

# DRAWING NEW LINES

HOW ADVOCATES IN  
NEW JERSEY PUT  
COMMUNITIES ON THE  
REDISTRICTING MAP



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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**“Legislators represent people, not trees or acres. Legislators are elected by voters, not farms or cities or economic interests.” Reynolds v. Sims, 377 U.S. 533, 562 (1964)**

Fair Districts New Jersey (“FDNJ,” or “Fair Districts”) came together as a coalition to advocate for a redistricting process that is impartial, transparent, community-driven, and fair. How congressional and legislative district boundaries are drawn matters because redistricting determines representation, which in turn, determines how schools, hospitals and essentials services, among other crucial issues, are managed. Redistricting is about power. By maximizing public input in the process and improving independence, FDNJ sought to put power where it belongs: in the hands of the people.

This report provides a record of the coalition’s advocacy for a fair and community-led redistricting process in New Jersey in 2021 to 2022. Above all, the coalition’s aim was to ensure that the voices of ordinary citizens—and in particular New Jersey’s communities of color—were represented in the redistricting process. This report is meant to be a resource and compendium of lessons learned for future advocates to engage their constituencies in the redistricting battles to come.

Among many notable achievements, the coalition brought together advocates and individuals from across the state who created their own racial equity and unity maps to show New Jersey’s redistricting commissions what fair representation could and should look like. The coalition also successfully advocated for the commissions to hold an unprecedented 10 public hearings each in which speakers ranging from high school students to longtime community leaders—reflecting New Jersey’s substantial and growing racial, religious and ethnic diversity—advocated for their “communities of interest” to be considered in drawing district lines.

Those interviewed for this report include coalition members, nonprofit leaders, Rutgers University interns, members of the public who provided testimony at redistricting hearings, and Judge Philip Carchman, who served as the “tiebreaker” for the 11-member Legislative Apportionment Commission.

# Key Recommendations for Advocates

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## **We offer three primary recommendations for future advocates:**

1. **Timing:** Start early! Redistricting advocacy should begin well before hearings are scheduled; ideally as early as the start of the Census collection.
2. **Data:** Advocates should confirm that state-provided data is complete and accurate. The discrepancy between Census data and prison-adjusted redistricting data provided by the state created extra work for advocates and ultimately resulted in irresolvable slight discrepancies between different map-making platforms.
3. **Coalition map-making:** Working effectively in a coalition is dependent upon having certain agreements in place from the start. Map-making could be streamlined and made more effective by clarifying expectations, setting goals, and agreeing on best practices prior to beginning map-making.

In addition to recommendations, the coalition identified organizational challenges and successes related to: hiring advisors and consultants; identifying communities of interest; supporting smaller community groups; timing of activities; overcoming power dynamics; and maintaining a united front.

## **Recommendations for Reforms**

Recommendations are divided into two sections: Procedural reforms to improve the way in which the redistricting commissions conduct their work, and Structural reforms that would change the composition of the commissions. Procedural reforms should be adopted that build on the progress made over the course of the 2020 redistricting cycle: the commission should commit to more public hearings, greater transparency, increased accessibility, and non-partisan mapmaking standards. But New Jersey is also in need of fundamental structural reform in order to prevent gerrymandering and ensure all communities have a voice in our democracy. Following successful examples in other states, New Jersey should adopt independent redistricting commissions that are composed of ordinary citizens, not sitting legislators or partisan appointees. Finally, the state should also clarify the recently enacted prison gerrymandering statute to ensure an accurate reporting of racial and ethnic demographics.

# INTRODUCTION

For decades, New Jersey's political establishment has benefited from an entrenched system of privilege and power, enabled by a redistricting process that allows politicians to pick their constituents, instead of the other way around. New Jersey's Democratic and Republican politicians and their operatives gather privately in hotel conference rooms to pore over maps and hammer out who would run for office in which districts—leaving the public out in the cold. The result should surprise no one: For decades, New Jersey's politicians have been overwhelmingly white and male, in a state that is on a fast track to becoming majority-people of color in the next 10 years (i.e., one in which the non-Hispanic white population is not a majority of the population).<sup>1</sup>

Redistricting is the process of drawing new voting district boundaries for state legislative and federal congressional districts based on Census population data. When the redistricting process is not fair, the result may be gerrymandered districts, manipulated by the ruling political party to maintain and consolidate its power, thus eroding the principles underpinning a representative democracy.

Redistricting—and associated problems of gerrymandering—has long been on the radar of the League of Women Voters (LWVUS), both nationally and in New Jersey. In 2017, the League of Women Voters of New Jersey (LWVNJ, or “the League”) launched Fair Districts New Jersey (FDNJ, or “Fair Districts”). The coalition was made up of organizations and advocates in the state who believed that a different way was possible. Together, they embarked on a collective advocacy effort, inspired in part by states such as California and Arizona that had established independent redistricting commissions in recent years. The group's name was adopted from Fair Districts Pennsylvania, a similar effort taking place across the Delaware River.

As FDNJ shifted from legislative advocacy to on-the-ground efforts for the 2020 redistricting cycle, the coalition—the first of its kind in the state—was aided by these key factors:

- Critical financial support from The Fund for New Jersey, which rallied other funders to the cause.
- The growth of advocacy groups representing New Jersey's communities of color, reflecting an increasingly diverse population.
- Advances in technology that, for the first time, made open-source district mapmaking available to all.
- Increased public awareness of redistricting and gerrymandering following national controversies around the 2010 redistricting cycle.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mike Schneider, “Census Shows US is Diversifying, White Population Shrinking,” Associated Press, August 12, 2021. <https://apnews.com/article/census-2020-house-elections-4ee80e72846c151aa41a808b06d975ea>



Fair Districts' objective was to advocate for a redistricting process that was impartial, transparent, community-driven, and fair. In doing so, the coalition hoped to achieve two larger goals: (1) to promote fair redistricting and (2) to deepen community engagement in the redistricting process, prioritizing New Jersey's communities of color. Beyond a doubt, Fair Districts achieved both of these goals.

This report describes Fair Districts' efforts to take redistricting in the Garden State out of the back rooms and into the public realm. The purpose of this report is twofold:

(1) To provide a record of the coalition's advocacy for a fair, transparent and community-led redistricting process in New Jersey from 2021 to 2022.

(2) To create a resource and compendium of lessons learned for future advocates to rely on when they engage in the redistricting battles to come (following the 2030 decennial Census).

This report is based on 20 one-on-one interviews with Fair Districts funders, coalition leaders, staffers, and Rutgers University interns, as well as with the community members who joined them in the struggle for equal representation. (A complete list of all interviews is available in Appendix C).

Readers of this report should be encouraged by all the coalition achieved, even though the final redistricting maps produced by the commissioners demonstrate that more work remains to be done. This record and these findings should serve as a roadmap for future success. There were many important "firsts" in this cycle's redistricting process, starting with the remarkable achievement of the advocates who together created their own maps that showed the commissioners what fair representation could and should look like.

Above all, the coalition's aim was to ensure that the voices of ordinary citizens—and in particular New Jersey's communities of color—were represented in the redistricting process. Ultimately, says the League's Executive Director Jesse Burns, "It's about more than a map; it's about showing individuals and communities that they are a powerful force regardless of what the issue is going to be."

In sharing these experiences, Fair Districts hopes to inspire the next generation of activists to take up the fight as the 2030 redistricting cycle looms just eight years from now. If future advocates take just one piece of advice from this report, it should be this: *Start now!*

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<sup>2</sup> Justin Fox, "How the Republicans lost their House edge in midterms," (Analysis) The Washington Post, December 9, 2022. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/how-republicans-lost-their-house-edge-in-midterms/2022/12/09/d30f1074-77b9-11ed-a199-927b334b939f\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/how-republicans-lost-their-house-edge-in-midterms/2022/12/09/d30f1074-77b9-11ed-a199-927b334b939f_story.html)

# PART I: PLANTING THE SEEDS FOR CHANGE

Fair Districts was established in New Jersey at a time when grassroots redistricting reform movements were beginning to make strides across the country.<sup>3</sup> While the League, the founding member of the coalition, had been advocating for an independent redistricting commission,<sup>4</sup> “there were not a lot of coordinated efforts by advocates to work together” during the last redistricting process, recalls Jesse Burns, the League’s Executive Director. “There was no unity mapping, testimony gathering, or coalition-building. Very few people even testified. I thought this could be much more powerful if we had a nonpartisan effort.”

The earliest and most active members of the coalition included the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice (“the Institute”), the United Black Agenda (a statewide coalition of nonprofits focused on racial justice), and the League. Other early coalition members included New Jersey Citizen Action, NJ Appleseed Public Interest Law Center, the Good Government Coalition of New Jersey, Waterspirit, the New Jersey Working Families Alliance, Faith in New Jersey, Clean Water Action, and more.

In the first few years of its existence, the group focused chiefly on high-level system change and building public support for redistricting reforms. But by late 2020, following the tumultuous first year of the COVID-19 pandemic and the usual partisan shenanigans in appointments of the state legislative and congressional redistricting commission members, it was time to start drawing up plans to put community redistricting on the map. Those plans required staffing, expertise and, most of all, funding.

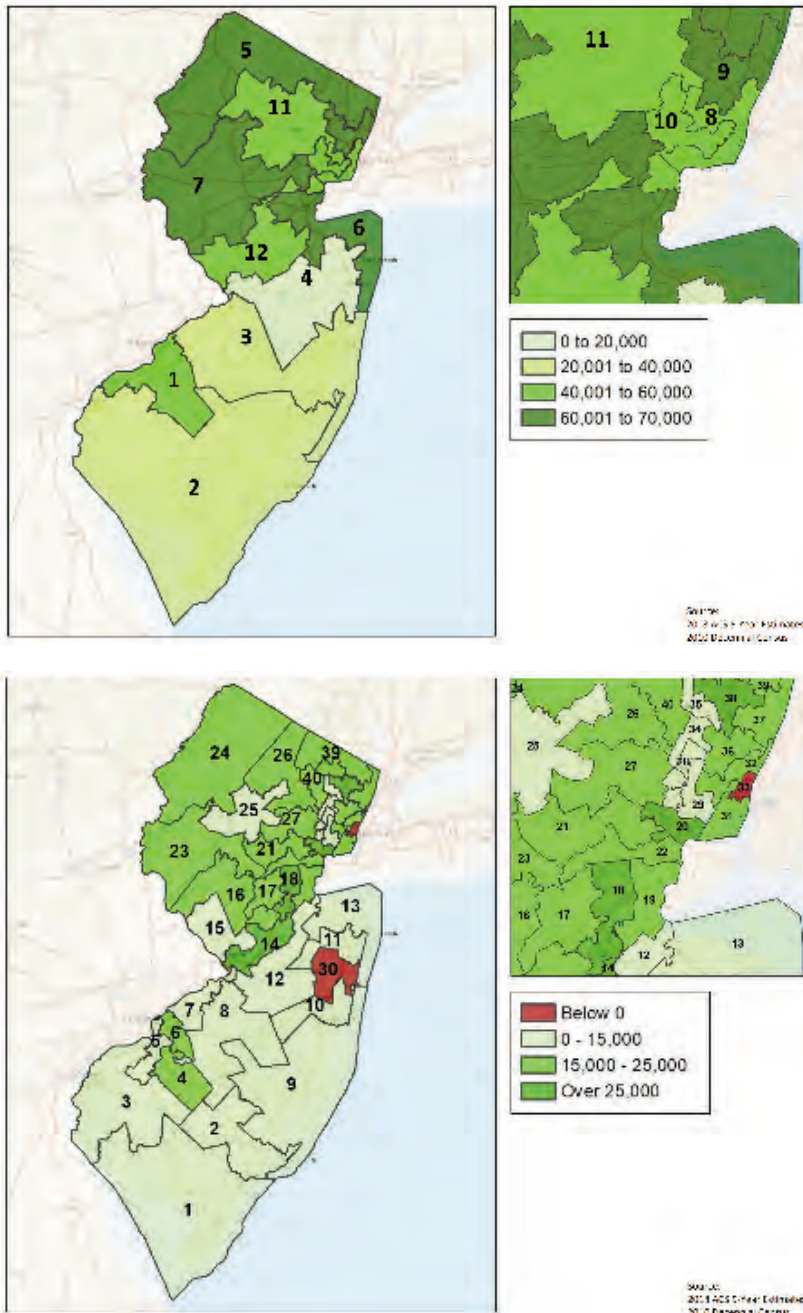
Enter The Fund for New Jersey (FFNJ, or “The Fund”), a private grantmaking institution focused on public policy. In the years leading to the 2020 Census, The Fund had sparked the creation of a public/private partnership that contributed more than \$11.5 million toward Census enumeration in the state with the goal of accurately and completely counting all residents of New Jersey, with particular focus on communities of color and urban communities. The effort was a success: New Jersey’s complete count totaled 400,000 more residents than the Census Bureau had anticipated, a disparity larger than any other state in the nation. The Fund’s focus then turned to ensuring that residents in the Garden State were not only accurately counted, but fairly represented.

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<sup>3</sup> Peter Miller and Brianna Cea, “Everybody Loves Redistricting Reform,” (Analysis), Brennan Center for Justice, December 5, 2018. <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/everybody-loves-redistricting-reform>

<sup>4</sup> Helen Kioukis, “Independent Citizens, Not Partisan Politicians, Must Tackle Redistricting,” (Op-ed), NJ Spotlight News, Sept. 18, 2018. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2018/09/18-09-17-op-ed-independent-citizens-must-tackle-redistricting-not-partisan-politicians/>

In mid-2020, as the Census work wrapped up, the Fund's president, Kiki Jamieson, began to gather advocates, many of whom had been involved in Census work, to create a strategic plan of action. To illustrate the need (to both advocates and to potential funders), the Fund commissioned a set of maps depicting the mismatch between New Jersey's diversity, which had grown considerably since the last Census, and that of its elected representatives. As the 2020 census results ultimately revealed, the rapid population growth among people of color in New Jersey was even greater than the maps, based on 2018 estimates, showed.



***Estimated Net Growth in People of Color by Congressional and Legislative District, 2010-2018***

*Credit: More Equitable Democracy*

In a series of meetings, a plan began to take shape. The Institute and the League quickly emerged as strong partners with many overlapping priorities and a history of close collaboration. Early on in the coalition-building process, Fair Districts brought together statewide and grassroots organizations from across the state. In addition to the various groups already engaging in redistricting efforts through FDNJ, groups that focused on specific demographics also became more involved: the New Jersey Alliance for Immigrant Justice for immigrant communities, the Latino Action Network (LAN) for Latinx communities, the Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF) for Asian communities, and the United Black Agenda for Black and faith communities. (A complete list of all organizations involved in the effort is available in Appendix D).

As the creator of Fair Districts, the League was identified as a leader within the coalition. The Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University, which focuses on studying the American political system and promoting public service, committed to providing both undergraduate interns as well as helping to recruit a graduate student to provide assistance with data and demographic analysis.

By the following spring, a budget and action plan were in place, and Jamieson had secured a pool of more than \$1 million from state and national funders. It was time to grow New Jersey's democracy.

## PART II: POWERING UP THE PEOPLE

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### **Assembling the Team**

Senior leadership from Latino Action Network Foundation (LANF), United Black Agenda (UBA), and New Jersey Alliance for Immigrant Justice (NJAIJ) became deeply involved in the coalition early on. Being part of a funded coalition made all the difference, according to Christian Estevez, LAN's President. "The Fund was super helpful in raising the money so we could hire staff to do the technical work, analyze the data, create the maps, and conduct the outreach. This was a great experience in the sense that all members of the team came together to get the job done."



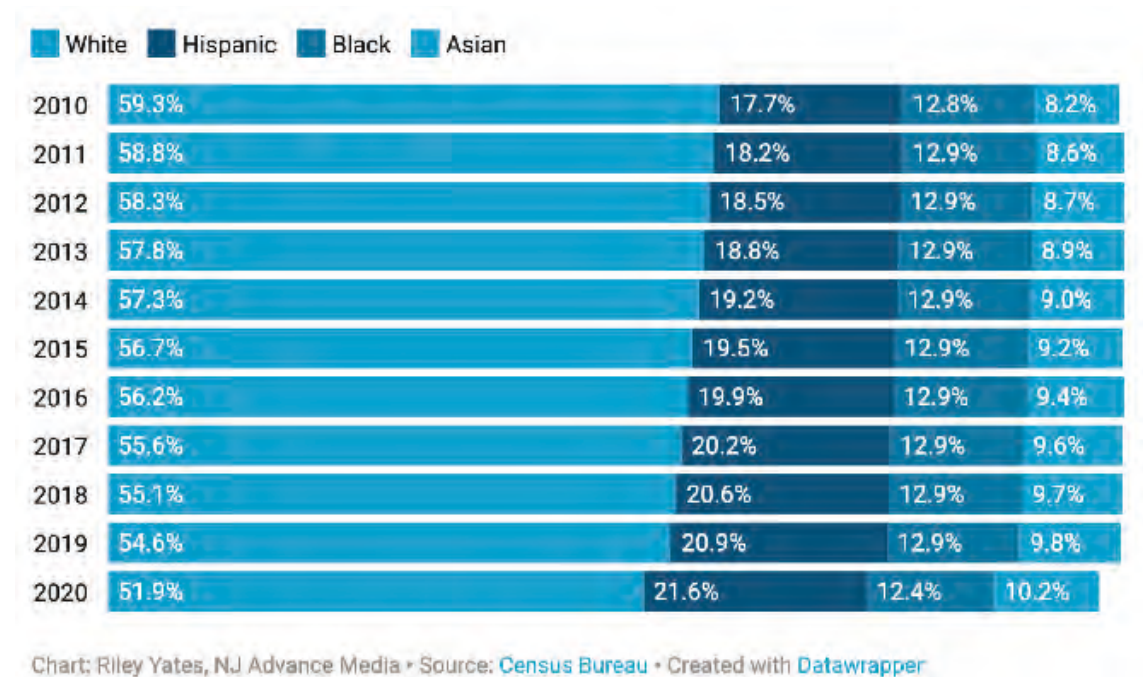
## Wading Into the Work

Now a fully funded effort, the coalition began its advocacy work in earnest over the spring and summer of 2021.

While there were organizers to hire and communities to engage in the mapmaking process, this was also the time to start pushing the commissioners for a fairer, more transparent redistricting process. The pandemic, and pandemic-related delays in the Census in particular, complicated matters, both logistically and politically, as discussed below under Organizational Challenges.

Even before the release of the new Census numbers, the coalition knew that diversity was on the rise in New Jersey. As illustrated below, the release of the 2020 Census data made the case for more diverse representation in government and for a redistricting process that was of the people, by the people, and for the people.

