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REPORT

NO MORE GERRYMANDERS

Missouri's Partisan Plan vs. The Fair Voting Alternative

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OVERVIEW

Lawmakers in Missouri have recently passed a congressional redistricting plan that distorts the state's political representation in favor of Republicans and institutionalizes a decade of uncompetitive, meaningless elections. While many pundits blame the state legislature for drawing a partisan gerrymander, the root of the worst problems associated with redistricting lies with winner-take-all elections.

To address the structural impediments of winner-take-all, FairVote has created an alternative — what we call fair voting — for Missouri's congressional elections. Fair voting systems are a constitutionally permissible form of proportional representation and the only way to achieve two fundamental goals of representative democracy in every election: fair representation and meaningful contests. While the state legislature's plan contains zero inherently competitive districts, every voter in a fair voting system would experience a meaningful election and the great majority of voters would help elect a representative.

THE POLITICAL CONTEXT IN MISSOURI

Missouri and the 2010 Census: From 2000 to 2010, Missouri's population grew slightly, from 5.60 million to 5.99 million, for an increase of 7.0%, as compared to a rate of 9.3% from 1990 to 2000. This rate was slightly below the national average of 9.7%. As a result, Missouri lost one U.S. House seat in congressional reapportionment, going from nine seats to eight, the first time the state has lost seats since the 1980 Census. Missouri was just 16,000 people shy of holding on to its nine seats.¹

Internally, population shifts appear to be a blow to congressional Democrats, with St. Louis city having seen its population decline sharply by 8.3%.² Such a dip continues the Democratic stronghold's decades-long slide, as the 'Gateway to the West' has now lost just shy of 500,000 residents since 1960, with its population of 320,000 being roughly equivalent to the city's size in 1870. As a result, St. Louis, which currently sends three members to Congress, will likely lose a seat and clout in Congress.³

Missouri's other major cities appear to be going in the opposite direction, with Kansas City and Columbia growing between four and five percent and Republican-leaning Springfield soaring by over 25%. As a result, Columbia residents believe the area is entitled to a "central Missouri district,"⁴ as opposed to being lopped into the northeastern 9th District that encompasses both rural towns on the Iowa boarder and affluent St. Louis suburbs. Racially, Missouri remains predominantly non-Hispanic white (81.0%), with non-Hispanic blacks at 11.5% and Latinos, which grew by nearly 80%, at 3.5%.

1 <http://www.columbiatribune.com/news/2011/mar/13/census-turns-state-into-wonderland/>

2 <http://kwmu.drupal.publicbroadcasting.net/post/mo-congressional-redistricting-may-decrease-political-clout-metro-region>

3 <http://www.stlbeacon.org/voices/in-the-news/108548-jones-on-2010-redistricting>

4 <http://www.columbiatribune.com/news/2011/mar/09/senate-redistricting-panel-seeks-feedback/>

Redistricting in 2001 was relatively sedate,¹ as split control (Democrats controlled the State House and the governorship, while Republicans had a slim majority in the State Senate) required the two parties to work together. Collaboration yielded a congressional map that locked in the 5-4 Republican advantage until 2010.

Electoral, a Closely Divided State: Democrats have had recent statewide success in Missouri, with former State Auditor Claire McCaskill — who narrowly lost her bid for the governor’s office in 2004 — winning a contentious 2006 U.S. Senate race over incumbent Jim Talent, 49.6-47.3%. In the presidential race, Barack Obama lost by only 3,600 votes, but given the magnitude of his victory across the nation, Democrats in fact lost ground in the state. Indeed, this election marked the first time since 1956 in which the “bellwether” Missouri did not award its electoral votes to the national winner (in 1956, Missouri went for Democrat Adlai Stevenson).

After Democrats’ statewide gains in 2006 and 2008, however, Republicans rebounded with a very strong 2010. Most dispiriting for Democrats was Secretary of State Robin Carnahan’s (daughter of the late former Governor Mel Carnahan and former U.S. Senator Jean Carnahan) 13-point defeat to U.S. Representative Roy Blunt, the No. 2 ranking Republican in the 111th Congress, for Kit Bond’s vacated U.S. Senate seat.

At the U.S. House level, the GOP made significant inroads, as Tea Party favorite Vicky Hartzler knocked off Democrat Ike Skelton in the 4th District by casting the 17-term incumbent as a “loyal lapdog Democrat”² and a “foot soldier for Nancy Pelosi.”³ Hartzler’s victory increased the GOP control of the state’s U.S. House delegation from 5-4 to 6-3. Elsewhere, Democrats Emanuel Cleaver II of the 5th District and Russ Carnahan (son of the late governor) of the 3rd District barely fended off formidable GOP challengers — Cleaver, having shed 11% since his comfortable victory in 2008, won with 53% of the vote, while Carnahan’s support actually dipped below 50%, for a 17-point decrease. Perhaps most importantly for redistricting, Republicans expanded their majorities in the General Assembly, grabbing a veto-proof majority in the State Senate and coming within three votes of a two-thirds majority in the State House.



