52.66% and 50.21% respectively.

### ***State Requirements***

Illinois' congressional lines are drawn by the state legislature subject to gubernatorial veto. The legislature is also primarily responsible for drawing state legislative lines, but if it fails to pass a plan, then authority falls to an eight-member backup commission. If a majority of those eight backup commissioners cannot agree on a plan, the Supreme Court submits two individuals from different political parties to the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of State will randomly choose one of the two to serve as a tiebreaker on the commission.

The state law itself does not deviate much from the federal standards. As the State Constitution echoes, "Legislative Districts shall be compact, contiguous and substantially equal in population. Representative Districts shall be compact, contiguous, and substantially equal in population." There are no additional state laws mandated pertaining to redistricting. Nonetheless, this plan considers all traditional and ethical redistricting principles.

## **Contiguity**

A district is generally thought to be contiguous if it is possible to travel between any two points in a district without crossing into a different district. For congressional districts, 34 states require contiguity—including Illinois. All districts in this plan are fully contiguous and no district protrudes between another district's boundaries.

## **Compactness**

Another vital aspect of redistricting involves compactness, which requires a district to be concentrated in a geographic region. The current enacted plan for Illinois averages a Reock compactness score of .27, which is a low score for compactness. This Good Government Plan significantly improves on compactness. The average Reock score is .4 and the maximum score is a .61. The most compact district would have a score of 1. Yet, most districts in this plan exceed the average Reock score of the enacted plan.

Another statistical measure worth for comparison is the Polsby-Popper score. On average, the current enacted plan received a score of .14. This proposed plan received an average score of .28, almost twice the average of the enacted plan. The maximum score in this plan was a .46. Additionally, the compactness of the districts can be visually measured as well. The districts drawn in this plan are typically rectangular or square in which a center can be easily spotted. These are signs of a relatively compact district. On the other hand, the enacted plan contains overreaching districts that expand over geographic areas and is difficult to determine its center.

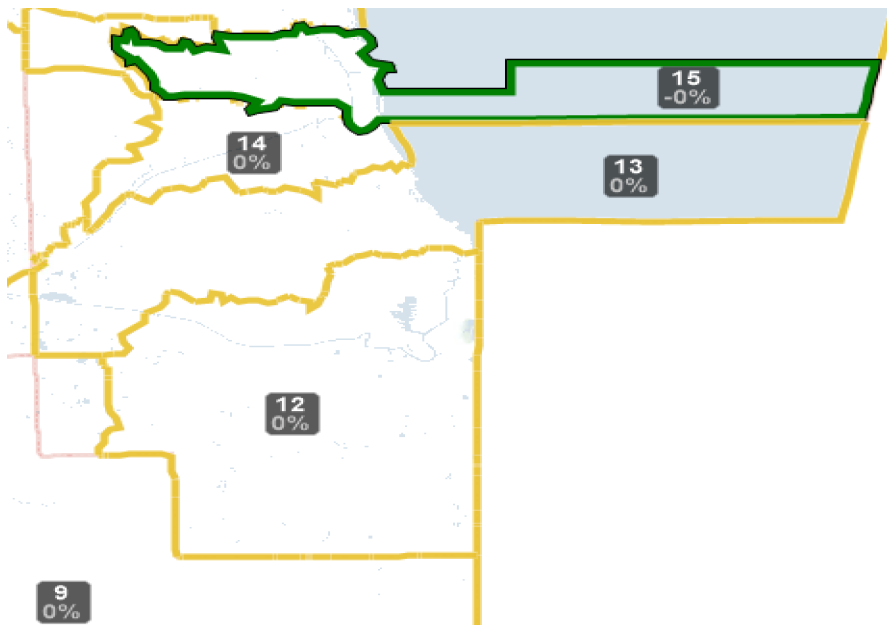
## **Political Subdivisions Splits**

Political subdivision splits entail any split between counties and towns among different congressional districts. Since this plan prioritized the Good Government principle, it was extremely important to ensure that counties and towns were not unnecessarily split among different congressional districts. Ideally, an effective good government plan would be one that minimizes county splits below the number of districts present in the state; in this case, that would be under 17. This plan splits 12 counties. Eight of these splits are shared between two districts and the remaining are shared among multiple districts. These counties include: Champaign, Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kankakee, Crawford, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, Winnebago, Sangamon, and McLean. Of these counties, DePage and Cook had to be split because it contained more voters than a district should hold. Additionally, this Good Government Plan makes a concerted effort to not split cities and towns as well. Hence, many of the district lines are squiggly instead of straight because they are accounting for the cities and towns that may be unintentionally broken when the counties were split.

In contrast, the current enacted plan involves over 32 split counties. This includes: Boone, Bureau, Champaign, Coles, Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Ford, Fulton, Henry, Kane, Kankakee, LaSalle, Lake, Livingston, Macon, Madison, McDonough, McHenry, McLean, Mercer, Peoria, Piatt, Putnam, Sangamon, St. Clair, Stephenson, Tazewell, Vermilion, Warren, Will, and Winnebago. While both this plan and the enacted plan share some split counties in common, the enacted plan extends to more split counties that my proposed plan successfully manages not to split. An [independent redistricting website](#) concluded that splits in the enacted plan affects almost 72% of the state's voters.