**New 2020 Census figures show that New Jersey’s nearly 9.3 million people are increasingly diverse, with growing Hispanic and Asian populations. This chart shows the proportional breakdown of the state’s population by race in recent years.<sup>5</sup>**



<sup>5</sup> Riley Yates, S. P. Sullivan & Michael Sol Warren, “N.J. is growing and getting more diverse, new Census numbers show,” NJ Advance Media, Aug. 13, 2021, <https://www.nj.com/news/2021/08/nj-is-growing-and-getting-more-diverse-new-census-numbers-show.html>

## Setting the Terms of the Debate

The moment the Census data was released on August 12, 2021, Fair Districts was ready with a public statement reiterating its demands for a public process and transparency in decision-making.<sup>6</sup>

The state legislative and congressional redistricting processes in New Jersey are conducted through bipartisan commissions: 11 members for state legislative redistricting and 13 members for congressional redistricting, with an equal number of members from each major party and one independent member. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court selects the independent member on the state legislative Apportionment Commission. The major-party commissioners vote to select the independent member of the congressional Redistricting Commission. In the case of a tie, which occurred for the first time during this cycle, the two names with the top votes are provided to the New Jersey Supreme Court, which selects the member.

There are few requirements on either commission to accommodate public participation in their deliberations, or to make their meetings accessible. The New Jersey Constitution requires three public hearings for congressional redistricting. Historically, commissioners have not exceeded that minimum. The legislative Apportionment Commission is not required to hold any public hearings, but by convention it typically conducts some; in the 2010 redistricting cycle it held five public hearings. There are no requirements on either commission to provide language access for speakers of languages other than English, or to make their hearings physically accessible. Neither of the commissions had ever publicly released draft district maps to the public, a frequent occurrence in other states.

It was with this background that the coalition determined its advocacy demands. Chief among them was a call for the state's legislative Apportionment and congressional Redistricting Commissions to each schedule at least 25 public hearings and prioritize public input in the mapmaking process.

“Public involvement will help preserve communities that share common interests from being broken up in the map-drawing process, diluting their voice and representation,” a coalition statement said. “Fair maps help ensure that communities receive the resources they need to fund essential services, from hospitals to schools.”

The coalition also called for:

- Clear, nonpartisan line-drawing standards.
- Investment in language access and translation services for all public meetings.
- Robust informational websites that allow for public submission of maps and testimony.
- A commitment to making the commissions' draft maps publicly available.
- A commitment to hold public hearings on the proposed maps prior to certification.
- Distribution of a publicly accessible written report justifying all map-making decisions.

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<sup>6</sup> FDNJ, “Fair Districts New Jersey Welcomes Release of Official Census Data and Calls for a Public Redistricting Process,” August 12, 2021. <https://www.njisj.org/fair-districts-nj-welcomes-census-data-release-calls-for-public-redistricting-process>

Remarkably, Fair Districts was able to achieve many of these goals—none of which had been in place in 2010—and during the hearings, demonstrated in real time why they were necessary. Unfortunately, some of the priorities, such as language access, were not achieved. Achieving greater transparency and accessibility in future redistricting processes will likely require enacting statutory or constitutional mandates.

## Trigger Dates and Tiebreakers

When the Census Bureau released its data in early August 2021, it also announced that a more user-friendly format would be released on or before September 30, emphasizing that the initial numbers would not change. This marked the first time in U.S. history that the Census Bureau had released official data on two separate dates.<sup>7</sup> In a comprehensive legal analysis sent to the Apportionment Commission on August 16, the Institute and the League made the case for the earlier August date should kick off the state legislative redistricting process. Despite ample evidence to back that statement, the Apportionment Commission proceeded with its plan for the later start date, with the first public hearing scheduled for November 6, 2021 based on the September 30 data release date. Similarly, the congressional Redistricting Commission's first public hearing was set for October 23, 2022.

It was a loss, but the coalition had laid down an important principle. On the plus side, the later “trigger” date gave the coalition more time to pursue other battles.

The next looming battle was the choice of tiebreaker, the independent member who would have the deciding vote in case of a deadlock on which map to certify (which was likely, given the equal partisan makeup of the two commissions). With party control in the U.S. House of Representatives up for grabs amid a volatile and hyperpartisan national political climate, the choice of New Jersey's congressional redistricting tiebreaker was closely watched on the national stage.<sup>8</sup>

The formation of the partisan delegations on each commission had already taken place, largely behind closed doors but with many dramatic leaks and reversals as politicians jockeyed for the plum appointments considered stepping stones to power.<sup>9</sup> FDNJ had done its part to influence the process, providing recommendations for a diverse slate of candidates who were not sitting lawmakers, but the coalition's input was largely unwelcome. The Democratic commission members kept the coalition at arm's length, but Democratic staff met and communicated with coalition members. The Republican

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<sup>7</sup> United States Census Bureau, “Redistricting Data Product Frequent Asked Questions (FAQs)”, August 5, 2021. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/decade/2020/planning-management/release/redistricting-data-product-faqs.html>

<sup>8</sup> Stephen Wolf, “The Daily Kos Elections Guide to How Redistricting Will Unfold in 50 states,” DailyKos.com, August 11, 2021. <https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2021/8/11/2044999/-The-Daily-Kos-Elections-guide-to-how-redistricting-will-unfold-in-all-50-states>

<sup>9</sup> David Wildstein, “Here Are the Candidates for Legislative Redistricting Tiebreaker. There Are No Matches.” New Jersey Globe, August 17, 2022. <https://newjerseyglobe.com/fr/here-are-the-candidates-for-legislative-redistricting-tiebreaker-there-is-no-match/>

members on the state legislative Apportionment Commission invited the coalition to multiple meetings, but their Congressional counterparts had more limited meeting options. In both cases, communication was controlled and limited.

“The decision about who gets to be on these commissions is political; these seats are highly coveted.” says Henal Patel, then Director of the Democracy & Justice Program (now Law & Policy Director) at the Institute and a core member of the FDNJ leadership team. “Both commissions saw our coalition as a group to be managed. That was a sign of our power but it was also a reality we had to deal with.”

COVID lockdowns caused further difficulties: There were no opportunities to buttonhole the commission members in corridors or engage in casual conversations. “The process has real limits when commissioners are not accessible at all to have direct conversations with advocates about specific communities of interest and key concerns,” said Adam Gordon, Executive Director of Fair Share Housing Center, which works to end discriminatory housing practices in New Jersey and convenes the United Black Agenda.

The coalition spent much of late spring and early summer 2021 trying to get the commissioners to appoint a truly independent member. For decades, the tiebreaker role has been filled by white men who come from academia and are well-versed in the redistricting process and had views on which redistricting criteria they would prioritize. Complaints had been levied from both sides about partisanship among this group. Judges, on the other hand, were perceived as more even-handed, but less knowledgeable on the nuances of redistricting. The coalition’s advocacy goal was to establish the norm that the tiebreakers should represent the public’s interests, not partisan interests or the interests of incumbent legislators.

Not surprisingly, neither of the partisan commissions were able to agree on a tiebreaker.

The Democratic congressional redistricting commissioners selected John E. Wallace Jr., a prominent African American jurist and a former New Jersey Supreme Court Justice who works at Brown & Connery. The Republican congressional redistricting commissioners selected retired Superior Court Judge Marina Corodemus. The seven members of the New Jersey Supreme Court selected Wallace to serve as the independent member of the congressional Redistricting Commission. In this role, he would also serve as chair of the commission.

For the legislative Apportionment Commission, rules dictate that the Chief Justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court selects the tiebreaker. Chief Justice Stuart Rabner asked the commission’s Democratic and Republican members to submit lists of potential independent members for consideration. He asked a third party to check the lists for any overlap in names (which is how the 2010 independent member was selected). No names appeared on both lists. Chief Justice Rabner instead selected someone on neither list: Philip Carchman, a former Administrative Director of the Courts and State Appellate Judge. Judge Carchman had been appointed to the Superior Court by Republican governor Tom Kean in 1986.



He was identified in news stories as a Democrat “who hadn’t made a political donation since 1985.”<sup>10</sup> The state legislative Apportionment Commission was co-chaired by Leroy Jones Jr., Chair of the New Jersey Democratic State Committee, and Al Barlas, an Essex County Republican Committee Chairman.

Each of the tiebreakers was charged with selecting a technical advisor for their respective commissions. Both chose Professor Sam Wang’s Princeton Gerrymandering Project (PGP), a nonpartisan group that seeks to end partisan gerrymandering at a state level.

In the end, the fact that the redistricting process gave partisans the power to influence the selection of the “independent” members of their commissions reflects the flaws inherent in a system which puts the power to redistrict in the hands of politicians who can use the process to solidify their own power.

## New Jersey Congressional Redistricting Commission



Hon. John E. Wallace, Jr.  
Chair



Janice Fuller  
Democratic Delegation  
Chair



Doug Steinhardt  
Republican Delegation  
Chair



Michele Albano  
Republican



Jeanne Ashmore  
Republican



Iris Delgado  
Democrat



Mark Duffy  
Republican



Vin Gopal  
Democrat



Stephanie Lagos  
Democrat



Mark LoGripipo  
Republican



Jeff Nash  
Democrat



Lynda Pagliughi  
Republican



Dana Redd  
Democrat

Credit: [njredistrictingcommission.org/members.asp](https://njredistrictingcommission.org/members.asp)

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<sup>10</sup> Joey Fox, “Carchman Named as Legislative Redistricting Tiebreaker,” New Jersey Globe, October. 7, 2021. <https://newjerseyglobe.com/redistricting/carchman-named-as-legislative-redistricting-tiebreaker/>

## New Jersey Legislative Apportionment Commission



LeRoy J. Jones, Jr.  
Democratic Co-Chair



Al Barlas  
Republican Co-Chair



Jon M. Bramnick  
Republican | Assembly  
Republican Leader



Cosmo Cirillo  
Democrat



Linda A. DuBois  
Republican



Thomas H. Kean, Jr.  
Republican | Senate  
Republican Leader



Michael B. Lavery  
Republican



Laura Matos\*  
Democrat



Gary Taffet  
Democrat



Diane T. Testa  
Democrat



Philip S. Carchman  
11th Member

*\* Lauren Matos replaced former Senate President Steven Sweeney on the Commission on January 26, 2022*

*Credit: [apportionmentcommission.org/members.asp](https://apportionmentcommission.org/members.asp)*

## Forcing the Issue on Public Hearings: “A Game of Chicken”

While skirmishes over trigger dates and tiebreakers were unfolding, Fair Districts was pushing each of the commissions to agree to hold a minimum number of public hearings. As far as Fair Districts was concerned, this was a hill to die on: without public input into the mapmaking process, the entire process would be a sham.

Fair Districts had proposed 25 hearings, knowing that was a lofty goal, but were unwilling to start with a compromise figure that would only weaken their position. In advocating to the commissions, Fair Districts pointed out that states like Alabama, Texas, and Illinois were all holding 25 public hearings or more in their redistricting processes. Did New Jersey deserve any less?

Fair Districts' main negotiators on this issue were Henal Patel of the Institute, Matt Duffy, who had recently come on board as Special Counsel for Redistricting at the Institute, and Philip Hensley, a Democracy Policy Analyst with the League. For a number of weeks, the three of them toggled back and forth between the commissions' leaders and their Democratic and Republican staffers, trying to arrive at an agreement.

While each of the commissions had previously stated that at least three hearings would be held, they were stalling on an announcement. The congressional Redistricting Commission, required by the State Constitution to hold a minimum of three hearings in which members of the public could testify and present maps, had already missed its deadline to announce hearing dates.

Hensley recalls: "Commission staffers kept saying that last time barely anyone had shown up to their three hearings. We kept telling them, 'if you build it, they will come.'" While Fair Districts coalition members did not expect to get 25 hearings, they were hoping for at least seven.

By late September, the coalition decided it was time to force the issue. They told congressional Redistricting Commission staffers that if public hearings were not announced by Wednesday, September 29, then Fair Districts would publicly announce its own "People's Hearings." Phone calls and texts flew back and forth as commission staffers sought to avoid the embarrassment of being publicly pressured into announcing hearing dates. Meanwhile, Fair Districts scrambled to get an announcement ready, hoping not to have to use it.

Patel recalls being on the phone with her colleagues and party members on October 4, 2021, during the entire two-and-a-half-hour drive back from an event in South Jersey. "We told them we were ready to hit send on that press release," Patel recalls. "It was a game of chicken." The commissioners asked for more time and Fair Districts gave them until the end of the day on October 5. In the end, the commissions came back with a proposal for 10 hearings each. Fair District had scored its first major victory.

Barely able to savor the win, Fair Districts moved quickly to negotiations on the hearings themselves—how many were to be virtual, how many in-person, how many hybrid? What kind of language access would be provided? What time of day would they be held? How would they be publicized? At the same time, the coalition continued to advocate for the public release of the commissioners' draft maps, another crucial element of a truly transparent process.

There was no lack of funding for the hearings. The state had enjoyed a surplus budget for the past few years, and redistricting was always given a special appropriation. In addition, during the budget hearings for fiscal year 2021, the League and the Institute had made their own budget requests of \$2.5 million for

each of the commissions to ensure that pleading poverty would not be used as an excuse to stint on public hearings or any other aspect of the redistricting process.<sup>11</sup> But even with the funds, the state's understaffed and overtaxed Office of Legislative Services (OLS), tasked with providing support services to the commissions, lacked sufficient time and organizational capacity to implement the hearings and other mechanisms in a way that would allow full public participation. As Judge Philip Carchman observed in retrospect, "In the future, as we expand this concept of publishing maps to the public and getting input, we can use the technology better."

## Organizational Challenges and Successes

By October, everything was happening all at once: While Fair Districts members were pushing for public hearings and tiebreaker candidates, they were also starting to hold community mapping sessions to identify boundaries of various actually existing communities, known as "Communities of Interest," or "COIs," and was advocating for those communities to not be broken up during redistricting. The advocates were also holding trainings on mapmaking and testifying, and attending to myriad other details.

Coalition members were making decisions daily, even hourly, and some aspects of the work were bound to suffer. "There were only so many hours in the day, and what got prioritized was mapmaking," says Jesse Burns of the League. Given the technological learning curve on mapmaking for the coalition as well as community participants, the focus was understandable. In retrospect, however, earlier planning on a number of fronts (e.g., outreach to communities and collection of COI maps) would have eased some of the pressure. But the importance of the shared mission held the coalition together despite an at times chaotic process.

One notable success was the diverse range of community members who created maps and testified before the commission.

Each of the organizational issues areas discussed below is addressed in the Findings and Recommendations on pp. 43.

### Hiring Advisors and Consultants

The coalition's budget included a line for communications, which was a key element of the work considering the lack of public education on redistricting and the need to develop a sense of urgency around the process. (Notably, New Jersey provides zero funding for public education on redistricting, and had allocated \$9.5 million to support the 2020 effort to count New Jersey's nine million residents only after considerable advocacy.)<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> New Jersey Institute for Social Justice, "FY2022 Budget Testimony of Andrea McChristian New Jersey Institute for Social Justice Assembly Budget Committee," March 22, 2021. [https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/njisj/pages/707/attachments/original/1620838038/Andrea's\\_Institute\\_2021\\_Assembly\\_Budget\\_Testimony\\_%283-21-21%29.pdf?1620838038](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/njisj/pages/707/attachments/original/1620838038/Andrea's_Institute_2021_Assembly_Budget_Testimony_%283-21-21%29.pdf?1620838038)

<sup>12</sup> New Jersey Institute for Social Justice, "NJISJ Testimony Before the New Jersey Complete Count Commission," January 9, 2019. [https://www.njisj.org/new\\_jersey\\_complete\\_count\\_commission](https://www.njisj.org/new_jersey_complete_count_commission)

Hiring a communications firm based in the state proved to be difficult. Most New Jersey-based firms with expertise on political issues had conflicts of interest, given their ongoing work with the Democratic or Republican parties, including with the redistricting commissions that had already engaged them. Fair Districts ended up bringing in an outside firm that had connections with national media, but fewer relationships with the New Jersey television, radio, and print outlets followed by voters.

Early on, the Institute's communications team, which had good local relationships with reporters, managed to connect members of the coalition with state house reporters and garner media hits. But more was needed. Given the uncertainty around the dates of public hearings and other challenges, it was difficult for Fair Districts to advise their communications consultants about what would be needed or when—a problem that could have been at least partly overcome by starting the hiring process earlier in order to secure a local firm or, in the alternative, to get a national firm up to speed. The firm Fair Districts hired was successful in placing op-eds and putting together talking points, but less so on crisis communications and anything requiring a fast turnaround. Crucial staff time was lost in briefing the firm on the team's objectives and on the nuances of New Jersey politics.

As Amy Torres of NJAII observed, “Our media landscape is so shallow and sparse as it is, so you really need someone who’s an insider. By the time the public education phase of the work was over, we were mainly trying to influence commissioners to adopt the right map, and in order to do that, you have to know which papers they’re reading.”

In retrospect, the coalition might also have focused more on hyperlocal and ethnic media, particular in the community outreach phase. Unfortunately, many of the outlets with which coalition members had relationships had shuttered due to the pandemic.

The effectiveness of the coalition's messaging was limited by the fact the coalition started out with scant information on the public's perceptions of redistricting. This knowledge would have been helpful in crafting a communications strategy.

Communications firms were not the only consultants with an availability problem. The Eagleton Institute had come on board to help with the mapping technology, but the coalition's choice for expert analysis, the Princeton Gerrymandering Project, had agreed to work for the commissions. In the end, the coalition hired a Rutgers graduate student to provide analysis of the coalition's maps. This analysis proved to be invaluable in the work ahead.

As community organizers, coalition members had more success in reaching people through their social media networks. They posted Facebook invitations to Fair Districts training events, the League

held regular “Community Calls” with updates on redistricting and live Q&A sessions, the Institute live-tweeted commission hearings, and engaged with journalists and others following New Jersey’s redistricting saga on Twitter.

### **Identifying Communities of Interest (COIs)**

Given the importance of engaging the state’s many diverse populations to identify their communities of interest and participate in mapmaking and testimony, nearly half of the coalition’s budget was dedicated to outreach with a focus on Latinx, Black, Asian, and immigrant communities. The Black and Latinx communities were well known to Fair Districts and well represented in statewide advocacy groups. They also had well-established voter registration drives and Census outreach projects.

A major challenge was the absence of any statewide advocacy groups for certain growing populations, particularly Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) and Middle Eastern and North Africans (MENA). “We wanted to uplift voices who either weren’t funded or were under-resourced or not present,” said Amy Torres of NJAIJ.

While some members of these groups participated in civic and professional alliances, such as the South Asian Bar Association and the Taiwanese American Citizens League, they generally did not see themselves as political. But, as Jamieson noted, they could potentially be persuaded to get involved once they understood the nonpartisan nature of the work and the impact of redistricting on their business and economic interests.

Jamieson helped connect Fair Districts with a number of smaller local groups that The Fund had supported to conduct Census outreach. Asian American representation within the coalition significantly increased when a national nonprofit, Asian Americans Advancing Justice, provided funding to bring in the Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF), a national organization with media, policy, and education expertise.

By the time SALDEF came on board in late September, the organization had benefited from on-the-ground experience in Virginia to inform their activities in New Jersey. In addition, SALDEF’s Executive Director, Kiran Kaur Gill, had run a consulting firm in New Jersey and had numerous business and community contacts in the state.

