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All links are here and found at: **https://tinyurl.com/freedomgerry**

Username: students Password: C-SPANCLASSROOM

Would independent commissions improve the redistricting process?

1. First, define these terms Try searching Google or a dictionary for a definition.

2. Then, use these words in your deliberations and writing activities after you understand all sides of the issue.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Term | Explanation |
| Bipartisan |  |
| Nonpartisan |  |
| Legislature |  |
| Independent commission |  |
| Communities of interest |  |
| Reapportionment |  |
| Redistricting |  |
| Gerrymandering |  |
| Single-member Congressional District |  |
| Census |  |
| Packing (political) |  |
| Cracking (political) |  |
| Contiguity |  |
| Compactness |  |
| Population Equality |  |
| Safe Seat |  |

Background Articles

Should state legislatures be allowed to draw congressional district boundaries in such a way that the majority party in the state may gain an advantage?

Answer the following questions as you read the background article from the Washington Post

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/redistrictingexplained/2011/05/27/AGWsFNGH_story.html>

1) Why are states required to redistrict every 10 years?

2) What is the process for drawing congressional maps in most states?

3) How are lawmakers affected by redistricting?

4) Why does the article say that “mid-decade redistricting” can be seen as a “power grab?”

Answer the following questions as you read the background article from Governing Magazine

<http://www.governing.com/topics/politics/govredistrictingsupremecourtfloridavirginia.html>

1. Explain why the author of this article believes that “there is no longer a dormant time in the redistricting world?”
2. What is a partisan gerrymander?
3. If partisan gerrymandered districts are unconstitutional according to the U.S. Supreme Court, why are the number of legal challenges to the practice increasing?
4. Why does the author of this article believe that legal challenges to redistricting will increase after the 2020 census?

Background Article Questions

Would independent commissions improve the redistricting process?

Answer the following questions as you read the background article from The Washington Post

<https://redistricting.lls.edu/who-fed10.php>

1. Who were the two parties to the Arizona case before the Supreme Court?
2. Why did Arizona voters create an independent commission?
3. What word was central to the Court’s decision? Why?
4. Why don’t Republicans like the outcome of the court case?
5. Why do Democrats like the outcome of the court case?
6. What is preventing more states from creating independent commissions?

Answer the following questions as you read the background article from The NYTimes Upshot

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/02/upshot/independently-drawn-districts-have-proved-to-be-more-competitive.html?_r=0>

1. Which state first created an independent commission to handle Congressional redistricting?
2. What were the goals of the Arizona law, Proposition 106?
3. How competitive were districts created in Arizona after Proposition 106, compared to the rest of the US?
4. Who created Arizona’s election map in 1990, and how competitive were those districts compared to the rest of the country?
5. How does California’s commission differ from Arizona’s commission?
6. How competitive are California’s districts compared to the rest of the country?

Background Video Questions

Should state legislatures be allowed to draw congressional district boundaries in such a way that the majority party in the state may gain an advantage?

Answer the following questions as you watch the background video,

<http://www.cspan.org/video/?c4555575/reapportionmentredistricting>

1. What is the definition of Reapportionment?
2. What role does the U.S. Census play in reapportionment?
3. What is the definition of Redistricting?
4. Why is redistricting necessary at any level of legislature where that legislature is elected according to single member districts?

Answer the following questions as you watch the background video,

<http://www.cspan.org/video/?c4504032/gerrymander>

1. Who was Elbridge Gerry?

2. What was the outcome of redistricting for the Democratic-Republicans in the election of 1812?

3. How did Elbridge Gerry’s name become synonymous with partisan redistricting?

Answer the following questions as you watch the background video,

<http://www.cspan.org/video/?c4504127/packingcracking>

1. How is “cracking” used as a method of diluting representation? In your answer, discuss population concentrations of minority communities.
2. Based on the examples from the video, why might a map maker choose to pack rather than crack a community’s vote?
3. What does Professor Persily mean when he says there is a “goldilocks principle” to redistricting if your goal is to create accurate representation?

Answer the following questions as you watch the background video,

<http://www.cspan.org/video/?c4503825/rolegerrymanderingcongressionaldisfunction>

1. What does Former Rep. Floyd (DNY) mean when he says that redistricting can “destroy what made a district strong in the first place?”
2. What connection does Former Rep. Gonzalez (DTX) make between partisan redistricting and minority majority districts?
3. Former Senator Snowe (RME) indicates that an increase in the number of competitive seats in the U.S. House would help balance the political equilibrium. How would an increase in the number of competitive seats improve congressional dysfunction?

Would independent commissions improve the redistricting process?

Answer the questions as you watch the video, “Background on Independent Redistricting Commissions”

<http://www.cspan.org/video/?c4554892/backgroundindependentredistrictingcommissions>

1. Who complained about the maps created by Arizona’s independent commission?
2. What Constitutional argument was brought against Arizona’s independent commission?
3. How many states use commissions to determine Congressional maps?
4. How are Arizona and California unique when it comes to redistricting?
5. Will the Supreme Court decision lead other states to create independent commissions?
6. Do independent commissions lead to competitive elections?

Would independent commissions improve the redistricting process?

Answer the following questions as you watch the video, “Americans for Redistricting Reform”

<http://www.cspan.org/video/?c4555623/backgroundindependentredistrictingcommissions>

1. What are the “Americans for Redistricting Reform” concerned about?
2. Why would a state choose to redistrict mid-decade instead of right after a census?
3. Describe how gerrymandering may benefit the minority party.

Use this chart to take notes on the strongest arguments for and against the question as you watch videos and read the linked articles. For each argument include the source (the name of the speaker or writer), a direct quote, and a summary in your own words.

 **Would independent commissions improve the redistricting process?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **In favor of Commission** | **Not Convinced Commissions Make a difference** |
| Source:Quote:Summary:   | Source:Quote:Summary:  |
| Source:Quote:Summary:  | Source:Quote:Summary:  |
| Source:Quote:Summary:  | Source:Quote:Summary:  |
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