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**To:** [Senate Redistricting](#)  
**Subject:** INETMAIL: Redistricting Public Input  
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Regarding: Congressional

Message:

On September 27, the Texas Senate Redistricting Committee released its Congressional redistricting map. Last week, the Senate committee released redistricting maps for the Texas Senate and State Board of Education. Next week, the Texas House of Representatives will release their version of the maps.

The purpose of redistricting every 10 years is to look at current Census data and reorganize voting districts so that they represent the demographic makeup of the population that live in each district. (Racial makeup is the only basis on which redistricting maps can be legally challenged. The Supreme Court ruled that partisan gerrymandering is acceptable.)

Senator Joan Huffman, the Chair of the Senate Redistricting Committee, declared that her redistricting map was not racially biased because, she said in a public forum, (1) she did not use Census data on race in drawing maps, and (2) she invited each Senator into Room 460 at the Sam Houston building, out of public eye, to ask how each one thought their district should be shaped. Senator Huffman said she concurred with the Senators' opinions, with a few exceptions.

If one takes Senator Huffman at her word that she did not look at race at all, she violated several principles of redistricting, including: 1) that race should be considered, 2) that redistricting should create districts made of "communities of interest"—people who share economic, social, and cultural interests—so they have an opportunity to influence policy and elect representatives that reflect their interests, and 3) that the process should be open to community input.

By default, letting Senators choose their own districts is racial gerrymandering. Here's why: Anglos make up less than 40% of the Texas population but they have 67% of the Congressional seats, 71% of the Texas Senate, and 68% of the Texas House. As for partisan gerrymandering, Republicans got 53% of the 2020 Congressional votes but 64% of the seats.

It gets worse with the new map: The current map includes 22 districts with white majorities, eight with Hispanic majorities, one with a Black majority and five that have no majority. The newly proposed map includes 23 districts with white majorities, seven with Hispanic majorities, none with a Black majority and eight that have no majority.

Perhaps the most artful work done by the Texas Senate Redistricting Committee is trimming off small percentages of minorities, Democrats and Republicans from one district and adding them to other districts. As a result, Democrats and minorities are deprived of the ability to elect someone they prefer, while increasingly unpopular Republicans, like Donna Campbell and Chip Roy, get a statistical cushion of 3% or so more Republican and white voters that makes the next election safer for them, and districts that went for Joe Biden in 2020 would favor Donald Trump if we use the proposed maps.

Republicans in the Texas Legislature are trying to rush this process through. They are releasing maps and asking for commentary in a few days. That is an impossible task for statisticians and demographers, much average citizens. Their maps come with very little data that could be used to evaluate the maps: For the average person, going through what data are readily accessible is a tedious, manual cut-and-paste exercise.

Nonetheless, those of us who care about democracy and justice must get involved in this process in the next couple of weeks that are our window of opportunity to make our opposition known. While it is unlikely that the Texas Legislature will reverse course, it is certain that the maps will be subject to lawsuits. Our testimony, whether written or in person, will become part of the record that goes forward with the lawsuit and will be important documentation that the citizens of Texas were denied an opportunity to participate in the redistricting process and have raised serious objections to decisions that were made.