“We had the foundational relationships to dive in and hit the ground running,” recalls Navdeep Singh, a Virginia-based public policy expert and consultant to SALDEF. He and Jyot Singh, SALDEF’s policy analyst, quickly became an integral part of the Fair Districts team in New Jersey.



It was not until December that Fair Districts connected with the Palestinian-American Community Center (PACC), a small but energetic nonprofit based in Clifton and headed by Rania Mustafa. The group came on board too late to participate in the congressional redistricting effort but plunged enthusiastically into the state legislative apportionment mapmaking and testimony.

“When Henal reached out to me, I saw that as a huge win,” said Mustafa. “PACC has been around for eight years, and that’s what we wanted: A seat at the table.”

Native American communities were a smaller but important constituency. However, outreach proved more elusive: there was no readily identifiable umbrella group to contact. Neha Aluwalia, one of the Eagleton Institute interns, was assigned the task. “This was eye-opening to me,” she recalls. “Up until this point I didn’t know that there were any indigenous communities in my home state, since I knew that we didn’t have any federally recognized tribes in the Garden State.” She learned that New Jersey was home to three tribes: the Ramapough Lenape Indian Nation, the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Tribe, and the Powhatan Renape Tribe. The Ramapough tribe ended up submitting a community of interest map and testifying to the state legislative Apportionment Commission, although it arrived after the Congressional redistricting had taken place.

In the end, the coalition surpassed its goals in assembling an unusually broad and diverse range of New Jerseyans to participate in mapmaking and testimony. Their contributions are discussed in greater detail in “Spotlights” highlights throughout this report.

### **Supporting Smaller Community Groups**

Regardless of when they came on board, the learning curve was steep for the smaller community groups unfamiliar with redistricting. These groups also had greater organizational challenges given their limited resources and commitment to a wide range of issues, including direct service in some cases. Supporting these members was a priority for Fair Districts’ leaders.

“We asked a lot of the coalition members in terms of their time, the amount of deep diving into data, reporting back, and gathering COI information. That’s a heavy lift for everyone,” said the League’s Hensley.

“Training the trainers” turned out to be a successful—and economical—approach. Matt Duffy, the Institute’s special counsel, created a “Redistricting 101” PowerPoint and met with community leaders as they came on board.

“They went through everything, A-Z and told us what we had to do: find community stories, get people to testify, create an Arab-American map,” recalls Rania Mustafa of PACC. Mustafa was able to secure funding for a consultant to help with the process. She quickly created her own task force and began holding weekly meetings to track progress.

Gloria Blanco of Wind of the Spirit, a faith-based nonprofit that serves immigrant communities, recalls her first reaction to those training sessions, which she attended along with Rania Mustafa of PACC, Charlene Walker from Faith in New Jersey, and others.

“At first it was a little confusing: how do we explain this to our community if we’re still learning about it?” she said. “By the second or third meeting, they taught us how to work on maps. That was intimidating at first, but they guided us through and always responded to our calls and texts with questions.”

When it came to mapmaking, groups that were engaged in lobbying, such as NJ Citizen Action, had the advantage of deep familiarity with New Jersey’s districts and political leanings, down to the zip code. For others, that level of granularity was a whole new world.

“This was the closest I’d ever been to the redistricting process,” said Rachel Dawn Davis, Public Policy and Justice Organizer for Waterspirit, a spiritually oriented environmental justice nonprofit. “It was a learning curve, but everyone was really willing to work with me, helping me to understand the mapmaking tools.”

### **Timing of Activities**

The coalition’s late start on community outreach ran up against the redistricting commissions’ delays in getting staffed up and agreeing to public hearings. With no hearings yet scheduled, the coalition had community groups prioritize creating community maps. The “if you build it, they will come” mantra applied here too; but people needed deadlines, schedules and plans in order to get on board.

The three main tasks before the coalition in the late summer and early fall of 2021 were:

- Getting communities to define their geographic boundaries through COI maps.
- Training and supporting individuals willing to testify before the commission once hearings were scheduled.
- Use the COI maps to inform the coalition’s proposed district map, which would be presented to the congressional redistricting commission as the Racial Equity Map.

As Patel recalls: “At one point, we were drafting testimony while also drafting a racial equity map and reaching out to more organizations – there was a lot happening!”

Because of the ad hoc nature of the outreach, people were coming on board on a rolling basis up to and beyond the date of the first congressional redistricting hearing on October 23, 2021. Individuals and organizations that missed the first round of redistricting were brought into the legislative process, which would begin with hearings on November 6, 2021 and run through early February 2022.

Looking back, the Fair Districts team acknowledges that the community outreach could have started much sooner; ideally, during the all-important Census phase, when so many local organizations were reaching out to their constituencies. As the Institute's Patel put it, "Get the communities to identify their COIs on the maps, and we'll come back to them later when it's time to testify." Despite the challenges, the coalition was able to collect over 50 community of interest maps.

The coalition was even more successful in pulling together resources for testimony. Matt Duffy put together another "Train the Trainers" PowerPoint presentation on testifying that community groups could take back to their constituents and translate into other languages. Later in the process, SALDEF put together a sophisticated social media and public service announcement advocacy campaign in five languages that boosted Asian American participation considerably.

### **Overcoming Power Dynamics**

At the outset, Fair Districts made clear that one of their primary goals was to achieve district maps that prioritized racial equity and communities of interest. However, beyond the basic agenda of fairness, there weren't many specific parameters or non-negotiables to guide the coalition.

"One of the things that would have helped was to have more of a framework at the outset – specific principles," said Alex Staropoli, Director of Advocacy and Communications at Fair Share Housing Center. "I think we ended in a good place but it took a lot to get there."

In particular, the combination of organizations that engage in lobbying and those that were strictly community-oriented created some uncomfortable power dynamics. Organizations that engaged in lobbying politicians had more at stake in the legislative redistricting battles, and more connections and access to power in the state capitol than other nonprofits. As a result, different groups had different ideas about what to prioritize.

Rutgers intern Neha Aluwalia, who participated in the Congressional mapmaking (and later testified before both commissions as a resident of Plainsboro), observed: "Watching different organizations advocate for different, and sometimes conflicting, priorities was an eye-opening experience. I learned first-hand how compromises are reached and how consensus can be found. At certain points, I was unsure if the coalition would remain intact or we would be able to agree on a unity map."

For the League's Jesse Burns, "the purpose of the coalition in my eyes, very clearly, was not drawing a map to satisfy any political party—they have enough power. Goals were agreed upon—having more minority districts, greater transparency in the process—but there were so many more different decision points than in other issue-oriented campaigns."

“That’s the theory and practice of unity maps,” said Philip Hensley. “The idea that, especially in areas with racial and ethnic diversity, there can be tensions in how you draw maps, groups with a history of being underserved. The worst thing from our perspective is if those interests are pitted against each other, rather than focusing on commonalities.”

Ultimately, and defying the expectations of many, including of the group’s leaders and funders, the coalition came together and presented unity maps to each of the commissions.

“I honestly expected that we would not have a map,” said Burns. “So, every time Philip said, ‘I don’t think we’re going to have a map,’ I said that’s fine.”

Adds Hensley: “Not everyone signed on to the maps, and that was okay.” The maps were issued with lists of signatories, focusing on the nature of the map rather than the Fair Districts coalition brand. It didn’t seem to make much difference to journalists, who identified the mapmakers as a “progressive group” or a racial justice coalition.<sup>13</sup>

## PART III: MAPPING DEMOCRACY

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The evolution of redistricting technology has without a doubt been a game changer for public participation in democracy.<sup>14</sup> The availability of open-source mapmaking software using geographic information systems (GIS) has made mapmaking more accessible to the public than ever before. However, the technology can be less than completely user-friendly, and Fair Districts spent a considerable amount of time working through myriad technical and accessibility issues with all of the software platforms they encountered.

Mapmaking rules and requirements set by each of the commissions made the process even more complicated. The commissions historically used Maptitude and used it again in 2020. As such, Fair Districts purchased licenses for that software early on. But Maptitude came with certain limitations, and Fair Districts New Jersey used a number of different software products depending on the task. For instance, Fair Districts collaborated with one software company, Azavea, to offer its map-making tool, DistrictBuilder, for free to the public. The “Draw Your Map” section of Fair Districts’ website included a link to a landing page where users could sign up to build their own maps. The site also provided tips, talking points, and links to training videos.

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<sup>13</sup> David Wildstein, “Democrats Close to Naming Legislative Redistricting Commission Members,” New Jersey Globe, November 19, 2020. <https://newjerseyglobe.com/legislature/democrats-close-to-naming-legislative-redistricting-commission-members/>

<sup>14</sup> Tim Storey, Technology and Transparency in the Redistricting Process, C-SPAN, Oct. 24 2018. <https://www.c-span.org/video/?c4757202/technology-transparency-redistricting-process>

By not accommodating a variety of software packages, the commissioners made it difficult for the public to engage. “If we didn’t physically redraw maps [on Maptitude, the choice of both commissions], the testimony and submissions were meaningless,” said Alex Staropoli of the Fair Share Housing Center.

To make matters even more complicated, each of the independent commissioners had hired the Princeton Gerrymandering Project (PGP) to provide analysis of maps created by the public. PGP had its own software package, Representable. Representable was not a platform for drawing district maps, but rather was intended to serve as a repository of community of interest maps. Because the independent members relied on PGP’s analysis, all COI maps from the coalition’s community mapping sessions had to be redrawn in Representable.

Despite many frustrations and setbacks, the coalition kept one important principle in mind: “The people are in the data.”

## Tools of the Trade

At the time the mapping work began in late 2021, there were a number of competing software packages to choose from. Each had their pros and cons, as identified by the Eagleton Institute interns who were assigned to create the maps based on the COI information gathered by coalition members.

In 2020, the interns assigned to Fair Districts had attended a class on gerrymandering and democracy that included a mapmaking project using Maptitude, one of the leading software packages. This was during the first weeks of the COVID-19 lockdown, and the students soon discovered that Maptitude, an expensive software that had been licensed for use on Rutgers University computers, was difficult to use remotely (although a web sharing app was later added).<sup>15</sup> The students eventually switched to another program, Dave’s Redistricting, that was easier to access from home computers. Unlike Maptitude, Dave’s was free—created by a group of volunteers and Microsoft veterans<sup>16</sup> “who share a passion for technology and democracy,” and whose mission is “empowering citizens to advocate for fair and transparent redistricting,” according to their website.<sup>17</sup>

Over the course of the Fair Districts mapmaking process, the interns ended up using a number of different software packages to address different needs and requirements, although the main ones were Maptitude and Dave’s Redistricting. Those two are briefly assessed below, based largely on the experiences of the Rutgers University interns as well as the experiences of Hensley and other coalition members who were also directly involved in mapmaking.

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<sup>15</sup> Caliper.com; “Maptitude Mapping Software,” <https://www.caliper.com/maptitude/online-mapping-software-web-mapping-online-gis.htm>

<sup>16</sup> Wikipedia; Dave’s Redistricting, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dave%27s\\_Redistricting](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dave%27s_Redistricting), accessed December 7, 2022.

<sup>17</sup> [Davesredistricting.org](https://davesredistricting.org); <https://www.davesredistricting.org/maps#home>

## Software Pros and Cons

The main purpose of this section is to give the reader a sense of the complexity of mapmaking, since it is very likely that by 2030 all of the products discussed will have been significantly revised and newer, more nimble technology will be available. But it will probably still be the case that considerable training and practice is needed before embarking on community mapmaking. Apart from price, the most important considerations in choosing a software package include:

- Ease of use.
- Remote accessibility.
- Availability of tech support.
- Availability of free online training programs and/or webinars.
- Ability to create a Community of Interest of any size.
- Ability to easily publish and share maps with coalition partners and the public.
- Ability to easily import and export data.
- Accurate and up-to-date data at every level of mapping.

### **Maptitude for Redistricting**

This was the software eventually chosen by the commissions. Maptitude for Redistricting is a version of the Caliper Corporation's Maptitude GIS software, and is the standard tool of redistricting professionals. Fair Districts chose to purchase Maptitude licenses in order to be able to ensure that the coalition's final maps would be presented in a format the commissions would be able to use.

The general consensus was that Maptitude was complex and difficult to learn, although the live tech support was responsive and helpful. "I think they had me on speed dial at one point," said intern Michael Brestin. The coalition also discovered discrepancies in Maptitude's data – for instance, some municipalities were incorrectly identified. The mistake only came to light because one of the coalition's mapmakers, Adam Gordon of Fair Share Housing Center, was remarkably well-versed in New Jersey's many townships and municipalities. Philip Hensley contacted Maptitude, and after a few hours of back-and-forth, got a plug-in to fix the problem.

The intern team also experienced some challenges with how to create new maps on Maptitude using the "Plan Manager" feature. As intern Neha Aluwalia explained: "Reference maps can be modified but there is no undo feature on the program. Before gaining a better understanding of the software, our intern team had accidentally made permanent changes to some of the reference maps in the Plan Manager, such as changing current district lines. This meant that we could no longer use that particular reference map (for example, a state legislative map broken down into a voting district layer), because it no longer accurately portrayed the districts. We learned moving forward that we had to make copies of the reference maps in order to modify the districts as required."



Maptitude had a range of functionality unavailable on other platforms. For example, it offered users the ability to create a report book that compiles maps of each district and provides data on each of those districts.<sup>18</sup> However, the software did come with some challenges. The software was primarily designed to draw districts, and did not allow users to draw community of interest maps. In addition, the team had difficulty importing election data into Maptitude in order to produce reports on partisan lean.

### **Dave's Redistricting App**

Dave's Redistricting App (DRA) was considered a favorite by the interns and coalition mapmakers. Its mission of facilitating community mapmaking for the public meant that features were more user friendly and geared toward public participation. DRA proved to be the most viable for sharing and monitoring changes to maps – which were being made on an hourly, if not minute-by-minute basis at times. The browser-based nature of DRA meant that coalition members could easily exchange maps by simply sharing URLs.

The software made it easy to view features and data on the block, precinct, city, county, or district level, and selecting a district immediately provided demographic and partisan lean information. DRA came with extensive election data already included (which was provided courtesy of the VEST data team, which also provided elections data for DistrictBuilder).

### **Representable**

This software package, created by the Princeton Gerrymandering Project, was created to help communities define their geographic boundaries through a community of interest map, rather than as a district mapping tool. However, one problem advocates ran into was that Representable capped the population size of each COI. Moreover, Representable did not allow communities that were not connected to each other to be drawn—which was a challenge for a highly segregated state like NJ (often communities were spread across multiple municipalities or parts of municipalities that were not necessarily neighboring). However, Representable did make it easy to view COI maps (and their attached narratives) submitted by other organizations.

### **DistrictR**

Like DRA, DistrictR is a free browser-based tool for drawing districts. It was created by researchers at Tuft University's MGGG Redistricting Lab to facilitate public participation in redistricting.<sup>18</sup> According to its website, DistrictR's maps show relevant landmarks and data that allows users to try their own hand at creating maps with attached community narratives.

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<sup>18</sup> MGGG.org; MGGG Redistricting Lab: Our Mission, <https://mggg.org/>

## DistrictBuilder

While the interns did not use this mapmaking tool, it was considered to be among the most user-friendly for the general public. Azavea made DistrictBuilder available at an affordable rate so that Fair Districts could offer it free of charge to community mapmakers. DistrictBuilder also offered organizations the ability to create a branded “organization page,” which allowed Fair Districts to collect dozens of maps from sixty-two mapmakers who signed up to use the program.

## Issues With Data

During the course of mapmaking, several issues arose with data, as described below.

### Prison Gerrymandering Data

In 2020, New Jersey became one of 11 states to end prison gerrymandering, which is the practice of counting incarcerated people as residents of their prison location rather than their pre-incarceration home community.<sup>19</sup> As a result, the Census Bureau had to reallocate its counts of some 38,000 incarcerated people from correctional facilities to the districts they called home.<sup>20</sup>

The challenge for advocates was twofold: First, there were inconsistencies in how different government agencies categorized these individuals. The Census Bureau allows respondents to record more than one race (e.g., Black and Asian), while New Jersey’s Department of Corrections (DOC) does not record more than one race (meaning that a Black and Asian person could be recorded as Black, thus denying Asian communities an opportunity to count that person as a member, or vice-versa.). As a Census Bureau report on the matter explained, “Each individual in the DOC report falls into one race only. Therefore, the Two or More Races category is identical for both the adjusted and unadjusted table series. With regard to ethnicity, a small number of the inmate records did not indicate yes or no and are included in Non-Hispanic.”<sup>21</sup>

Second, there were discrepancies in the version of the Census data the mapping platforms chose to use. For instance, Maptitude used the adjusted data from the Department of Corrections. Other mapmaking websites, such as Dave’s Redistricting, created their own fix by combining the unmodified census data with the DOC adjusted data, “massaging” the numbers to get a more accurate count of people from more than one race.<sup>22</sup> Coalition advocates decided to use the Dave’s Redistricting numbers even when they transferred their data to Maptitude and included an explanation of the discrepancy for commission members. The commissioners accepted the submission but ultimately relied on the state’s adjusted numbers in their calculations.

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<sup>19</sup> Prison Policy Initiative, “New Jersey governor signs bill ending prison gerrymandering,” January 21, 2020. <https://www.prisonersofthecensus.org/news/2020/01/21/nj-signed/>

<sup>20</sup> Colleen O’Dea, “End of ‘prison gerrymandering’ means changes to redistricting,” NJ Spotlight News, September 1, 2021. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2021/09/nj-redistricting-congress-legislature-end-prison-gerrymandering/>

<sup>21</sup> United States Census Bureau, “U.S. Census Bureau 2020 Census PUB.L. 94-171, Redistricting Data and New Jersey, P.L.2019, C.385 Reallocated Redistricting Data,” [https://nj.gov/state/assets/2020-census-data/us-census-bureau-2020-census-pub\\_l\\_94-171-redistricting-data-and-nj-p\\_l\\_2019\\_c\\_385-reallocated-redistricting-data.pdf](https://nj.gov/state/assets/2020-census-data/us-census-bureau-2020-census-pub_l_94-171-redistricting-data-and-nj-p_l_2019_c_385-reallocated-redistricting-data.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> David R for DRA, “Adjusted 2020 Census Data: Reallocating for Incarcerated Persons,” Medium.com, September 3, 2021. <https://medium.com/dra-2020/adjusted-2020-census-data-reallocating-for-incarcerated-persons-441fcc10f65a>

# Connecting With The Community

## SPOTLIGHT: WIND OF THE SPIRIT IMMIGRANT RESOURCE CENTER

Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center (WotS) describes itself as “a faith-based organization for all immigrants and non-immigrants who are moved by the tradition of hospitality.”<sup>23</sup> WotS organizes and trains communities to fight for social change, working chiefly in areas of north and central New Jersey where the Latinx diaspora is located: Morristown, Dover, Madison, Bernardsville, Chatham, Plainfield, North and South Plainfield, Summit, Stirling, Wharton, and City of Orange.

