

Sajan Mehrotra

January 1, 2022

## New York Max Competition Plan Description

This map is a max competition plan for New York, aiming to create the maximum number of politically competitive districts. I define a competitive district as a district where the difference between the Republican and Democratic vote shares in the 2020 presidential election was at most 5 percentage points. Under this definition, the plan has 11 competitive districts: 8 in upstate New York (districts 18-25) and 3 on Long Island (districts 1-3), a substantial improvement over the current plan's three competitive districts (districts 1, 2, and 19).

Moreover, this plan contains a greater number of competitive districts than either of the two proposals from the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission ([NYIRC](#)), the bipartisan commission tasked with drafting New York's redistricting plans. Using data from the Center for Urban Research's *Redistricting & You* [website](#), the commission's "Names" proposal has 3 competitive districts and their "Letters" proposal has 4 competitive districts.

After prioritizing competitiveness, the plan aims to keep political subdivisions intact in compact, contiguous districts. In total, the map splits 16 counties, 50 cities/towns, and 48 precincts. In contrast, the enacted plan splits 19 counties, 40 cities/towns, and 22 precincts.

To maintain competitive districts without unnecessarily splitting cities and towns, the map connects Democratic urban and suburban hubs with Republican-leaning rural areas. For example, district 20 connects Albany to more rural regions in Fulton and Herkimer counties. Similarly, district 23 connects liberal Rochester suburbs to the more conservative Chautauqua and Cattaraugus counties.

One tradeoff to this approach is that the plan often separates cities from many of their suburbs; that means even if political subdivisions are generally intact, the plan may potentially break up communities. For example, Syracuse lies in district 24, while many of its suburbs are in district 19. Creating competitive districts necessitates such separation: if the entire Syracuse metropolitan area were in a single district, it would lean heavily toward the Democrats. The plan similarly separates the Buffalo metropolitan area in districts 26 (containing Buffalo) and 23 (containing some of Buffalo's suburbs) and the Rochester metropolitan area in districts 25 (containing the city) and 23 (containing some of the suburbs). However, in many cases, these metropolitan areas would have to be broken up regardless, because they are too large to fit in an individual district — for example, Buffalo's metropolitan area has a [population](#) of over 1.1 million people, so it must be split.

Connecting rural regions to urban centers also reduces compactness to some extent. For example, this plan's mean Polsby-Popper compactness score is 0.26, and its mean Reock compactness score is 0.38. In contrast, my good government [plan](#) for the state has a mean Polsby-Popper score of

0.29 and a mean Reock score of 0.43. However, this plan still contains fairly compact districts: outside of New York City (which has some non-compact majority-minority districts), the minimum Polsby-Popper score is 0.18 and the minimum Reock score is 0.29. For reference, the enacted plan has minimum Polsby-Popper and Reock scores of 0.21 and 0.28 respectively (not including districts in New York City) and average Polsby-Popper and Reock scores of 0.35 and 0.42 respectively.

In addition to competitiveness and good government considerations, the map preserves the enacted plan's high levels of minority representation. As in the current congressional map of New York, districts 13 and 15 are majority Latino by citizen voting age population (CVAP), and districts 5 and 8 are majority Black by CVAP. The map preserves Latino opportunity districts 7 and 14, Asian opportunity district 6, and Black opportunity district 9, maintaining comparable CVAP and voting age population (VAP) percentages of the relevant minority groups in each district.