## Majority-Minority Districts

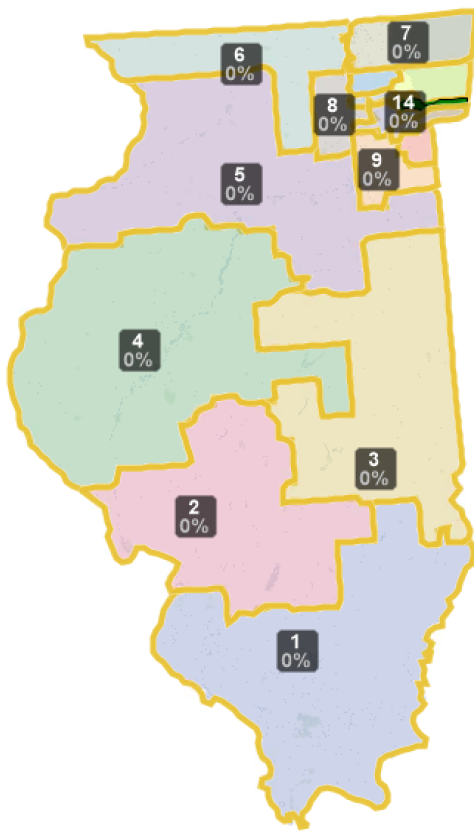
Majority-minority districts are unique to particular states that hold a large population of minorities. Hence, it requires the creation of two Black minority-majority districts, and given population, also a Hispanic majority-minority district. In this plan, the two Black minority districts are District 12(54.43%) and District 13(52.66%). Additionally, District 14(50.21%) is a Hispanic majority-minority district. District 14 closely mirrors the enacted plan's majority-minority district as a lot of the Hispanic population is concentrated in the same area. Though, this plan's majority minority district is more geographically concentrated and compacted than the enacted version. Similarly, the two Black majority-minority districts in this plan are more concentrated and compact in comparison to the enacted or proposed districts.



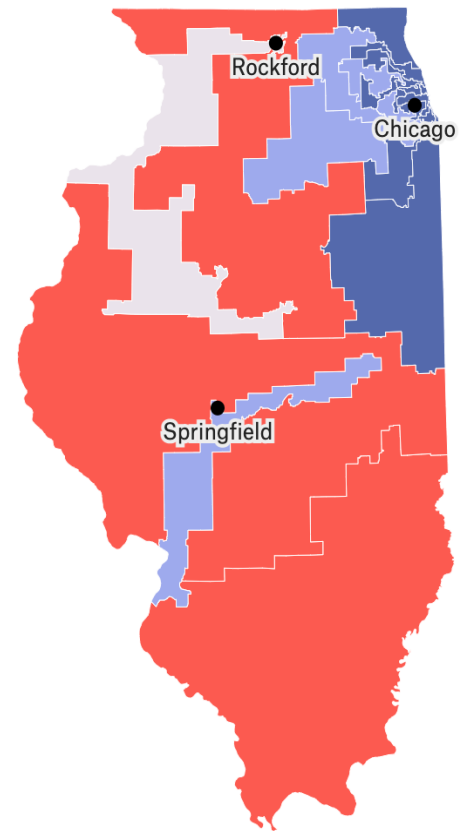
*Proposed majority-minority districts in this plan: District 12-14*

## Comparison to Adopted Plan

As alluded to throughout the various parts of this plan, there are significant differences between the current enacted plan and this proposed plan, which includes compactness, splits, and overall construction. Most importantly, the official proposed plan employs many county splits, which my plan attempts to minimize to 12 counties. While this could be reduced further, my plan also attempted to create compact majority-minority districts, which the enacted plan does not prioritize. Furthermore, the enacted plan generally indulges in creating a more expansive and less compact district, which deviates from my plan's attempt. Visually, it is apparent that the enacted plan contains more elongated districts than this proposed plan contains. Below is a side-by-side comparison:



*Proposed in this plan.*



*Enacted.*

## **Partisan Considerations**

This plan attempts to create a fair congressional map without weighing political benefits. PlansScore rendered a .3% efficiency gap for this plan. Alongside, the model predicts that 55.9% of the voting share would be Democratic while 44.1% would go towards Republicans. While the plan does favor Democratic candidates, it also creates five districts that strongly tilt in the Republicans' favor. On the other hand, the current enacted plan only creates three opportunities for Republicans to win.

## **Challenges**

Redistricting consists of various challenges depending on the nature of the particular state. Illinois is a particularly challenging state to redistrict keeping in mind the various factors, such as the VRA and concentrated populations in particular regions. Illinois holds a lower density of its population in its lower regions, which allows it to more easily allocate counties into districts with minimal county splits. Though, the upper regions are quite challenging given that population is heavily concentrated in areas like Chicago. Hence, it becomes necessary to split a large city like Chicago into various different districts. At the same time, the minority population is concentrated into the same area as well. As a result, the Northeastern region of Illinois becomes a complex area to redistrict, in order to meticulously achieve a majority-minority district and perfect population equality. In many instances, there weren't many census blocks that could achieve perfect population equality because they would contain a considerable amount of people that would tip the population deviation.

Additionally, since some of the cities and towns were so heavily populated, it became necessary to break them in order to achieve perfect population equality. Also, many cities lay at

the border of counties which had to be split in order to achieve perfect population equality. In this case, I attempted to include the entire city as part of the new district in order to avoid splitting the political subdivision, in line with the principle I applied to this plan. Nonetheless, there were various examples of where towns and cities had to be broken up in order to achieve perfect population equality.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this plan for Illinois' congressional map brings forth a Good Government principle, in which the map attempts to minimize the number of county and city splits. Consequently, this plan has split 12 counties in comparison to the 32 counties in the official proposed plan. Furthermore, this plan has shown to be fairer, more compact, and respects political subdivisions to a greater degree. While the number of political subdivision splits could be lower, I attempted to create more compact majority-minority districts, which necessitated that other counties were split in order to meet the perfect population equality rule. Nonetheless, at each point of this redistricting process, I have made a concerted effort to respect all political subdivisions and abide by traditional redistricting laws.