WotS had worked closely with Fair Districts members on Census outreach in 2020 and was eager to be engaged with redistricting. The coalition helped the group secure funding, which was needed since its Census outreach workers had been temporary employees and, like many smaller nonprofits, they were already stretched thin.

During the Census-gathering at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, WotS continued to serve the community. They helped local churches distribute face masks and food, while also setting up separate areas to gather Census information from the diverse Latinx population they served. “The faith leaders know us,” said Gloria Blanco, the group’s advocacy and policy coordinator. “That opens the door to so many things. If the pastor says it’s okay to do it, people will do it.”

Churches were also the logical place for Wind of the Spirit to look for community members willing to participate in redistricting. After attending the mapmaking and testimony trainings during the first round of Congressional redistricting, Blanco and her team were ready to hit the ground running.

WotS has a unique approach to working with a diverse constituency whose members speak many different languages, and whose economic conditions and immigration statuses vary. Their first task was to translate the coalition materials into Spanish, as well as into the many regional Indigenous languages spoken by New Jersey’s Central American immigrants, such as Mam and K’iche’ (two of the 21 Mayan languages of Guatemala<sup>24</sup>). “It helped that we didn’t have to recreate everything,” said Blanco.

Next they fanned out into the community, performing skits in which community members would act out how being identified as a community on a redistricting map could give them greater clout in convincing a politician to change a law. The skits included music, dancing, and lots of laughter. People were inspired and wanted to contribute. WotS also asked well-known community members to spread the word via WhatsApp, putting out the call to come participate in a mapmaking session.

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<sup>23</sup> Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center (website), <https://wotsnj.org/about/>

<sup>24</sup> Wikipedia; “Languages of Guatemala,” Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Languages\\_of\\_Guatemala](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Languages_of_Guatemala), accessed December 7, 2022.

Like the informational skits, the mapmaking sessions were also fun and informal. The group would start in a listening circle, describing the characteristics of their community: Where they work, shop, eat, play, worship and send their kids to school. Then the mapping software was projected on a screen so that they could see, in real time, how changes in the way their district was drawn could give them greater political power as voters. The final product was a COI statement describing their area.

Finally, Blanco and her team would tell their audience that there was another way they could participate, by providing testimony on their COI in front of the commissioners. Despite issues with language access and the timing of the hearings, many signed up to testify, knowing they would be supported by WotS and Fair Districts.

## **SPOTLIGHT: PALESTINIAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY CENTER**

The Palestinian-American Community Center (PACC) describes itself as “strictly a non-political and non-religious organization whose mission is to sustain and strengthen ties to Palestinian heritage while empowering the success and well-being of the entire community.”<sup>25</sup> But as Executive Director Rania Mustafa is quick to emphasize, the group’s focus is not limited to Palestinians. While Palestinians are the largest Arab-American community in the state (South Paterson is known as “Little Ramallah”), there are also significant populations of Egyptians, Syrians, Yemeni, Somalians, Sudanese, Moroccans and Algerians. In demographic terms, they are collectively referred to as Middle Eastern and North Africans (MENA).

Notably, the MENA category does not exist in the U.S. Census, despite advocacy efforts over the years. In 2020, these populations were once more forced to mostly identify as “white.” As a 2022 report on NPR noted, “that racial identity has not matched the discrimination in housing, at work and through other parts of daily life that many say they have faced.”<sup>26</sup>

PACC joined the redistricting effort in December 2021, after Congressional redistricting had already taken place. The group had been heavily involved in Census work and was excited to take this next step. “If you’re not counted, politically you don’t exist. So redistricting is like our part two,” Mustafa said.

PACC’s direct service work during the COVID-19 pandemic (distributing PPE and boxes of groceries) “turned a negative into a positive,” giving the organization greater visibility in many hard-to-reach communities. “People don’t forget when you’re there for them in tough times,” said Mustafa. During that period, PACC started a weekly “Community Check-In” group on Facebook to identify problems and needs, such as how to gather safely during Ramadan. Their efforts garnered local and even national attention. “We got a shout-out from Governor Murphy,” Mustafa recalls with pride. “Before then he didn’t even know we existed!”

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<sup>25</sup> Palestinian American Community Center (website), <https://www.paccusa.org/>

<sup>26</sup> Hansi Lo Wang, “The U.S. Sees Middle Eastern and North African People as White. Many Don’t,” National Public Radio, February 17, 2022. <https://www.npr.org/2022/02/17/1079181478/us-census-middle-eastern-white-north-african-mena>

Aided by funding that allowed Mustafa to hire a consultant to support her, PACC quickly got to work on redistricting. The group did not have statewide chapters and there was little time to fan out into the community and gather information. Instead, Mustafa formed a task force of local leaders who could help identify their COIs. That approach streamlined the process, which was already on a tight timeline; it was December, and the state legislative Apportionment Commission had already started holding its hearings.

The task force met for a total of three one-and-a-half hour sessions, examining each county in turn and noting the locations of mosques, supermarkets, schools, doctor's offices, parks and other places where their communities gathered. "Narrowing it down was the biggest conflict," Mustafa recalls. "A lot of people didn't want to; they were emotionally invested in some areas."

For instance, there was a significant concentration of Palestinians in South Paterson and Clifton, but the community knew that both municipalities were too large to be combined together in a single legislative district. "We were playing within the rules of the game, but some of the rules weren't in our favor. That was a huge challenge," said Mustafa.

In making their choices, PACC's task force focused on two important strategic goals:

- Identifying areas where they could gain greater political power that would lead to getting their policy initiatives implemented.
- Flagging areas where they expected to see a population increase over the next 10 years.

Understanding areas of future population growth was not so much a matter of demographic expertise as it was a question of knowing what was happening in the community. There was a running joke about upward mobility among Palestinians, Mustafa said. "You go from Jersey City to Paterson to Clifton to Wayne—and then you've made it." But it was an important factor in the work; the Census was backward-looking, but redistricting was forward-looking.

In the end, the group decided to focus on Passaic and Hudson counties, with Mustafa's consultant using DistrictR to draw PACC's COI maps. Once the community had been mapped, PACC started reaching out to individuals to testify.

Mustafa was new to redistricting, but not new to community organizing. Noticing that testimony was being given in alphabetical order, she made sure to strategically register volunteers with a variety of last names from A to Z so that they would be represented throughout each day of the hearings.

Mustafa was proud of what her organization had accomplished but frustrated at how little awareness the commissioners seemed to have about the state's Arab American community. "We had to explain: Not all Arabs are Muslim and not all Muslims are Arab." But she came away feeling that her group had left an impression that everyone remembered.

The work has inspired her to continue collecting community maps and stories. "Now that I know there's a place for us to be heard, I want to gather as much as we can. Our political power is growing."

## **SPOTLIGHT: SIKH AMERICAN LEGAL DEFENSE AND EDUCATION FUND**

The Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF) proved to be invaluable in gathering COI information, particularly given the lack of any statewide advocacy organizations or coalitions for Asians or Asian Americans as a whole.

SALDEF and other allies, including Asian Americans Advancing Justice, Asian Pacific Islander Vote, and Bangladeshi American Women's Development Initiative, were accustomed to parachuting into different states to aid in local advocacy campaigns. Both Navdeep Singh and Jyot Singh (respectively, SALDEF's policy consultant and policy analyst) had already worked on redistricting efforts in Virginia, which gave them a head start over others who were just getting familiar with maps and software.

SALDEF started by connecting with local chapters of national organizations with whom they had strong relationships. They also reached out to SALDEF's extensive volunteer base in the state, leveraging those connections to get introductions to local community groups. Two local groups in particular, Make Us Visible NJ and AAPI Montclair, were great sources for finding people willing to get involved.

"What made NJ interesting was that these existing organizations didn't network," said SALDEF's Navdeep Singh. "Potential community leaders were not used to doing this level of work or thinking about their communities in this way," i.e., as a political force. Religious organizations were even less willing to get involved, fearing loss of their tax-exempt status.

In addition, there was the cultural stereotype that Asian Americans don't vote, a trope easily disproved by looking at voter turnout statistics.<sup>27</sup> True or not, the political parties did little to engage Asian American voters, despite their growing numbers. Although, as Navdeep observed, "leaders from all sides do pander to us."

Undaunted, SALDEF began by translating Fair District's many fact sheets and toolkits into Hindi, Punjabi, simplified Chinese, Tagalog and Korean, aided by a list of translators from AAJC and APIVote. Next they

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<sup>27</sup> Nicholas Reimann, "Asian-American Voter Turnout Soared Over 45% In 2020 Election, Study Finds—And That's Probably An Undercount," Forbes.com, April 21, 2021. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/nicholasreimann/2021/04/21/asian-american-voter-turnout-soared-over-45-in-2020-election-study-finds-and-thats-probably-an-undercount/?sh=3d9831439eaa>



reached out to those language groups through a sophisticated social media “splash” campaign that ran on Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and India.com. Through videos, social media messages and online ads, they were able to reach an audience of 1.4 million people, spending just over \$10,000 of a modest \$13,000 budget.

Jyot took on the task of conducting the Redistricting 101 workshops, mostly via Zoom (which ended up netting them more volunteers since people were able to attend virtually). Like other groups, SALDEF drew maps using DistrictR, which later had to be redrawn in Representable for the commissions. The commissioners’ restrictions on which software could be used struck SALDEF as unnecessary. “They had crack data teams,” said Jyot. “We could have printed out our maps and handed them over.”

In early December 2021, as the Congressional Redistricting hearings drew to a close and the first Legislative hearings got underway, SALDEF took the lead in writing a detailed letter to the commissioners, laying out the myriad deficiencies in language and disability access for Asian Americans in the state’s process. While few accommodations were made, the letter is a blueprint for advocacy leading up to the 2030 redistricting cycle.

## **SPOTLIGHT: SALVATION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE**

The infrastructure of faith organizations lends itself particularly well to community organizing, particularly within the Black church, which played a pivotal role in the civil rights movement. From Sunday sermons to Bible study groups to youth committees and interfaith council meetings, there are multiple entry points for engaging with the faith community—and trusted leaders to deliver the message.

At Salvation and Social Justice (SandSJ), a faith-based policy advocacy group in Trenton, those leaders are Rev. Dr. Charles Boyer and his wife, Rosalee Boyer. They willingly answered the call to get involved with Fair District’s redistricting efforts, having participated for years in church-based voter turnout efforts like “Souls to the Polls.”

Getting souls to a community mapping session, however, presented some initial challenges, according to SandSJ’s Chief Strategy Fellow, Rev. Dr. Robin Tanner. “The [redistricting] issue wasn’t really on people’s radar,” she said, and it took several steps of communication to get people engaged. But once they connected the dots, it was a real “aha” moment, for Dr. Tanner as well as others. “There was some really righteous and appropriate indignation” about how nontransparent and unfair the redistricting process has been in New Jersey, Dr. Tanner said.

The organization's first step was to take Fair Districts' training materials and adapt them for the SandSJ audience, framing the message from a moral and ethical perspective. The group's Black Church Civic Engagement fellow, Rev. Teaira Parker, took the lead, creating a document titled "Redistricting and the Black Church" that explained redistricting, why it matters, and what's at stake.

"The black church has always been the clarion call for the liberation of the marginalized and oppressed," said the flyer "From slavery to the Civil Rights Movement till today, the black church recognizes that the ministry of Jesus Christ was to call out those in charge misusing the system for personal gains. The clarion sounds again. Will you answer?"

Rev. Parker also created short informational videos that were shared at Sunday sermons, bible study meetings and gatherings of youth activism groups across the state.

The organization's members answered the call and a series of mapmaking sessions were convened, with Matt Duffy from the Institute and Rutgers intern Nehu Aluwalia facilitating. Once the maps were completed, the Institute gave a second session, "Redistricting 102," to provide a refresher on the issue and real-time practice in delivering testimony.

"Once we got over the barrier of 'how do you make it engaging and interesting,' getting folks to testify was easy," said Dr. Tanner.

Numerous SandSJ members throughout New Jersey testified during the hearings, starting with Rev. Parker, who appeared before the Congressional Redistricting Commission on Nov. 15. The organization also signed on to Fair Districts' final maps.

The collaboration, says Dr. Tanner, "created a space for the Institute to share their knowledge and the framing to be drawn from SandSJ's experience and faith-rooted grounding."

# PART IV: LET EVERY VOICE BE HEARD

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That fact that Fair Districts had successfully pressured the commissions to hold ten hearings each was, in itself, a victory. Now it was time to make sure the public's interests were truly represented. With public testimony on the record about New Jerseyans' desire for fair districts, politicians would no longer be able to avoid accountability. The number of hearings also set a precedent that future commissions will be more likely to follow.

Despite these history-making advances, numerous barriers to public participation were still in place, starting with the language and accessibility issues discussed elsewhere in this report. Another issue was timing: many of the initial hearings were scheduled on weekdays and during regular business hours, making it difficult for working people to participate. All but one of the first five legislative commission hearings took place on a weekday, and the second five were not announced until the fifth hearing, on December 10, 2021, making it difficult for Fair Districts to schedule people to testify.

None of these issues were new: Fair Districts had been lobbying the commissioners about them for months, through open letters, op-eds and rallies. When the hearings finally began, the coalition kept up the drumbeat by turning these issues into talking points for testimony. After the first few hearings in which community members repeated requests for translators and for more sessions on weekends and during evening hours, the commissioners got the message. While the language access issues were never adequately resolved, some of the later state legislative Apportionment Commission hearings were scheduled for Saturdays or after work hours.

The fact that so many of those testifying were clearly aligned sent a powerful message to the commissioners, the media, and the public that redistricting this cycle was not going to be business as usual. And another significant win was the fact that the commissioners finally heard from people who, for the most part, did not look like them.

## Preparing for Testimony

The dates loomed large on the coalition's calendar: The congressional Redistricting Commission hearings began on October 23, 2021 and ran through December 9, 2021. The legislative Apportionment Commission hearings began on November 6, 2021, and ran through February 11, 2022. Most of the hearings were virtual due to the ongoing COVID pandemic, which turned out to be a benefit for people with limited time and means to travel. All of the hearings were livestreamed and can still be viewed online. Agendas and transcripts of each meeting are also available on each commission's website ([apportionmentcommission.org](https://apportionmentcommission.org) and [njredistrictingcommission.org](https://njredistrictingcommission.org)).

The format for testimony was the same for each of the commissions: Members of the public were allotted about five minutes each to speak. Written testimony could also be submitted, but Fair Districts asked all of its participants to personally deliver their testimony, so that the commissioners could hear directly from the communities that would be impacted by their decisions.

While most of the people who testified were recruited through community mapping sessions and coalition members' outreach efforts to their constituencies, Fair Districts also created a portal where anyone could sign up. The webpage made three specific asks of users:

1. Pledge to attend a public hearing (the portal included links to the commission web pages where they could view the schedule and sign up).
2. Review training materials and tips on preparing effective testimony (including a video of a webinar).
3. Let the commissioners know they must commit to clear, nonpartisan line-drawing standards, including:
  - A racial equity provision reinforcing the principles of the Voting Rights Act, ensuring that New Jersey's communities of color have an equal opportunity to participate in the political process.
  - A commitment to preserving communities of interest to the greatest extent possible.
  - A guarantee that plans shall not be established for the purpose of favoring or disfavoring any office holder, candidate, or political party.

During the runup to the hearings, the Fair Districts team worked closely with community groups and individuals, reviewing their written testimony, and providing one-on-one coaching and practice sessions.

### **SPOTLIGHT: NJ NAACP YOUTH AND COLLEGE CHAPTER**

Bringing younger people into the redistricting conversation was an important coalition goal, so Fair Districts was thrilled when Ma'isha Aziz reached out to be part of the effort.

Aziz, an attorney and civil rights activist, was wearing several hats: She is the Region 2 Adult Representative of the national NAACP's Youth Works Committee, State Advisor for the New Jersey State Conference NAACP Youth and College, (acting as an advisor to high school and college NAACP chapters in New Jersey) and advisor of the NAACP Camden County East Youth Council. She was also a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., one of nine noted African American sororities and fraternities collectively nicknamed "The Divine Nine."<sup>28</sup> The Deltas, as they're known to members, had committed to creating a redistricting cohort in every state where they had chapters. Aziz was elected as secretary of the cohort for the State of New Jersey. The cohort was tasked with overseeing organizing efforts in New Jersey. She had worked with young people before on public testimony, but she needed practical guidance on testifying before the redistricting commissions. In meetings with Matt Duffy from NJISJ, she found everything she needed. "That testimony guide was a complete lifesaver," Aziz recalls.

The coalition asked Aziz to look for people in communities that typically did not get much attention, such as Winslow Township in Camden County. Aziz, who has a network of connections across the

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<sup>28</sup> Wikipedia; s.v. "The National Pan-Hellenic Council," accessed October. 10, 2022. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National\\_Pan-Hellenic\\_Council#Affiliate\\_organizations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Pan-Hellenic_Council#Affiliate_organizations)

state, quickly got on the phone with a Winslow school board member and told her that Fair Districts needed testimony on redistricting from young people in the town's Black community. The school board member contacted the principal, the principal sent an email to the entire high school student body, and Aziz soon had a list of students who were eager to participate. One was Winslow High School senior Charly Dutton, senate president of her school's student government – and a young person with no time to waste.

“By the time we got on the phone, she'd already gone to the website and submitted her testimony,” said Aziz. She and Duffy worked with Charly and other volunteers to make sure their oral testimony included key talking points and did not exceed the three-minute time limit. Because of her eagerness, Aziz awarded her with a NAACP membership.

In her testimony presented on February 5, 2022, Dutton told commissioners: “The Winslow Township community is a good example of what our nation should look like, with a great blend of diverse ethnicities and backgrounds.” She asked the commissioners to draw a district that united Winslow with the demographically similar towns of Sicklerville and Chesilhurst. Drawing on Fair Districts talking points, she also urged the commission members, who by then had agreed to release a draft map, to add another hearing that allowed the public enough time to assess the draft and respond -- a request the commission ultimately granted. This impact was so great, Dutton talked about it to her college and was highlighted on their website. (<https://www.gmu.edu/news/2022-08/incoming-freshman-determined-be-heard>).

Another young person who responded to the call was Malikah Stafford, at the time a student at Stockton University and a lifelong resident of Atlantic City. In addition to testifying, Stafford joined the Stockton University chapter of the NAACP – a bonus for Aziz – and agreed to publish a version of her testimony as an op-ed on Blavity News, an online community and platform for Black voices.<sup>29</sup>

Aziz also reached out to student leaders in existing NAACP chapters, including Kevin Bernard, who joined Dutton in testifying on Feb. 5. “We could have had students at every hearing, except that some took place during the day when they couldn't miss classes,” Aziz said. The a NAACP college students who testified before the reapportionment & redistricting committee admitted that this was the first time they even heard about the word redistricting. This truly was a learning experience for all of them.

