

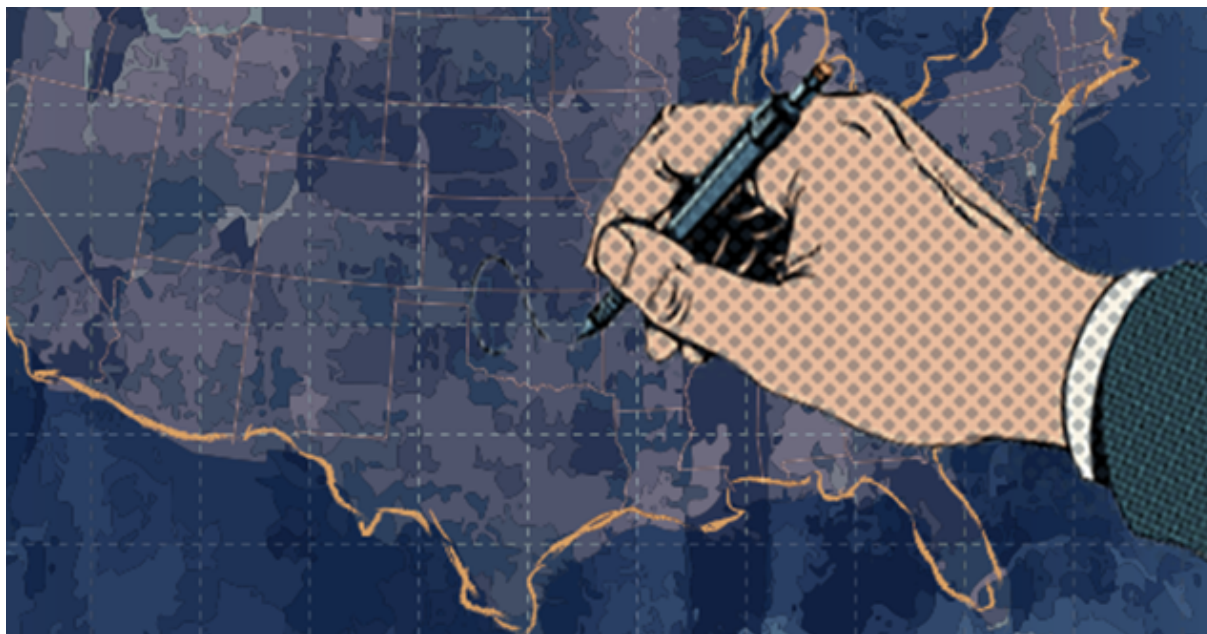


Want Competitive Elections? Don't Let Partisan Lawmakers Draw Districts

A new Brennan Center analysis finds that the few toss-ups on the House map were much less likely than the safer seats to have been drawn through a process controlled by one party

Annie Lo

October 24, 2018



SHARE



Districts drawn by lawmakers in trifecta states — states under unified one-party control — are nearly four times less likely to be toss-ups than districts drawn by courts, commissions, and legislatures under split control, a new Brennan Center analysis finds. It provides the latest evidence that if Democrats succeed

[Back to Blog >](#)

RELATED RESEARCH

[Citizen and Legislative Efforts to Reform Redistricting in 2018](#)

11/07/18

[Overview: Proposed Colorado State Legislative Redistricting Reform Amendment \(Amendment Z\)](#)

10/12/18

[Overview: Proposed Colorado Congressional Redistricting Reform Amendment](#)

in flipping 23 seats in the midterms to capture the House, it will be thanks in part to fairer maps drawn by courts and commissions.

The 435 House seats each fall into one of [seven categories](#), depending on the process used to draw them. We found:

Two hundred twenty-three U.S. House seats were drawn by a state legislature and governor of a single party. (Seven seats are at-large, so they're not included here.) Only 2.2 percent of those seats were rated by Sabato's Crystal Ball as toss-ups, as of October 18.

By contrast, over 8 percent of seats drawn by legislatures under split-control, courts, and all types of commissions were rated by Sabato's Crystal Ball as toss-ups.

Put differently, courts, commissions, and split-control legislatures drew 17 out of 22 ultra-close seats. If legislatures in trifecta states had drawn competitive seats at the same rate, at least 13 more congressional seats would be in play.

Broadly, we found that districts drawn by courts or commissions composed of political appointees were most likely to draw toss-up districts. Districts drawn by legislatures in states controlled entirely by Republicans were least likely to draw toss-ups.

Maps Drawn By	Total Number of Seats	Number of Toss-ups	% of Seats that are Toss-ups	Share of All Toss-ups	Share of All Seats
Legislatures in Trifecta States	223	5	2.2%	23%	52%
Courts, Commissions, and Split-control Legislatures	205	17	8.3%	77%	48%
Legislature – Republican Trifecta State	181	3	1.7%	14%	42%
Legislature – Democratic Trifecta State	42	2	4.8%	9%	10%
Courts	84	8	9.5%	36%	20%
Independent Redistricting Commission	62	4	6.5%	18%	14%
Political Appointee Commission	26	2	7.7%	9%	6%
Advisory Commission	4	1	25%	5%	1%
Legislature – Split-control State	29	2	6.9%	9%	7%

Because one district was incorrectly categorized, these

(Amendment Y)

10/12/18

RELATED NEWS

[Justice Roberts, Pay Attention to What Brian Kemp Did](#)

11/15/18 | CNN

['Textbook voter suppression': Georgia's Bitter Election a Battle Years in the Making](#)

11/10/18 | The Guardian

[Voters Voted for Voting](#)

11/07/18 | Politico

numbers have been revised slightly since publication.

(Image: BCJ/Getty/Shutterstock)

RELATED ISSUES: [Redistricting](#)

ISSUES

Money in Politics

Government &
Court Reform

Justice for All

Liberty & National
Security

Automatic Voter
Registration

Voting Rights and
Elections

Protect the Vote

ADVOCACY

Court Cases

Legislation

New Constitutional
Vision

RESEARCH

Publications

Analysis

Statements &
Testimony

MEDIA

Media Center

Press Releases

Multimedia

Newsletters

News

Events

Experts

ABOUT

About Us

Celebrating Justice
Brennan

Board of Directors

Staff

Programs

Events

Get Involved

Employment

Donate

Contact Us

[HOME](#)

[DONATE](#)

[PRIVACY POLICY](#)

[CONTACT](#)

[ACCESSIBILITY](#)



[GET INVOLVED](#)

Search...