Rep. Emanuel Cleaver II of District 5

Quarreling Republicans Struggle to Reach Agreement: With control of the redistricting process split between the two parties, state Republicans faced a difficult balancing act: any lines drafted to protect GOP incumbents in Congress would be likely to draw the veto from Governor Nixon,

1 <http://archive.fairvote.org/redistricting/reports/remanual/monews2.htm>

2 http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/political-fix/article_01a775de-c1c9-11df-8a70-0017a4a78c22.html

3 <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704462704575591352782983466.html>

which State House Republicans would be unable to override absent the support of at least three Democratic representatives.¹ Early speculation hinted that Republicans would seek to exploit tensions between the Democratic establishment and urban African Americans; by giving the 1st District's William Lacy Clay, Jr. "what he wants,"² the GOP hoped to persuade St. Louis black state legislators to jump ship (Clay represents Missouri's only majority-minority district).³



Rep. Russ Carnahan of District 3

As the General Assembly began to turn to redistricting in late March, it quickly became clear that House and Senate Republicans were of different minds and that intra-party rather than inter-party squabbles might lead to dreaded political impasse. Under the leadership of State Representative John Diehl, House Republicans made the first move, passing their proposed map on April 6 after having controversially suspended procedural rules that would have delayed the vote.⁴ Importantly, the 106-53 vote was three votes short of a veto-proof majority (three Republicans voted against the bill, while four African American Democrats supported the measure). Spurning the House proposal, Senate Republicans on April 13 passed their own plan, 22-11.

Both the Senate and the House plans eliminated Russ Carnahan's seat, forcing the four-term Democrat into either a primary against colleague William Lacy Clay, Jr. of the 1st District or a general election campaign against Republican incumbent Todd Akin in a GOP-leaning 2nd District. Alternatively, some pundits speculate that Carnahan is considering a statewide bid for lieutenant governor.⁵ The two maps differed,⁶ however, in how to divide the Democratic-leaning St. Louis collar counties of St. Charles and Jefferson in order to optimize Republican chances — the House version provided Akin with a more Republican district, and Akin agreed to support Diehl's map.⁷

With Split Control Comes a Redistricting Nightmare: The deadlock continued with Senate and House Republicans steadfast in their loyalty to their respective proposals.⁸ Party leaders, recognizing that further delay would have caused them to miss the party's strategic April 22 deadline, agreed to conference on April 20. Republicans, anticipating Governor Nixon's opposition,⁹ wanted to

1 <http://www.columbiainmissourian.com/stories/2010/12/06/republicans-take-charge-process-if-missouri-loses-house-seat/>

2 <http://www.stlbeacon.org/voices/blogs/political-blogs/beacon-backroom/108812-missouri-legislative-redistricting-panels-hire-washington-lawyer>

3 <http://www.stlbeacon.org/issues-politics/112-region/108700-redistricting-wish-list>

4 http://www.stltoday.com/news/state-and-regional/missouri/article_29f408ef-4c8c-593e-ae5-00c3d5ad8038.html

5 <https://voices.washingtonpost.com/thefix/redistricting/redistricting-targets-could-se.html>

6 <http://news.stlpublicradio.org/post/mo-lawmakers-send-grand-compromise-redistricting-map-gov-nixon>

7 http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/political-fix/article_c49a985a-6b97-11e0-b757-0019bb30f31a.html

8 <http://www.carthagepress.com/news/x1146471794/Mo-lawmakers-cant-agree-on-redistricting-plan>

9 <http://www.komu.com/news/missouri-senate-house-to-negotiate-on-redistricting/>

ensure that they would have enough time to override the veto before the conclusion of the regular legislative session on May 13; failure to meet this timeline would have forced the General Assembly to call a special session or to wait until the fall regular session. Conference committee, coupled with the pressures of time constraints, paid dividends for the GOP, which ironed out a compromise between the two competing maps.¹ The House passed the modified map on April 21, 96-55, with the Senate concurring in a subsequent 27-7 vote.