The New Jersey Deltas also testified at the hearings and organized Zoom “watch parties” along with the New Jersey State Conference NAACP Youth and College, to cheer on everyone who testified. When they attended, they would all wear red, and were quite visible to all. In addition, the New Jersey Delta Redistricting Cohort sponsored community sessions with different communities, where Matt Duffy from NJISJ participated and interviewed the community participants and helped even prepare testimony with them.

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<sup>29</sup> Malikah Stafford, “Opinion: Communities of Color Deserve to be Seen,” Blavity.com, April 8, 2022. <https://blavity.com/communities-of-color-atlantic-city-black-neighborhood?category1=opinion>

# PART V: THE FINAL MAPS

One of the most significant advocacy victories Fair Districts achieved came when the legislative Apportionment Commission released two draft maps for public comment in early February 2022. The victory was all the sweeter coming after the congressional Redistricting Commission's failure to release its draft maps.

Two other signal moments to savor came when the coalition released its coalition unity maps: the racial equity map for congressional redistricting in December and its unity map for state legislative redistricting in February. The coalition had shown that it could be done, and that politicians could no longer divide and conquer New Jersey's diverse communities.

All four maps are discussed below.<sup>30</sup>

## Congressional Redistricting

### The Racial Equity Map

As described at the outset of this report, even the funders and some leaders of Fair Districts were not completely convinced that a coalition map could be achieved—but they were happy to be proven wrong. Against all odds, fighting an entrenched political machine and in the midst of an unprecedented pandemic, a broad coalition came together and demonstrated that it was possible for diverse groups to agree on a map that prioritized racial equity and preserving communities of interest. There could be no going back from this moment.

Before going public, members of Fair Districts, including LAN, the Institute, and the League presented their racial equity map to the congressional Redistricting Commission at an in-person hearing in Newark on Sunday, December 5. The meeting was well attended, and commission members listened to the coalition's presentation but did not respond or ask any questions from the dais.

At the outset, the coalition made a point of reminding commission members of a few key facts:

- According to current Census figures, over 48 percent of the state's population was people of color—and most likely already a majority, given the Census undercount.

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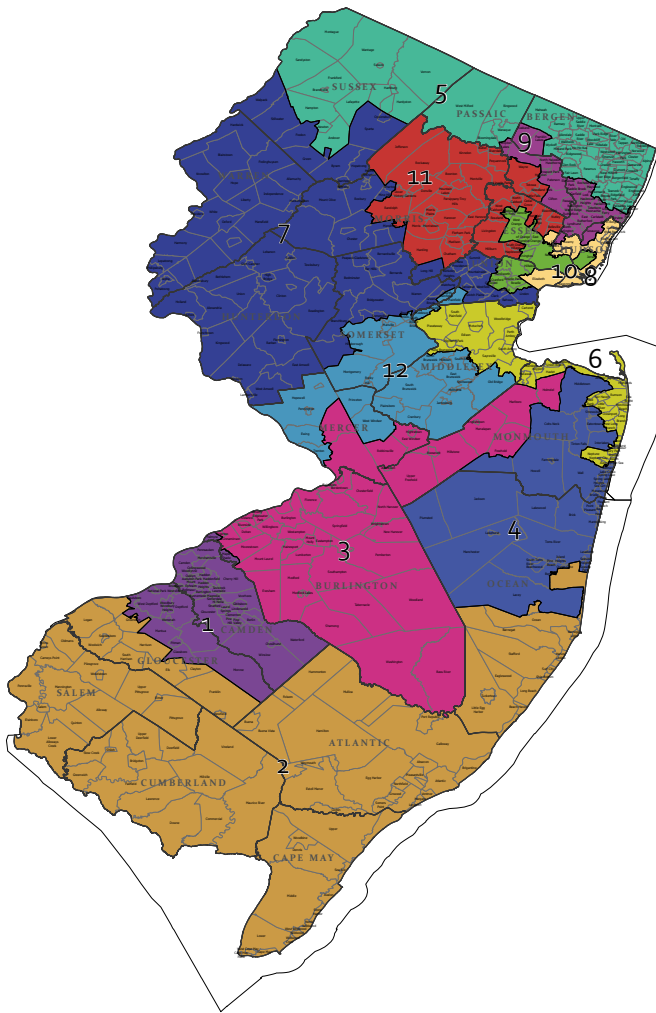
<sup>30</sup> An interactive comparison of all four maps can be viewed at <https://newjersey.redistrictingandyou.org/>





As one reporter humorously observed, AAPI influence district 11 in the racial equity map resembled “an anteater sucking up a meal as it zigzags from Morris County through parts of Essex, Union, Hudson and Bergen counties.”<sup>31</sup> While bizarre district shapes are often associated with partisan and racial gerrymandering, they are perfectly legitimate when the goal is to keep district populations roughly equivalent and comply with other fair mapping principles, including the goal that districts do not dilute minority voting strength.<sup>32</sup> [Just that week, in fact, Texas had been sued by the Justice Department for drawing its redistricting maps in a way that minimizes the voting strength of the state’s Black and Latino population<sup>33</sup>].

### The Congressional Redistricting Map



In the vast majority of states, draft redistricting maps are made public before being finalized, giving the public the opportunity to weigh in on a map that would be in place for the next decade. For decades, New Jersey’s opaque redistricting process has been an outlier in this regard—but Fair Districts was determined to change that. They kept up the pressure from the very beginning, highlighting the release of draft maps as a key demand in all of their communications with the press, the public and the commissioners.

As the deadline for a certified Congressional Redistricting map approached in late 2021, Fair Districts intensified the drumbeat, circulating #releasethemap messages on social media. At the December 5 hearing where the coalition presented their racial equity map, Hensley concluded his testimony by saying, “commissioners, we have shown you our map...where is your map?” When the commissioners announced that they would meet on December 22 to certify their map, Fair Districts issued a statement objecting to the decision, saying: “At their first meeting, and repeatedly thereafter,

the commissioners said they were committed to a public process. The failure to release a map publicly is not in line with that commitment.” The statement called on the Democratic and Republican delegations to immediately release

<sup>31</sup> Colleen O’Dea, “Redistricting That Reflects NJ’s Racial and Ethnic Makeup,” NJ Spotlight News, December 8, 2021. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2021/12/redistricting-coalition-racial-equity-map-coalition-racial-representation-ethnic-makeup-new-districts-majority-minority/>

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Alex J. Rouhandeh, “What Is ‘Vote Dilution’? Justice Dept. Says Texas’ Redistricting Suppresses Minority Votes,” Newsweek, Dec. 6, 2021. <https://www.newsweek.com/what-vote-dilution-justice-dept-says-texas-redistricting-suppresses-minority-votes-1656524>

their final draft Congressional maps, and for the commission to allow testimony at Wednesday's meeting and delay a final vote until a later date.<sup>34</sup>

The commission's lack of transparency, extreme even by New Jersey's standards, also caught the attention of the media. On December 21, David Wildstein, editor of The New Jersey Globe, tweeted: "Let's be clear: the commissioners have only seen their own map. There has been no map exchange between the two parties. So only the tiebreaker, Justice Wallace, and his staff have seen both maps."

Ignoring all entreaties, independent tiebreaker Chairman Wallace released the commission's map without public comment on December 23, choosing the Democrats' map. In a scathing opinion piece, Frank Argote-Freyre and Christian Estevez, respectively the chair of LANF and president of LAN, called the move a "bad Christmas surprise," the result of a "flawed, opaque process."

"As families across New Jersey prepare to open their Christmas presents, New Jersey's congressional Redistricting Commission gave us a big surprise for the holiday season—and it's a stinker," the op-ed began. The authors went on to note that while the Congressional map had drawn five of New Jersey's existing 12 congressional districts as majority-minority, "this is the result of fast-changing demographics—not because the map approved after the 2020 Census sought to empower people of color."<sup>35</sup>

Further, the authors pointed out, Judge Wallace revealed that his criteria for choosing the Democrats' map was that a Republican map had been selected in 2010. This transparently partisan rationale was yet another example of the need to adopt a truly independent, citizen-led redistricting process. Indeed, when the congressional map was challenged in court by Republicans on the grounds that Justice Wallace had not acted sufficiently independently, the New Jersey Supreme Court noted that there is no legal requirement that the independent member makes their decision in a non-partisan manner. The Justices' decision noted that "there are other ways to conduct the redistricting process," including independent citizens' commissions adopted in a number of states.

## State Legislative Apportionment

### The Unity Map

As the final legislative apportionment hearings drew to a close, Fair Districts released its Unity Map on Wednesday, February 2, via a virtual meeting attended by members of the Apportionment Commission, including Judge Philip Carchman, the independent tiebreaker.

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<sup>34</sup> "Fair Districts New Jersey Objects to Redistricting Commission's Plan to Certify a Congressional Map Without Public Participation," (Press release), Dec. 20, 2021. [https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com/5a21a3045521a400010b0fd1/61c2024b884c50e5654ac911\\_Fair%20Districts%20New%20Jersey%20Statement%20on%20Congressional%20Redistricting.pdf](https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com/5a21a3045521a400010b0fd1/61c2024b884c50e5654ac911_Fair%20Districts%20New%20Jersey%20Statement%20on%20Congressional%20Redistricting.pdf)

<sup>35</sup> Frank Argote-Freyre and Christian Estevez, "Opinion: New Congressional Maps Bad Christmas Surprise for Civil Rights," New Jersey Globe, Dec. 23, 2021. <https://newjerseyglobe.com/redistricting/opinion-new-congressional-maps-bad-christmas-surprise-for-civil-rights/>

Unlike the number of congressional districts that change with fluctuations in census numbers, the state legislature is always divided into 40 districts. Once again, the coalition emphasized community over incumbency.

Key features included:



- Twenty majority-people of color districts.
- Three majority Black districts, proposed districts 27, 28 and 34.
- Four majority and two plurality Hispanic districts (proposed districts 20, 29, 32, 35 and districts 33 and 36, respectively).
- Two Asian plurality districts, including a district, proposed district 18 in Middlesex County, whose population is 41% AAPI and that could grow into a majority-Asian district over the decade.
- Incorporating communities of interest throughout the state, including Arab-Americans.

The map was presented by Henal Patel from the Institute and Philip Hensley from the League, followed by remarks from Christian Estevez of LAN, Amy Torres of NJAIJ, and Rania Mustafa of PACC. They all began by thanking the Commission for its historic decision to release two draft maps and reiterating the coalition's request for additional hearings to air the public's views on the drafts.

Hensley started by reviewing the choices the coalition had made in crafting districts, noting that the unity map was created with the input of over 50 COI maps from around the state, which they submitted along with their proposed map.

Patel flagged the creation of LD-29, a new majority Hispanic district, as well as LD-35 and LD-40, which encompassed the growing Arab American community in Paterson, Wayne and Pompton Lakes. She noted LD-40's inclusion of the Lenape/Ramapough tribe in northern New Jersey and noted that the tribe had submitted a COI map that was included in the coalition's package.

In making his case for the unity map, LAN's Christian Estevez commented on the underrepresentation of Hispanics in the state legislature (seven percent in the Senate and eight percent in the Assembly) despite the fact that they made up 21 percent of New Jersey's population. He also expressed appreciation for the presence of Laura Matos on the commission, who was added after an original lineup that did not include a single Latinx member.

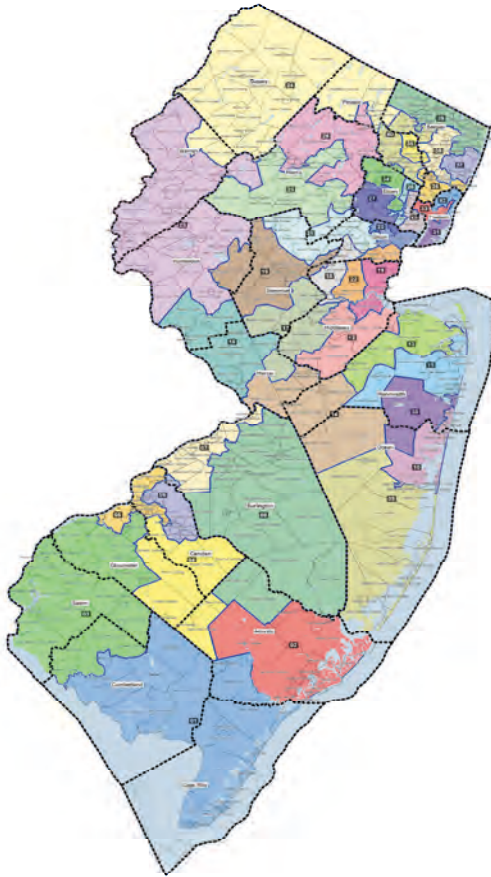


## The Draft Legislative Apportionment Maps

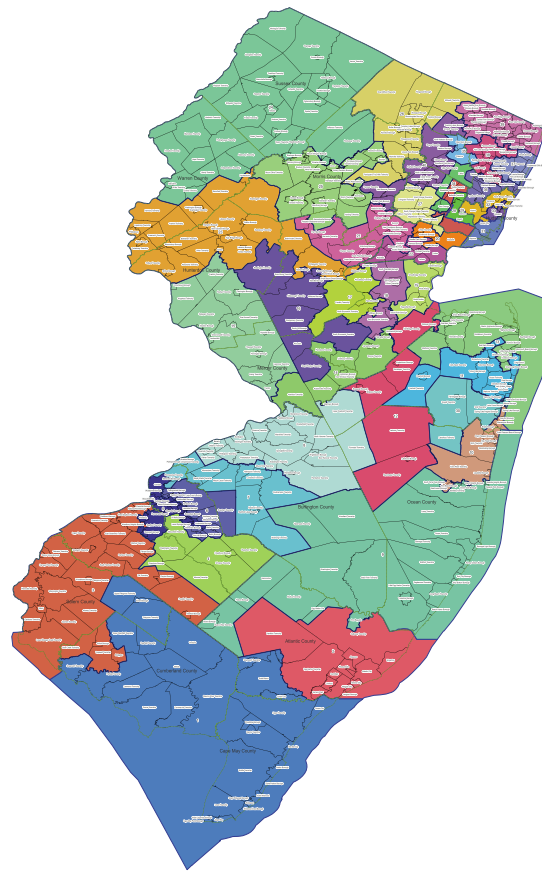
Judge Carchman’s announcement on February 2 that the legislative Apportionment Commission would release two draft maps was greeted with cheers by Fair Districts, as seen in this Twitter post: “Big deal alert: The NJ Apportionment Commission just announced they will post their 2 proposed maps, without partisan labels, for public comment. The League and our coalition members advocated for this and are grateful for this decision!” Despite the date of the announcement, the coalition held out hope that the final map would not result in a “Groundhog Day” experience of the same old backroom dealings.

On February 7, Judge Carchman released the maps created by the Democratic and Republican delegations, labeled “Turnpike” and “Parkway” in an attempt to disguise which was which. The labels fooled no-one—and neither of the maps adequately represented New Jersey’s diversity. It was Groundhog Day all over again.

**“PARKWAY” MAP**



**“TURNPIKE” MAP**



More than 160 people, including dozens of Fair Districts members and community mapmakers testified, commenting on one or both maps in two hearings on February 9 and 11. The first day of testimony began at 4 p.m. on a dark February afternoon; one after another, people cued up on Zoom to explain why and how the commission could do a better job of representing the people of New Jersey.

Given the number of speakers eager to have their say, participants were limited to a scant three minutes. All eyes were on the proceedings, including those New Jersey chapters of Delta Sigma Theta, the “Divine 9” sorority that had made redistricting their national cause. As a national organization, the Deltas often had sessions called “Redistricting Tuesdays” and made redistricting one of their national priorities.<sup>36</sup> They rallied to the cause once again, co-hosting a watch party with the NJ Institute of Social Justice and getting several shoutouts from those testifying.

Christian Estevez of LAN, one of the first to testify on February 9th, got right to the point: “We were able to draw 20 districts that had majority people of color, and both the Parkway and the Turnpike map both only got to 17 [adding only two more than the 2010 map]. We think that we demonstrated that it is possible to get to more, and we ask that both parties’ commissioners sharpen their pencils and try to do better on both counts.”<sup>37</sup>

The hearings reconvened two days later at 10 a.m. for another round of eloquent pleas for a truly representative map. At the end of the last session, the commissioners were effusive in thanking the participants for their input.

### **The Final Legislative Apportionment Map**

The Apportionment Commission’s final map was due to be certified by March 1. In a last-ditch bid to sway the outcome, Fair Districts issued a sign-on statement, saying that both the Turnpike and Parkway “appear to focus on political horse-trading with the aim of solidifying power for political parties and elected officials, when it should be about empowering us—the people—to choose leaders who represent our unique interests.”

In addition, the Institute’s Matt Duffy published an impassioned op-ed, saying “Our history is filled with the elected representatives of white communities denying Black people and people of color true representation and silencing their voice to disastrous results.”

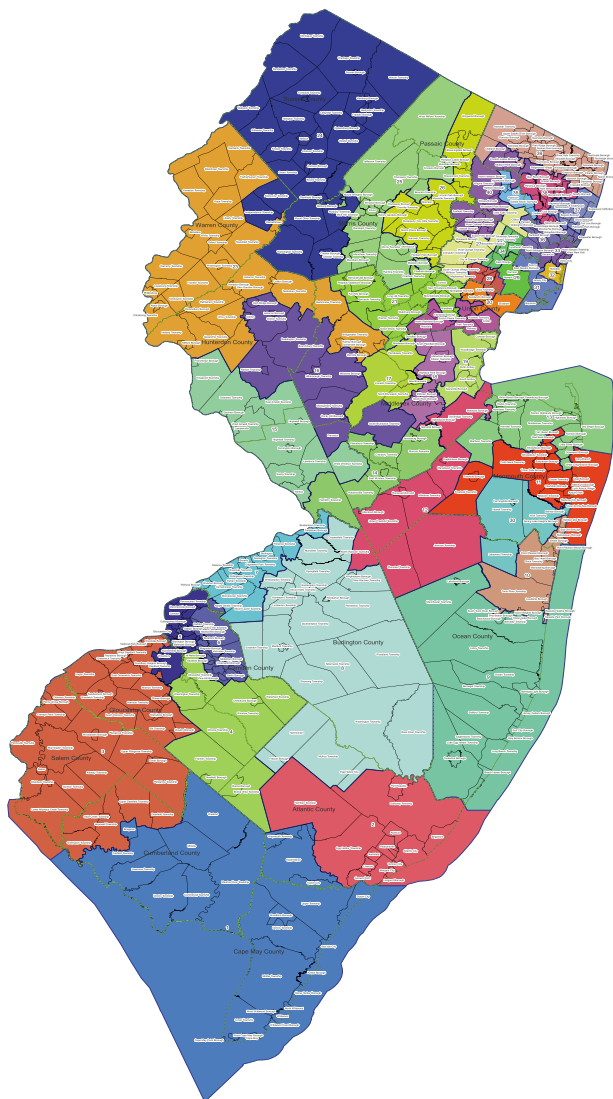
Speculation was rife about the decision, which was expected to rest with Judge Carchman, “among the most important people in New Jersey politics, a distinction he’ll hold until he makes his final choice of a legislative map,” as one newspaper put it.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> <https://www.deltasigmatheta.org/social-action-center/>

<sup>37</sup> Commission Meeting of New Jersey Legislative Apportionment Commission, (Transcript), February 9, 2022. <https://www.apportionmentcommission.org/Documents/2021/APPC%20Transcript%202-9-22.pdf>

<sup>38</sup> Joey Fox, “Grading the New Legislative Maps Along Carchman’s Standards,” New Jersey Globe, February 11, 2022. <https://newjerseyglobe.com/redistricting/grading-the-new-legislative-maps-along-carchmans-standards/>



Defying expectations, the Republican and Democratic Co-Chairs of the commission, Al Barlas and Leroy Jones, worked together on a bipartisan compromise map. The Chairs worked together, at Judge Carchman's urging, to bridge the differences that existed between their draft proposals. That compromise map was duly certified by the commissioners on February 18, with only two commissioners—one Republican and one Democrat—dissenting. While Judge Carchman credited Fair Districts with presenting “an extraordinary map which was able to bring together a record number of different diverse groups who agreed on what a map should look like,” ultimately, he characterized the final adopted map as balanced.<sup>39</sup>

“As the tiebreaker, the track I would normally operate with, is you’re negotiating with the parties over their maps,” Judge Carchman explained. “That’s one track. What made this cycle different, we had a second track – that was the negotiated consensus map. Once you’re on that track, I’m no longer the tiebreaker, I’m the mediator. As you [FDNJ] said in a press release, this is the way it’s supposed to work! The constitution says the 10 commissioners can agree on the map, the tiebreaker’s vote is diminished.”

