

[Gerrymandering](#) is “the practice of drawing electoral district lines to favor one political party, individual, or constituency over another.”

The nation’s history is [full of examples](#) of lawmakers redrawing electoral district maps in such a way that gives their respective parties more electoral power. [Historians have evidence](#) indicating Patrick Henry was actually the first to draw an unnaturally shaped district to ensure victory over James Madison in Virginia’s first congressional elections in 1789, but the actual term *gerrymandering* comes from [Massachusetts Governor and Founding Father Elbridge Gerry](#), who in 1812 signed a controversial redistricting bill that turned one Massachusetts district into a salamander-like shape.



[Election reformers say](#) state legislatures redraw districts “to cement their grip on power and dilute the voting power of people who support the rival party,” which affects voting rights. Additionally, the upcoming 2020 Census will lead to reapportionment of U.S. House seats across the country, so any court decisions on partisan gerrymandering may reduce the potential for either party to take a political advantage. Another argument is that there is no way to reliably identify partisan gerrymandering, nor is there a single way to correct gerrymandering ([WSJ](#)).

The Supreme Court cited this argument on June 27, 2019, when it [ruled against](#) challengers opposing partisan gerrymandering in a 5 to 4 vote. [Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. wrote](#), “...the fact that such gerrymandering is ‘incompatible with democratic principles,’ does not mean that the solution lies with the federal judiciary...judges have no constitutional authority to impose restrictions on lawmakers.”

This means the Constitution does not grant federal judges the authority to set limits on how lawmakers draw electoral maps, but there are other methods of redistricting. States including Arizona and California have transferred redistricting authority to [independent commissions](#), taking legislators out of the process. In 2018, Colorado, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, and Utah passed measures that would establish these types of independent commissions. Whether more states will move to establish independent redistricting commissions remains to be seen ([Reuters](#)).