“What you [Fair Districts] were able to do is show us how things work,” Judge Carchman added. “You gave an opportunity for us to visualize certain COIs that we could work with.”

In a statement, Fair Districts acknowledged that the commission’s map did draw some districts that kept communities of interest together, but criticized the commission’s failure to fully incorporate the public’s feedback or center racial equity into the final version.

“While the map does reflect some public testimony and creates some districts that keep communities with shared interests together, it also cracks some communities of interest in other parts of the state and fails to achieve the 20 majority-minority districts achieved by the Unity Map,” the coalition said. “The final map once again overrepresents white people and actively diminishes the voices of communities of color in our electoral process. In the end, the map fails to deliver on progress toward achieving racial equity.”

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<sup>39</sup> Commission Meeting of New Jersey Legislative Apportionment Commission, (Transcript), February 18, 2022. <https://www.apportionmentcommission.org/Documents/2021/APPC%20Transcript%202-18-22.pdf>



# PART VI: FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND REFORMS

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“Advice for next round: buckle up! Have your ears on, be able to be present, and be ever trying to amplify the coalition and the voices that can be represented...Think about who’s not in the room, who should be here alongside with you?” – **Rachel Dawn Davis, Waterspirit**

“We have to start off making the case that redistricting is the next step after Census,” she said, noting that the Fund was able to round up 20 funders to collaborate on Census outreach, but only 9 for redistricting. “Many funders wouldn’t support redistricting because it was perceived as too political or too partisan. But we now have a record to show how nonpartisan it can be.” – **Kiki Jamieson, The Fund for New Jersey**

“In 2010, one thing that happened, the Dems did not want to but had to reshape a district to majority Latino, pushed by worry that it would go on the Republican map. Whereas here, we didn’t get an Asian American community map. They didn’t want to touch it. Republicans were more willing to listen to us in the early stages on some of this because they were redrawing Democratic districts. But ultimately while there were some benefits of a compromise state map between the parties, one significant downside was that neither party had to make hard choices about increasing representation to try to convince the independent member to choose their map over the other map.”

– **Adam Gordon, Fair Share Housing Center**

## Findings and Recommendations

The coalition succeeded in changing the conversation around redistricting in New Jersey, and successfully pressured the commissions to achieve unprecedented levels of public participation and transparency.

Looking back at the historic wins, these key recommendations will be helpful in the future.

**Timing: Start early! Redistricting advocacy should begin well before hearings are scheduled; ideally as early as the start of the Census collection.** Timing is critical to nearly all aspects of the redistricting advocacy process. An earlier start alleviates pressure and facilitates effective, efficient, and comprehensive engagement.

- When organizations are doing Census outreach – whether to community organizations or to the public – they should also discuss the importance of redistricting and its connection to the Census.

- An early start allows advocates to identify and fully engage smaller and under-resourced groups, and to provide technical training and information to all. Then all groups will be prepared when it is time to present testimony and draw maps.
- It is crucial to hire a communications firm before redistricting begins so they can be embedded in the process.

**Data: Advocates should confirm that state-provided data is complete and accurate.** Redistricting advocacy is contingent upon having accurate population data. The discrepancy between Census data and prison-adjusted redistricting data provided by the state created extra work for advocates and ultimately resulted in irresolvable slight discrepancies between different map-making platforms.

- State-provided adjusted data must be detailed, aligned with the Census, and fully accurate.
- Both redistricting commissions must use these data.

**Coalition map-making: Working effectively in a coalition is dependent upon having certain agreements in place from the start.** Map-making could be streamlined and made more effective by clarifying expectations, setting goals, and agreeing on best practices prior to beginning map-making. Coalition members should consider finding consensus on the following aspects from the start:

- Select a common map-making platform that is web-based and relatively user-friendly.
- Identify clear principles, familiarize all coalition members with the importance and reasoning behind pursuing unity mapping as an advocacy strategy.
- Set common terminology.
- Explicitly state any existing disagreements.

In addition to these three primary recommendations, we examined the six organizational issue areas (discussed in Organizational Challenges and Successes below), to identify succinct takeaways for advocates within each area:

## ORGANIZATIONAL CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSSES

### Hiring Advisors and Consultants

**Finding:** Communications consultants' relationships and knowledge of local state media, hyperlocal media, and ethnic media is crucial to achieving advocacy goals.

**Recommendation:** Given the difficulty of securing consultants with preexisting know-how, future advocates should engage firms much earlier to provide enough time to bring consultants up to speed and/or find a firm with the right knowledge and relationships.

## Identifying Communities of Interest

**Finding:** Pre-existing relationships with communities of interest are essential to authentic engagement with these communities. Conducting community mapping sessions simultaneously with coalition unity-mapping efforts was very demanding on coalition time and resources.

**Recommendation:** Advocates should engage early and often, even before the redistricting cycle begins, so that they are already familiar with growing communities' perspectives. Community mapping sessions, combined with educational sessions about redistricting, should be conducted as early as possible, preferably in the year leading up to redistricting and prior to the commissions being formed. Starting early will allow advocates to effectively and efficiently solicit feedback and will have already produced dozens of community of interest maps which will greatly aid advocates' ability to produce unity maps.

## Supporting Smaller Community Groups

**Finding:** Smaller community groups and groups with limited resources had more difficulties engaging their constituencies around redistricting. These groups faced disadvantages and required more effort and resources from advocates.

**Recommendation:** Advocates should be thorough in their trainings for smaller community group leaders and ensure that these leaders have access to both basic and more advanced information about the redistricting process. Advocates should expect to answer more questions and provide a higher level of support to smaller community groups. Providing organized trainings and robust resources will empower community groups that may be at a disadvantage due to size, resources, and lack of prior familiarity with redistricting.

## Timing of Activities

**Finding:** A late start to community outreach caused some community groups and individuals to miss certain parts of the redistricting process and burdened advocates.

**Recommendation:** The best time to start outreach is during the Census phase, well before hearings are scheduled, because many organizations are already doing engagement work at that time.

## Overcoming Power Dynamics

**Finding:** A diverse coalition of groups will naturally have conflict and disagreements about redistricting priorities and goals, which can cause tensions and hinder progress.

**Recommendation:** Advocates should encourage diverging groups to focus on commonalities. Advocates should not have preconceived notions about what the result of their work might look like. It is essential to be open and allow the groups to take the lead in determining how the final result will be presented, so that as many organizations as possible feel comfortable in signing on and creating unity around a set of self-determined goals.

## Maintaining a United Front

**Finding:** The coalition was its most effective when it was united in messaging and advocacy.

**Recommendation:** While it is pertinent to address disagreements and diverging interests, it is crucial to remember that dividing the advocacy community serves the interests of those in power. During this cycle, the coalition was at its most effective when it was united in its messaging—whether it was calling for more public hearings, public release of maps, or advocating for communities of interest. Handle disputes internally, but remember to remain united publicly and, especially, to the commissions.

## REFORMS

This report has cataloged a number of the successes that the coalition was able to achieve, within the boundaries set by the existing [bi]partisan redistricting system. However, Fair Districts began its history as an advocacy coalition focused specifically on reforming New Jersey’s flawed redistricting process, and this report would be incomplete without including suggestions for improving the system, based on the experience of the 2020 redistricting cycle.

The reform recommendations are divided into two sections: Procedural reforms to improve the way in which the redistricting commissions conduct their work, and Structural reforms that would change the composition of the commissions. The state should also clarify the recently enacted prison gerrymandering statute to ensure an accurate reporting of racial and ethnic demographics.

## 1. Procedural Reforms

The 2020 redistricting process in New Jersey demonstrated something significant: that public pressure, and the openness of at least some commissioners to calls for greater transparency, could result in important changes in the commissions' practices that brought the public in like never before. The challenge for future advocates will be to ensure the practices established in 2020 are replicated, and to advocate for their codification in some form. The following reforms should all be adopted as requirements for both commissions through statutory or Constitutional change, but in the absence of such a mandate, they could also be codified in the commissions' bylaws:

- Future apportionment and redistricting commissions should be required to hold at least 25 accessible public hearings each. This was the original request of the Fair Districts coalition, and one of the clearest lessons of 2020 was that the more redistricting hearings were held, the greater the attendance. Many other states hold in excess of 25 hearings, and New Jerseyans deserve no less in 2030.
- Future commissions should implement language access policies and accommodations to ensure that the hearings are accessible to all New Jerseyans regardless of English proficiency.
- Future commissions should commit to the precedent of releasing draft maps publicly, with ample opportunities for public comment.
- Future commissions must commit to implementing their community outreach efforts, including a dedicated budget and targeted outreach in a variety of media, including non-English language media.
- The commissions should be required to adopt clear, explicit non-partisan redistricting principles:
  - A requirement that plans ensure that racial, ethnic and language minorities have an equal opportunity to participate in the political process and elect candidates of their choice;
  - A requirement that any redistricting plan preserves communities of interest;
  - A requirement that plans shall not be established for the purpose of favoring or disfavoring any office holder, candidate, or political party; and
  - The commissions should be required to produce publicly accessible written reports justifying all map-making decisions.

## 2. Structural Reforms

As the Fair Districts coalition has consistently advocated, and as the lessons of 2020 confirm, the gold standard of independence in redistricting is a commission composed of citizens, not politicians or political appointees. As the New Jersey Supreme Court stated in *Matter of Congressional Districts by New Jersey Redistricting Commission*: “A number of states, including California, Arizona, Michigan, and Colorado, have created

independent redistricting commissions that include citizens with no party affiliation, in order to “increase the degree of separation between map-drawers and partisan politics....To change the system and distance it from partisan politics would require a proposed constitutional amendment and voter approval. Those decisions can begin with grassroots efforts, or the political branches of government. In the end, the choice is left to the people of our State.”<sup>40</sup>

The Fair Districts coalition concurs, and proposes that New Jersey adopt Citizens Commissions for both legislative and congressional redistricting, whose members shall be chosen at random from among a pool of qualified applicants, following the models established in California, Michigan, and elsewhere. Ultimately, while procedural requirements can limit the ability of partisan actors to abuse the discretion the existing system gives them, only the adoption of a Citizens Commission model can guarantee that redistricting, and the allocation of political power it confers, is conducted impartially and at a remove from partisan considerations.

### 3. Additional Reforms

The statutes ending prison gerrymandering in New Jersey should be amended to require that the Department of Corrections (DOC) data on an individual’s race should include whether the individual identifies with more than one race, and should include at a minimum all ethnic and racial categories covered by the Census (as well as other categories not currently included in the Census, such as Middle Eastern and North African). As referenced earlier in this report, the DOC’s failure to include more than one racial category was not only inaccurate but resulted in discrepancies in redistricting data.

# CONCLUSION

“At the outset, even the idea of a coalition unity map was ‘frankly aspirational,’ said Kiki Jamieson, President of the Fund for New Jersey. “What surprised me was the groups achieved a racial unity map and did it twice. Now that they’ve done that, doing a coalition map going forward is the new norm.” – **Kiki Jamieson, The Fund for New Jersey**

The coalition succeeded in changing the conversation around redistricting in New Jersey, and successfully pressured the commissions to achieve unprecedented levels of public participation and transparency. It proved that a broad and powerful coalition, unified around clear goals and with clear demands for the coalition, can win historic reforms. But much remains to be done to ensure that redistricting in the Garden States truly represents the voice and the will of the people.

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<sup>40</sup> *Matter of Cong. Districts by New Jersey Redistricting Comm’n*, 249 N.J. 561 (2022).

Ultimately, the coalition's vision is for New Jersey to join other states in adopting the Citizens Commission model. Reform movements in other states have all passed with widespread bipartisan support, demonstrating that fairness is not a partisan issue. But in a state without an initiative process allowing citizens to place proposals for laws or constitutional amendments on the ballot, advocates must continue to press members of the New Jersey Legislature to advance reforms for fairly-drawn districts.

The hope is that this report will provide both inspiration and practical advice for advocates in the next round of redistricting. Let's put power back in the hands of the people—where it belongs.

## BACKGROUND: THE ROAD TO REDISTRICTING (2017-2020)

### Coming Together

Fair Districts was established in 2017, with leadership from the League of Women Voters of New Jersey. Early members included the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice, the NJ NAACP, the United Black Agenda, New Jersey Citizen Action, Clean Water Action, NJ Appleseed, the League, and others. Helen Kioukis joined the League of Women Voters of New Jersey's staff to lead Fair Districts New Jersey in 2018.

### A “Good Enough” System?

One challenge the group had to overcome was the public perception that New Jersey's redistricting process was, if not perfect, “good enough.”<sup>1</sup> Unlike many other states in which the dominant political party draws districts lines – a recipe for blatantly partisan self-dealing -- New Jersey is one of nine states that uses politically appointed commissions to draw Congressional and legislative maps. Other states, including California, Colorado, Arizona, and Michigan, have independent commissions that empanel public members – a nonpartisan approach that was a nonstarter in New Jersey, given the lack of political will to engage in state constitutional reform and the reluctance to cede power.

For FDNJ, “good enough” was a failure of democracy. The process was opaque -- redistricting maps were drawn with minimal public input and the system was missing the voices of unaffiliated and third-party voters. The evidence of the system's failings was clear to see in the makeup of the largely white, male legislature, which was hardly representative of a state on its way to becoming majority-people of color in the next decade.

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<sup>1</sup> The Fund for New Jersey, “Democracy in New Jersey: Increasing Representation, Expanding Participation, and Improving Security,” February 2020. <https://www.fundfornj.org/sites/default/files/Democracy%20in%20New%20Jersey.pdf>



## Laying the Groundwork as the Pandemic Begins

The Census year of 2020 started out with good news: In January, Governor Phil Murphy signed a bill to end prison gerrymandering –the practice of using prisons to transfer power away from the home communities of incarcerated people and give it to legislative districts that contain prisons.<sup>2</sup>

While the bill applied only to state legislative districts, another bill the following year ended prison gerrymandering for Congressional and local districts. Together, the bills' passage meant that an additional 38,000 voters could be allocated in the 2021 redistricting process.<sup>3</sup>

As advocates have noted, "This type of reform...is crucial for ending the siphoning of political power from disproportionately Black and Latino communities to pad out the mostly rural, predominantly white regions where prisons are located."<sup>4</sup> They would later find, however, that reallocating incarcerated voters to their home districts was not so easy, given the discrepancies in how racial categories are recorded by prisons.

But bad news was on the horizon as well, with the arrival of the COVID19 pandemic. In the midst of an unprecedented existential threat to lives and livelihoods, the deadly virus also impacted the ongoing door-to-door Census count. As the Census Bureau regrouped and local advocates sought to help their constituencies complete the Census, concerns developed about how a delayed count would affect redistricting deadlines (in addition to concerns about how the delay would result in an undercount of communities of color<sup>5</sup>). The original federal deadline for apportionment data used for determining Congressional seats was December 31, 2020, while the deadline for state congressional and legislative districts was April 1, 2021.<sup>6</sup>

After temporarily suspending in-person collection of field data in March, the following month the Census Bureau announced a revision of deadlines due to COVID-19: Apportionment counts would be delivered by April 30, 2021, and redistricting data would be delivered by July 31, 2021.<sup>7</sup>

New Jersey is one of two states (Virginia is the other) that has legislative elections scheduled for November 2021, meaning that they typically would receive their data earlier so that they could complete legislative redistricting in time for candidate filing. While the revised deadlines presented some challenges, it also bought more time for the coalition to press the commissioners to appoint a truly independent tie-breaker, to hold public hearings, and to make the entire process more transparent and equitable.

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<sup>2</sup> Prison Policy Initiative, "New Jersey Governor signs bill ending prison gerrymandering," January 21, 2020. <https://www.prisonersofthecensus.org/news/2020/01/21/nj-signed/>

<sup>3</sup> Colleen O'Dea, "End of 'Prison Gerrymandering' Means Changes to Redistricting," New Jersey Spotlight News, September 1, 2021. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2021/09/nj-redistricting-congress-legislature-end-prison-gerrymandering/>

<sup>4</sup> Prison Policy Initiative, "Where People Come From: The Geography of Mass Incarceration in New Jersey," June 2022. <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/origin/nj/2020/report.html>

<sup>5</sup> Raven Santana, "NJ Redistricting Proposal Could Delay Minority Representation," New Jersey Spotlight News, July 20, 2020. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/nj-redistricting-proposal-could-delay-minority-representation/>

<sup>6</sup> Tim Storey, Technology and Transparency in the Redistricting Process, C-SPAN, Oct. 24 2018. <https://www.c-span.org/video/?c4757202/technology-transparency-redistricting-process>

Politicians, meanwhile, seized on the delay to pass a state constitutional amendment deadline of February 15 to receive the federal census. If the census data arrived after that February date, the new maps had to be adopted by March 1 of that year. If that deadline was not met, maps from the previous census would remain in place until the next election cycle in 2023, giving an unfair additional advantage to incumbents.<sup>8</sup> In a switch, Congressional redistricting would happen first. The coalition sought to adjust to these changes as everyone also dealt with the uncertainties of the pandemic and the new world of Zoom meetings.

## THANKS AND CREDITS

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First and foremost, we would like to thank Emily Whitfield for drafting this report, for conducting dozens of interviews that contributed to its content, and for her infectious enthusiasm and eagerness to tell the story of Fair Districts New Jersey. And a special thanks to Jake Girard, at the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice, for designing this report.

We also want to thank the team at the Rutgers Eagleton Institute of Politics, whose support was vitally important to the coalition's work. We thank Institute Director, John Farmer Jr., Randi Chmielewski, former Chief of Staff at Eagleton, for her tireless efforts, and especially the fantastic team of Rutgers undergraduate interns Neha Aluwalia, Michael Brestin, Marc Ramrekha, and Alex Fonseca, for their invaluable contributions. We would also like to thank Robert Dougherty-Bliss, a Rutgers Graduate student who provided us with expert analysis.

We would especially like to thank Kiki Jamieson for her leadership, and whose support made Fair Districts New Jersey's work, and this report, possible.

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<sup>7</sup> United States Census Bureau, "U.S. Department of Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and U.S. Census Bureau Director Steven Dillingham Statement on 2020 Census Operational Adjustments Due to COVID-19," April 13, 2020. <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2020/statement-covid-19-2020.html>

<sup>8</sup> NJ.gov, "Public Question No. 3," <https://www.nj.gov/state/elections/assets/pdf/election-results/2020/2020-public-question-03-english.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Justin Levitt, "All About Redistricting," Loyola Law School. Accessed December 7, 2022. <https://redistricting.lls.edu/national-overview/?colorby=Institution&level=Congress&cycle=2020>

# APPENDICES

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## Appendix A: Glossary

**Apportionment:** The process for allocating representative seats within a geographic area or political jurisdiction according to changes in population. For example: Seats in the United States House of Representatives are distributed among the 50 states according to each new Census, with states that gain population receiving more seats and those that lose population getting fewer.

**At-large:** When a district elects more than one member, all candidates run against each other on one ballot, and they are elected by the whole population of the district.

**Ballot measure:** A ballot measure is a piece of proposed legislation to be approved or rejected by eligible voters. Ballot measures are a form of direct democracy, as opposed to legislation passed by representatives. Ballot initiatives, proposals, and referendums are all types of ballot measures.

**Ballot initiative or referendum:** A certain percent of voters is needed to validate a measure and be accepted on the ballot in an election. That number varies based on state and the number of signatures needed to get a ballot measure on the ballot. Also applies to referendums.

**Campaign:** An organized, purposeful effort to create a particular change.

**Census:** A complete count or enumeration of the population; the federal census is mandated by the U.S. Constitution in Article 1, section 2. Since 1988, the League has worked with state and local Leagues to encourage full participation in the census and to ensure that subsequent reapportionment and redistricting complied with one-person, one-vote requirements and the Voting Rights Act.

**Census block:** The smallest and lowest level of geography defined for decennial census tables. The Census Bureau provides redistricting data down to the block level, which is the lowest level of census geography. Blocks can have any population, including no people.

**Census Bureau:** The government agency responsible for the United States Census and gathers other national demographic and economic data. As part of the United States Department of Commerce, the Census Bureau serves as a leading source of data about America's people and economy.

**Census tract:** Set of block groups combined to create a unit of census geography delineated by local committees in accordance with census bureau guidelines for the purpose of collecting and presenting decennial census data.

**Civic engagement:** The process of working to make a difference in the civic life of communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. The promotion of improved quality of life in a community occurs through both political and non-political processes.

**Commission:** A statutory or constitutional body charged with researching, advising or enacting policy. Redistricting commissions have been used to draw districts for legislatures and Congress.

**Communities of interest:** Areas defined by shared socio-economic, ethnic, geographic, economic or other interests. The definition should not include any relationship between a community and a political party, incumbent or candidate.

**Compact:** The notion that a district should not have an odd shape, as is often the case with a gerrymandered district. Having the minimum distance between all the parts of a constituency (a circle, square or a hexagon are examples of very compact district). There are a number of different ways for measuring compactness, including the dispersion model which measures the distance of the borders from a central point and the perimeter-area model which provides a ratio of the perimeter to the area for comparison among districts.

**Competitive district:** A district where candidates of more than one party have a realistic chance of winning election. Mathematically the formula used for competition is generally  $50\% \pm 3.5\%$  meaning a range of 46.50% - 53.50%.

**Coalition:** An alliance for combined action, especially a temporary alliance of political parties forming a government or of states.

**Contiguous:** All parts of a district must be connected, usually by land, and connected by more than a single point.

**Cracking:** Spreading supporters of a particular party or members of a minority group across multiple electoral districts so as to prevent them from being able to elect their favored candidates.

**Criteria:** The standards on which a redistricting plan is based and should be judged must: (1) be enforceable in court; (2) require substantially equal population; geographic contiguity; and effective representation of racial and linguistic minorities. Criteria should also provide for promotion of partisan fairness, preservation and protection of “communities of interest” and respect boundaries of municipalities and counties. Compactness and competitiveness can be considered if it doesn’t conflict with the above criteria. Redistricting plans should explicitly reject protection of incumbents and preferential political party treatment.

**Dilution:** Reduction in the voting strength of a group within a redistricting plan. The phrase “minority vote dilution” describes racial minorities being in a position of not being able to elect candidates of choice.

**District:** The boundaries that define the constituency from which a public official is elected.

**Federal legislative fixes:** Federal legislative fixes for this campaign are bills passed by the U.S. House and Senate and signed by the President, which create a fix for gerrymandering nationwide. Examples of qualifying legislation include the For the People Act and the Voting Rights Advancement Act.

**Gerrymandering:** A term of art coined in early 19th century to describe a plan or a district intentionally drawn to advantage one group or party over another, sometimes identified by bizarre shapes.

**Incumbent protection gerrymandering:** Drawing safe district boundaries that include an incumbent's residence so as to assure his/her re-election.

**Partisan gerrymandering:** Drawing voting districts that give unfair advantage to one political party, group or incumbent. In *Vieth v. Jubliere* (2004), the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that excessive partisanship in redistricting is unconstitutional but did not state a standard for determining what is excessive.

**Bipartisan gerrymandering:** The drawing of safe districts by two political parties to mutually protect their political interests and their incumbent members.

**Prison-based gerrymandering:** Including prison populations in the calculations of a district's population, despite the fact that inmates are rarely constituents of the areas where they are housed. Especially in rural districts that include large, disenfranchised prison populations, the ballots of the voters of those districts thus hold a disproportionate weight.

**GIS:** Geographic Information System. Computer software used for creating or revising plans and analyzing geographically oriented data.

**Independent, or nonpartisan:** Because groups and communities use different terms to mean ‘independent’ and ‘nonpartisan’, we include a list of what may be considered synonyms for those words in this context. Leagues may want to use different terms depending on their communities, though we need to be aware of the importance of language. Words used in various states and by various groups to describe kinds of commissions:

**Independent:** A process that is independent from the legislature and that operates outside of partisan control and interests.

**Nonpartisan:** Like independent, a process that operates outside of partisan control and interests.

**Party-neutral:** Like independent, a process that is independent from partisan control.

**Partisan:** A process that is controlled by the major parties in the area being redistricted.

**Bipartisan:** implies two, but many people also think it means ‘fair’.

**Independent redistricting commissions:** The League supports independent redistricting commissions as the most transparent and responsible way to draft and implement electoral district maps. Independent redistricting commissions should consist of membership that reflects the diversity of the unit of government, including citizens at large, representatives of public interest groups, and members of minority groups.

**Legislative body:** Any entity that performs governmental legislative duties and whose membership is elected by the people; aka representational body.

**Minority-majority districts:** A legislative district where a racial, ethnic or language minority makes up the majority of the population.

**Multi-member district (aka ‘at-large’ or multi-seat district):** A district where the voters elect candidates to fill two (2) or more seats in the same “district.”

**One person, one vote:** The standard set by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Reynolds v. Sims* (1964), which generally requires that each legislative district include an equal number people. Chief Justice Warren said “Legislators represent people, not trees or acres. Legislators are elected by voters, not farms or cities or economic interests.”

**Packing or stacking:** Drawing districts so a group—opposite political party, minority—is heavily in one district and thinly represented in other adjoining districts. This process allows the party in power to weaken the opposition by wasting their votes in the packed district.

**Proportional Representation (PR):** A voting system in which groups of voters with similar interests gain representation in “proportion” to their voting strength. There are many styles of PR.

**Partnerships:** An association of two or more individuals or a group coming together for a shared goal or outcome around redistricting reform relevant to their state and communities.

**Population:** The total number of people, including noncitizens and children, who reside in a jurisdiction.

**Power Mapping:** The process of creating a visual chart to identify the best individual targets to advance our goals. Power mapping determines who the decision makers are in the community that are required to build momentum. It also identifies who are the people who can influence the decision makers and move them in our direction.

**Public participation:** Any individual or group activity working to address an issue or multiple issues of public concern.

**Reapportionment:** The reallocation of the number of representative seats within a set of geographic areas or political jurisdictions, based on changing populations.

**Redistricting:** The process of crafting new boundaries for representational districts.

**Safe district:** A district drawn so that no other political party or other group is likely to have a chance of electing a representative for the district.

**Single Member District (SMD):** A district where there is only a single winner or a single open seat; also known as “winner-take-all.” It is the most common type of district used in the United States.

**State constitutional options:** These options are court cases that challenge the practice of gerrymandering or establish fair redistricting reform based on a “free and fair” clause in a state’s constitution. Cases like *LWVPA v. Commonwealth* give hope for the state-level fight for fair elections. When the League challenged Pennsylvania’s congressional districts as unconstitutional under their state constitution, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled in their favor. The use of Pennsylvania’s state constitution established a framework for a state constitutional standard to measure extreme partisan gerrymandering. With this framework, partisan gerrymandering can be battled out in state courts by leveraging similar constitutional clauses

**State legislative fixes:** This is a fix through state legislative bodies that will establish fair redistricting processes in the state. LWV will track state legislation that could advance or hinder the redistricting process. Where there are productive bills that make redistricting more transparent, the League will work to advance that legislation. Where there are bills that shorten the window for a map, limit public content (other bad things), the League will work to fight such legislation. Making sure implementation of redistricting is protected. In this fix, Leagues will testify on the redistricting process. Any tinkering of the process will happen in early 2020 – drawing of the lines and implementation FY21, first quarter 2021. Leagues will call for transparency, an open process, and prohibition of lobbyist influence.

**Super District:** A term generally used to refer to a multi-member district (MMD) designed during a districting (or redistricting) process which consolidates the areas of several smaller single member districts. Each super district must still adhere to constitutional requirements of equal apportionment and protect the equal rights of voters, including minority voters.



**Transparency:** Mechanisms by which the public can obtain information about government operations so that they can hold governments accountable. (<http://www.brookings.edu/about/projects/transparency-accountability>.)

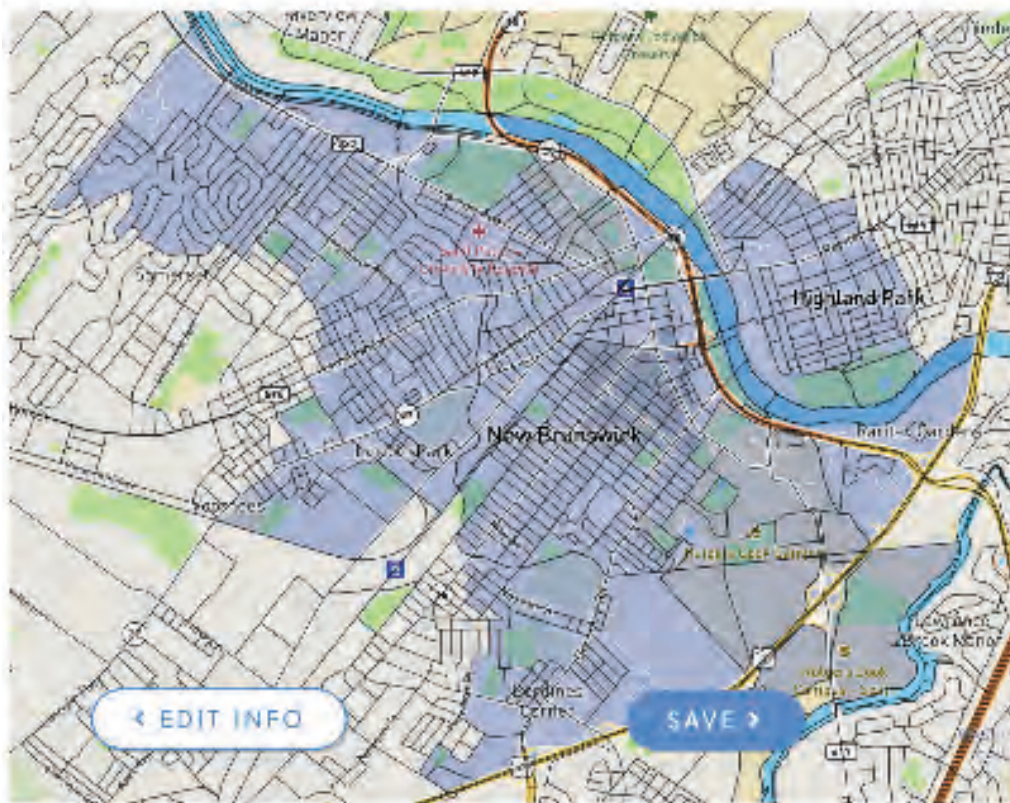
**Voting Rights Act (VRA):** The Voting Rights Act, also known as the VRA, was enacted by Congress in 1965 (42 U.S.C. 1973 to 1973bb-1) and transformed elections in the U.S. by prohibiting racial discrimination in voting. Pursuant to the VRA, the Attorney General undertakes investigations and litigation throughout the United States and its territories, conducts administrative reviews of changes in voting practices and procedures and monitors elections. The Act has been amended several times over the years, and in 2013, a portion of it was struck down by the Supreme Court. (See FAQs for more in-depth information about the VRA.)

**Unity Maps:** Where multiple organizations with different interests come together during a redistricting cycle to either create a mutually-agreeable map for presentation and submission as part of the redistricting process or where groups work together to identify the best map to accomplish a shared goal as part of the redistricting process.

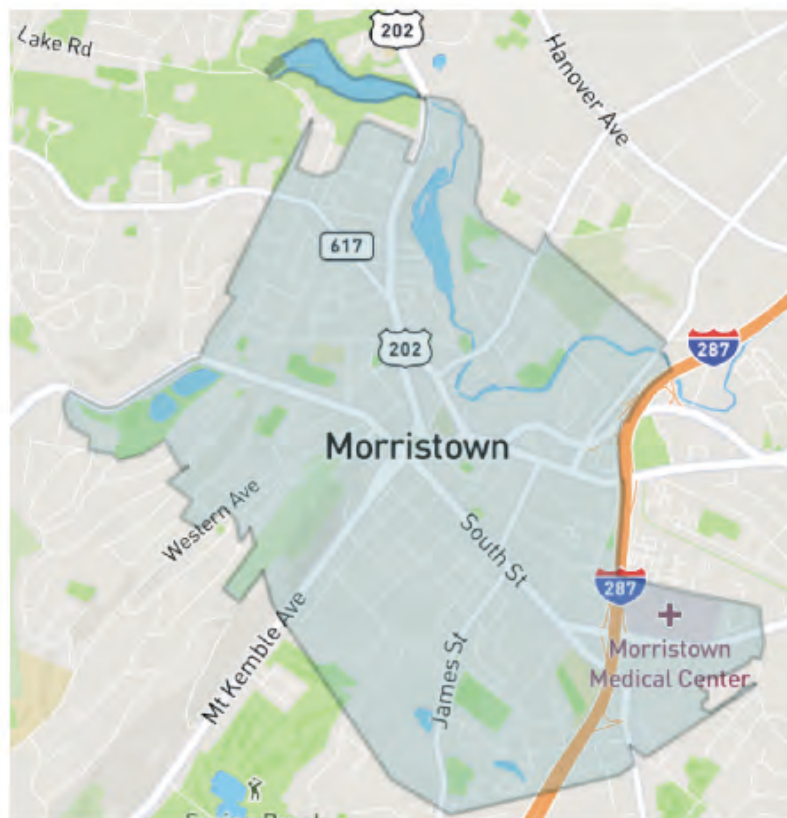
## Appendix B: Community of Interest Maps

The following maps are examples of COI maps produced by local community members at community mapping sessions conducted by Fair Districts New Jersey coalition members.

### New Brunswick:



**Morristown:**

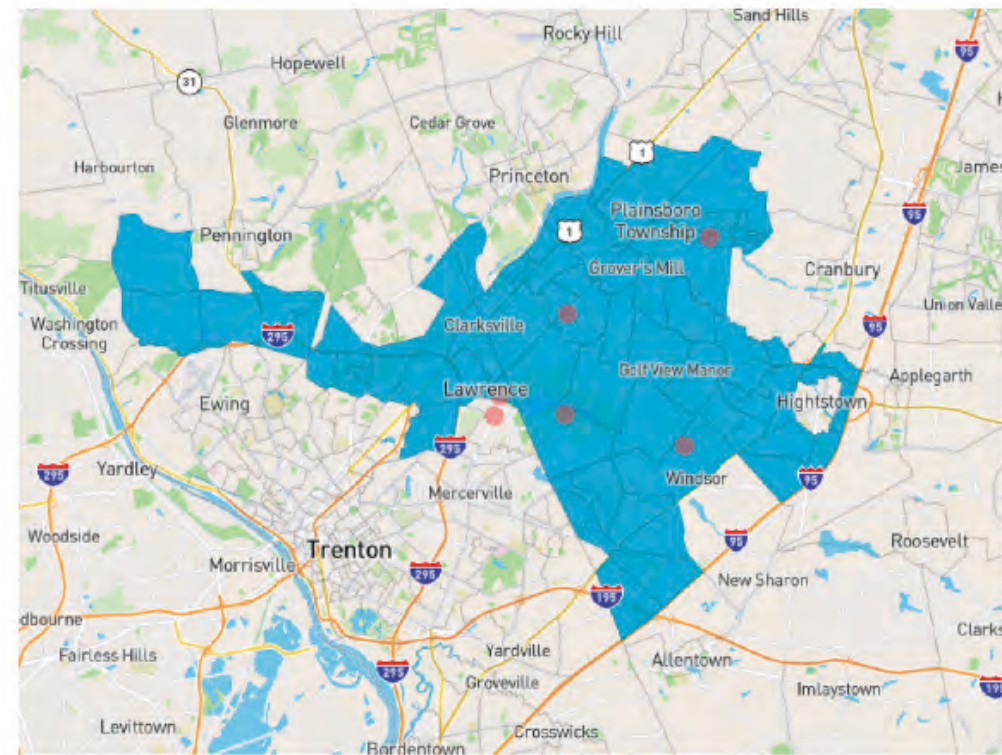


**South Orange:**

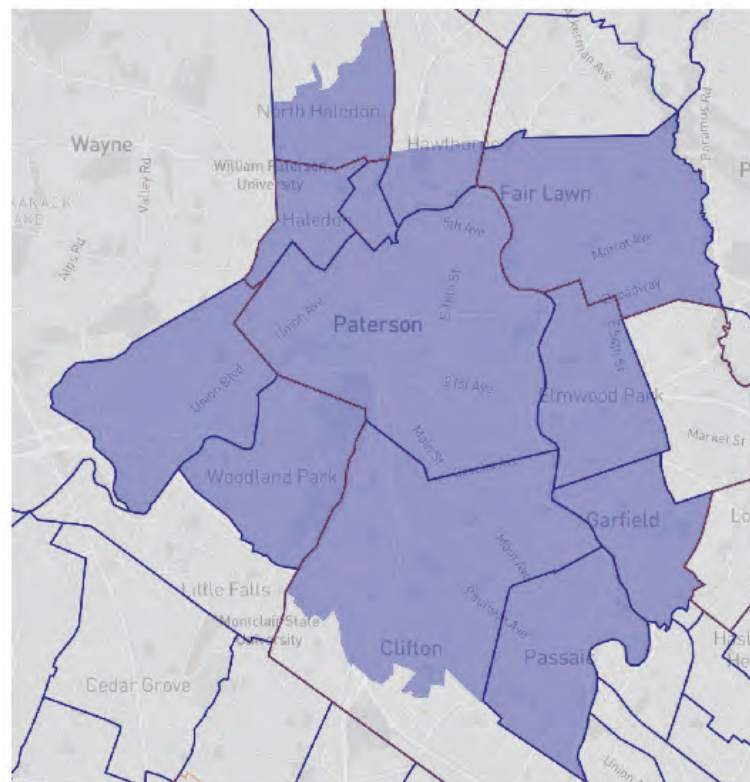




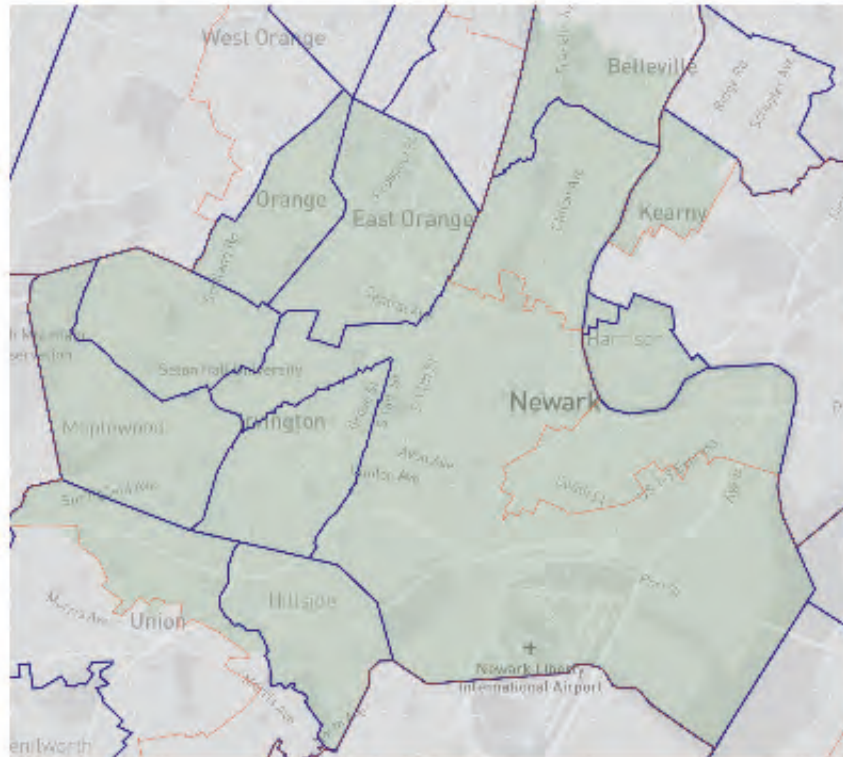
## Mercer County:



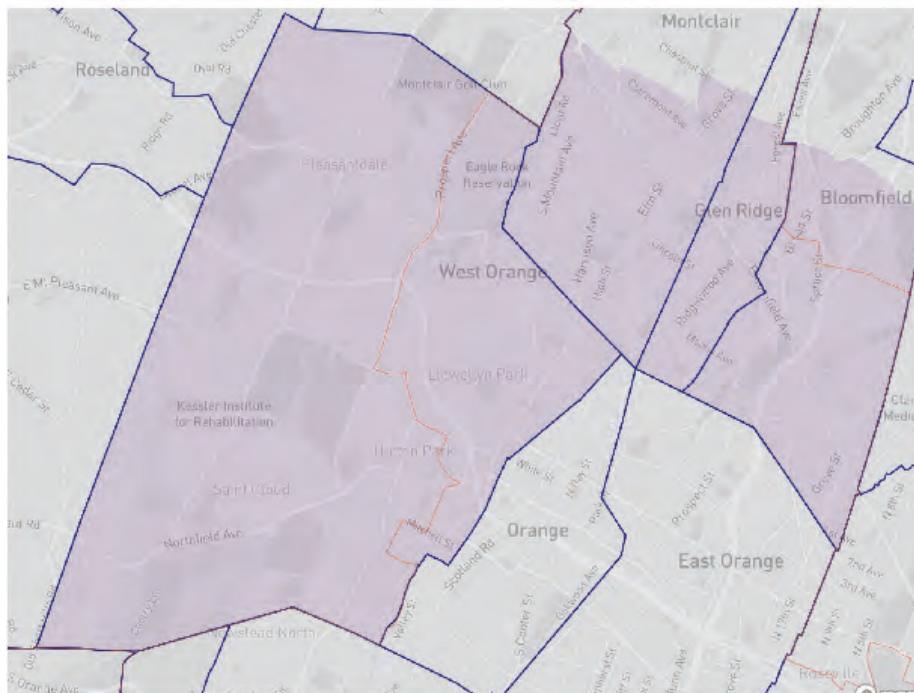
## Greater Paterson:



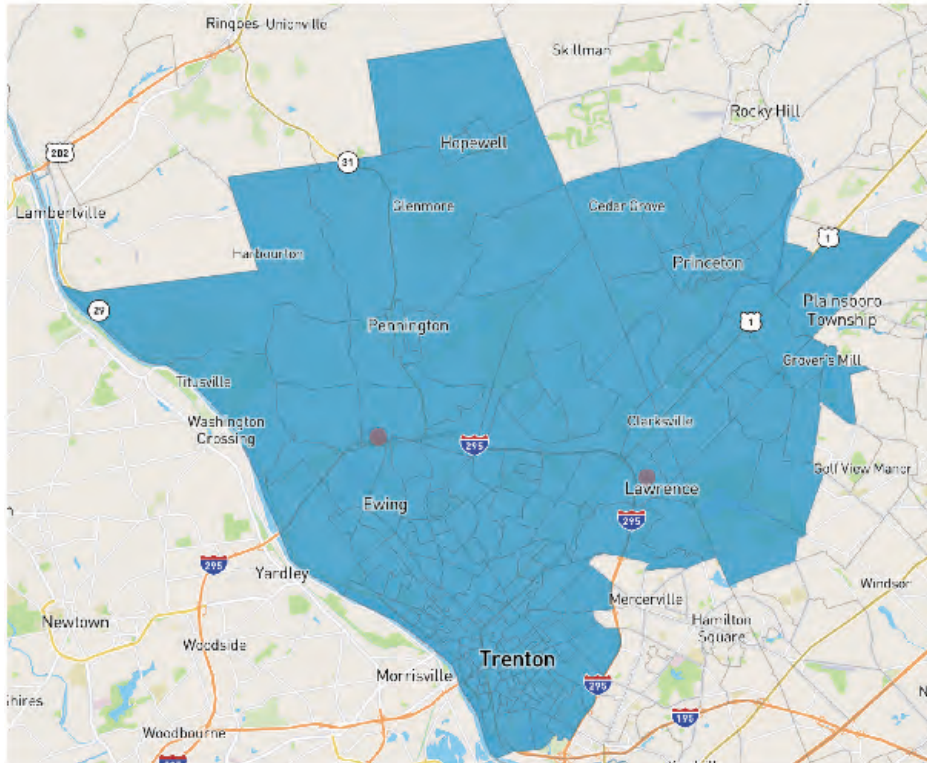
## Greater Newark:



## Greater Montclair:



## Lawrence Township:



## Appendix C: List of Interviewees

The 20 individuals listed below were interviewed for this report by Emily Whitfield along with Philip Hensley and Henal Patel of Fair Districts New Jersey. While the report does not include direct quotes from everyone on this list, each individual's experiences and observations informed this report. With one exception, all interviews were recorded on Zoom and are available to advocates upon request from The Fund for New Jersey.

Searchable transcripts and video of redistricting testimony before the New Jersey Congressional Redistricting Commission are available at <https://www.njredistrictingcommission.org/schedule.asp>

Searchable transcripts and video of testimony before the New Jersey Legislative Apportionment Commission are available at <https://www.apportionmentcommission.org/schedule.asp>

### **Nehu Aluwalia, Rutgers University intern**

Interviewed by email, September 4, 2022

Testified before the NJ Congressional Redistricting Commission on October 30, 2021

Testified before the NJ Legislative Apportionment Commission on November 6, 2021



**Ma'isha Aziz, Esq., Principal, Aziz Law Group LLC and Region 2 Adult Representative for the NAACP National Youth Works Committee**

Interviewed August 1, 2022

**Kevin Bernard, 2nd Vice President, New Jersey State Conference Youth and College, and President, Montclair State University Branch NAACP youth political action chair**

Interviewed August 1, 2022

Testified before the NJ Legislative Apportionment Commission on February 5, 2022

**Gloria Blanco, Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center**

Interviewed August 18, 2022

Testified before the NJ Legislative Apportionment Commission on February 9, 2022

**Michael Brestin, Rutgers University intern**

Interviewed August 4, 2021.

**Jesse Burns, Executive Director, League of Women Voters New Jersey**

Interviewed August 2, 2022

**Judge Philip S. Carchman, 11th “tiebreaker” member, New Jersey Legislative Apportionment Commission**

Interviewed August 10, 2022

**Rachel Dawn Davis, Public Policy & Justice Organizer, Waterspirit**

Interviewed August 12, 2022

Testified before the NJ Legislative Apportionment Commission on February 11, 2022

Testified before the NJ Congressional Redistricting Commission on October 30, 2021

**Christian Estevez, President, Latino Action Network**

Interviewed August 17, 2022

Testified before the NJ Legislative Apportionment Commission on November 16, 2021 and on February 2 and 9, 2022

Testified before the NJ Congressional Redistricting Commission on November 13, 2021

**Adam Gordon, Fair Share Housing Center**

Interviewed August 4, 2022

**Liz Glynn, Organizing Director, New Jersey Citizen Action**

Interviewed August 10, 2022

Testified before the NJ Legislative Apportionment Commission February 2 and 9, 2022

**Philip Hensley, Democracy Policy Analyst, Fair Districts New Jersey and League of Women Voters New Jersey**

Interviewed August 18, 2022

Testified before the NJ Legislative Apportionment Commission February 2 and 9, 2022

Testified before the NJ Congressional Redistricting Commission on October 23, 2021 and December 5, 2021

**Kiki Jamieson, President, The Fund for New Jersey**

Interviewed July 28, 2022

**Devon Jiang, West Windsor, NJ high school student**

Interviewed August 25, 2022

Testified before the NJ Congressional Redistricting Commission on November 13, 2021

**Rania Mustafa, Executive Director, Palestinian American Community Center**

Interviewed August 2, 2022

Testified before the NJ Legislative Apportionment Commission February 2, 5 and 9, 2022

**Jyot Singh, Research & Policy Manager, Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund**

Interviewed July 27, 2022

**Navdeep Singh, Policy Consultant, Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund**

Interviewed July 27, 2022

**Alex Staropoli, Director of Advocacy & Communications, Fair Share Housing Center**

Interviewed July 25, 2022

**Rev. Dr. Robin Tanner, Chief Strategy Fellow, Salvation and Social Justice**

Interviewed October 11, 2022

**Amy Torres, Executive Director, New Jersey Alliance for Immigrant Justice**

Interviewed August 3, 2022

Testified before the NJ Legislative Apportionment Commission February 2 and 9, 2022



## **Appendix D: List of Groups that Participated in FDNJ Mapmaking**

Clean Water Action  
Fair Share Housing Center  
Faith in New Jersey  
Good Government Coalition of New Jersey  
Indivisible Cranbury  
Latino Action Network  
Latino Coalition  
League of Conservation Voters of New Jersey  
League of Women Voters of New Jersey  
LUPE Fund, Inc. (Latinas United for Political Empowerment)  
Make the Road New Jersey  
NAACP State Conference  
National Association of Social Workers - NJ Chapter  
New Jersey Alliance for Immigrant Justice  
New Jersey Appleseed PILC  
New Jersey Citizen Action  
New Jersey Institute for Social Justice  
New Jersey Working Families Party  
NJ 11th for Change  
Our Revolution Essex County  
Palestinian American Community Center  
Salvation and Social Justice  
Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund  
SOMA Action  
United Black Agenda  
Waterspirit  
Wind of the Spirit

## Appendix E: Contributing Funders

- Anonymous (family foundation)
- Energy Foundation
- The Fund for New Jersey
- Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation
- New Venture Fund
- PSE&G Company Foundation
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- The Schumann Fund for New Jersey
- Victoria Foundation

## Appendix F: Additional Resources

- Where People in Prison Come From: The Geography of Mass Incarceration in New Jersey. Prison Policy Initiative (June 2022). Widra et al. <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/origin/nj/2020/report.html>
  - Changes in Racial and Ethnic Diversity in New Jersey, 2000-2020. Stockton University (June 2022). <https://stockton.edu/hughes-center/documents/2022-0609-changes-in-racial-ethnic-diversity-in-nj-2000-2020.pdf>
  - Dec. 18 SALDEF/Coalition letter on language access issues (copy on file)
  - Aug. 12 FDNJ Statement calling for public redistricting process [https://www.njisj.org/fair\\_districts\\_nj\\_welcomes\\_census\\_data\\_release\\_calls\\_for\\_public\\_redistricting\\_process](https://www.njisj.org/fair_districts_nj_welcomes_census_data_release_calls_for_public_redistricting_process)
  - Aug. 27 FDNJ Letter to Justice Wallace urging at least 25 accessible public hearings across the state. [an identical letter was sent to Judge Carchman]
  - Redistricting Reform for a Fairer New Jersey, League of Women Voters of New Jersey (September 2019). [https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com/5a21a3045521a400010b0fd1/5d8a63e8b1408230c7960051\\_Fair%20Districts%20New%20Jersey%20Report\\_2019.pdf](https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com/5a21a3045521a400010b0fd1/5d8a63e8b1408230c7960051_Fair%20Districts%20New%20Jersey%20Report_2019.pdf)
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## Wallace Letter

Dear Justice Wallace:

The Fair Districts coalition ([fairdistrictsnj.org](http://fairdistrictsnj.org)) is composed of organizations and individuals advocating for a fair, transparent, and inclusive redistricting process. We believe New Jerseyans deserve a map-making process that prioritizes public input; a process that ensures all our communities have an equal opportunity to participate in our democracy.

**We urge you to establish procedures to guarantee that this cycle's redistricting process will measure up to our shared values of transparency, equity, and democracy.**

We request that the Redistricting Commission hold at least 25 accessible public hearings across New Jersey that will be widely publicized, recorded, and livestreamed. We urge that the Commission schedule both virtual and in-person meetings, conducted in accordance with public health guidelines. We request at least 7 days public notice for all public meetings.

Our request to hold 25 public hearings is in line with the practices of many other states. By comparison, the state of [California's Independent Citizens' Redistricting Commission has over 40 public meetings scheduled between August 27th and December 27th](#), having already held dozens of public meetings to gather Community of Interest testimony over the summer. The Texas commissions have scheduled [31 public meetings](#), and the state of Alabama's Legislative Committee on Reapportionment plans to hold [28 public hearings in the month of September alone](#).

We believe that New Jerseyans deserve just as much of an opportunity to participate in the consequential process of redrawing Congressional district boundaries as residents of any other state. Holding fewer than 25 hearings would deny them that opportunity.

In addition to holding at least 25 accessible public hearings, we request that Commissioners publicly commit to clear, non-partisan line-drawing standards to guide map-making decisions and provide checks against political manipulation, including:

A racial equity provision that reinforces the principles of the Voting Rights Act and ensures that New Jersey's communities of color have an equal opportunity to participate in the political process.

A commitment to preserving communities of interest to the greatest extent possible, as determined through testimony derived through the public engagement process.

A commitment that plans shall not be established for the purpose of favoring or disfavoring any office holder, candidate, or political party.

We also request that the Redistricting Commission commit to making the commissions' proposed maps publicly available, hold public hearings on the proposed map prior to certification. Produce a publicly accessible written report justifying all map-making decisions.

We ask that the commissions' websites shall make the data used for redistricting available in an accessible format and allow for the submission of testimony as well as the submission of maps either of their communities, of the districts where they live, or complete Congressional maps for the state as a whole. Some examples from other states include the California Citizens Redistricting Commission's [DrawMyCACommunity.org](https://drawmycalifornia.org). And the Colorado Independent Redistricting Commissions, which provide an ArcGIS mapping tool for individuals to view and create maps, and has [a public comment portal on their website](#), where individuals can submit written comments and can also submit their own maps in csv, json, geojson, png and pdf formats.

Finally, we request make public all materials, communications and proposed maps submitted to each commission, as well as making public recordings and transcripts of each meeting available within 24 hours.

Thank you,  
Fair Districts New Jersey

### **Language Access for Redistricting Letter**

Dear Redistricting Commission Members:

The Fair Districts New Jersey coalition requests that the Redistricting Commission provide adequate language accommodations to ensure that all New Jersey residents have an equal opportunity to participate in the redistricting process.

We recommend that for written materials, including commission websites, hearing notices, and hearing transcripts, translations are provided for all the languages offered [by the New Jersey Division of Elections](#) – Arabic, Portuguese, Spanish, Gujarati, Creole, Hindi, Korean, Punjabi, Chinese – as well as a few additional languages which are commonly spoken in parts of the state – Tagalog, Polish, Bengali, Urdu, Vietnamese and Nepali.

We have also done a county by county break down (where data are available) on which languages would be most appropriate to have translation services for when hosting public meetings:

**Atlantic County**

Spanish  
Vietnamese  
Bergen County  
Spanish  
Korean  
Polish  
Tagalog

**Burlington County**

Spanish

**Camden County**

Spanish

**Essex County**

Spanish  
Creole  
Portuguese

**Gloucester County**

Spanish  
Hudson County  
Spanish  
Chinese  
Arabic  
Gujarati  
Hindi  
Tagalog

**Mercer County**

Spanish  
Chinese

**Middlesex County**

Spanish  
Chinese  
Gujarati  
Tagalog

**Monmouth County**

Spanish

**Morris County**

Spanish

Chinese

**Ocean County**

Spanish

**Passaic County**

Spanish

Arabic

Polish

**Somerset County**

Spanish

Chinese

Gujarati

Hindi

**Union County**

Spanish

Portuguese

Creole

Polish

Language data was insufficient in Cape May County, Cumberland County, Hunterdon County, Salem County, Sussex County, and Warren County.

Sincerely,

Fair Districts New Jersey



**JANUARY 2023**