Rep. William Lacy Clay, Jr. of District 1

Governor Nixon, who reportedly objected to the map's partition of Jefferson County² and its commensurate weakening of the area's influence in Washington, D.C., mollified congressional Democrats when he refused on April 30 to sign the bill into law.³ Undeterred, House Republicans pieced together a "rare legislative rebuke," overriding the Nixon veto 28-6 in the Senate and 109-44 in the House, making the redistricting map official. The veto override, the first since 2003, required four House Democrats to join with 105 Republicans (one GOP legislator had to leave the hospital bed to which doctors had consigned him) to break with the party line.⁴

That all four "defectors" were African American legislators with ties to the state's two African American congressmen — Clay of St. Louis and Cleaver of Kansas City, both of whom received safer districts under the Republican map — was not lost on the media. Adding fuel to the fire, one of the four Democratic legislators, Jamilah Nasheed, defended her vote to protect Clay saying, "I'm black before I'm a Democrat."⁵ Yet another, Leonard Hughes, who had cast the deciding vote to override and who had opposed the House's April 6 map as a "gerrymander," told the *Kansas City Star* that Cleaver had pressured him to cross the aisle,⁶ further highlighting that high-stakes redistricting can lead to odd bedfellows. Michael Brown, a Cleaver ally also of Kansas City, cited similar reasons as Hughes, adding that he hoped the vote would encourage Republicans to work with members of the Black Caucus in the future.

Partisan Implications of the Missouri Map: If anything, the partisan implications of the map are rather predictable, the process having been more enthralling than the product. All six of the state's current GOP members of Congress find themselves in highly safe districts (although Akin has since announced a bid for the U.S. Senate seat currently held by McCaskill). Jefferson and St.

1 <http://missouri.watchdog.org/15422/missouri-lawmakers-pass-redistricting-map/>

2 http://www.stlbeacon.org/issues-politics/176-Missouri_Issues/109399-missouri-house-oks-new-congressional-map

3 <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/04/30/us-missouri-idUSTRE73T21Q20110430>

4 http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/political-fix/article_6fe40340-766f-11e0-9f67-0019bb30f31a.html#ixzz1fgZs1cTd

5 http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/metro/article_6995ad6c-813a-5d55-b094-eed9ef306c8e.html#ixzz1fgbD1W3o

6 http://www.stlbeacon.org/issues-politics/176-Missouri_Issues/110073-missouri-house-overrides-governors-veto-of-redistricting-map

Charles counties remain divided between districts, while fast-growing Columbia now finds itself not in a hoped-for “central district” but the rural southwestern 4th District.

Although the map shores up Clay and Cleaver by packing urban Democrats into two districts — all of St. Louis, for instance, is now in the 1st District — state Democrats are irate, as Carnahan’s district has been axed and his home placed inside Clay’s urban district. “If anybody believes that this state is a 6-2 state [when] Barack Obama narrowly lost the presidential vote,” State House Minority Leader Mike Talbot intoned, “then we really need an education bill because nobody can count.”¹ Democrats’ only chance for three seats is if Carnahan pulls off an upset in the Republican-leaning 2nd District, presumed to be vacated by Akin, instead of taking on Clay. Indeed, POLITICO reports that national Democratic leaders, specifically House No. 2 Steny Hoyer, are quietly encouraging Carnahan to avoid “a kamikaze mission against Clay” by helping him pursue other electoral options.

THE FAIR VOTING ALTERNATIVE

Time for an Honest and Fair System: These controversies demonstrate the way in which the current system is inadequate: it fails not only to represent accurately the people of Missouri, but it reduces voters to mere pawns in a grand political game designed to benefit party elites rather than the people. Especially in states affected by reapportionment, there is the impulse to engage in gerrymandering and other highly undemocratic maneuvering.

In contrast to the Missouri state legislature’s politically motivated plan, fair voting puts voters first. Rather than use a winner-take-all system, which accentuates the effects of redistricting and encourages partisan games, FairVote has combined these winner-take-all, gerrymandered districts to form multi-member districts called “super-districts,” in which a fair voting system will allow like-minded voters to elect candidates in proportion to their voting strength.

As our analysis will demonstrate, FairVote’s super-district plan with a fair voting system generates meaningful elections in every corner of the state. This structural change facilitates representation that accurately reflects the political opinions of Missourians while creating opportunities for every voter to elect a preferred candidate. Moreover, it allows for fuller representation of the political and demographic dynamics of geographical areas: what we call “shared representation.”

Several candidate-based forms of fair voting, notably choice voting² and cumulative voting, have been upheld by the courts and fit well with our traditions. Choice voting, in which voters rank candidates in order of choice in at-large elections, helped break the power of urban political machines in New York and Cincinnati. It is used currently by Minneapolis in citywide elections. From 1870 to 1980, members of the Illinois House of Representatives were elected using cumulative voting, where voters can cast as many votes as there are seats, and nearly all of the districts elected both Democrats and Republicans in every election. Fair voting plans in super-districts are legal for congressional elections under the U.S. Constitution and have been upheld by the Supreme Court, but Congress would need to repeal a 1967 law mandating single-member districts.

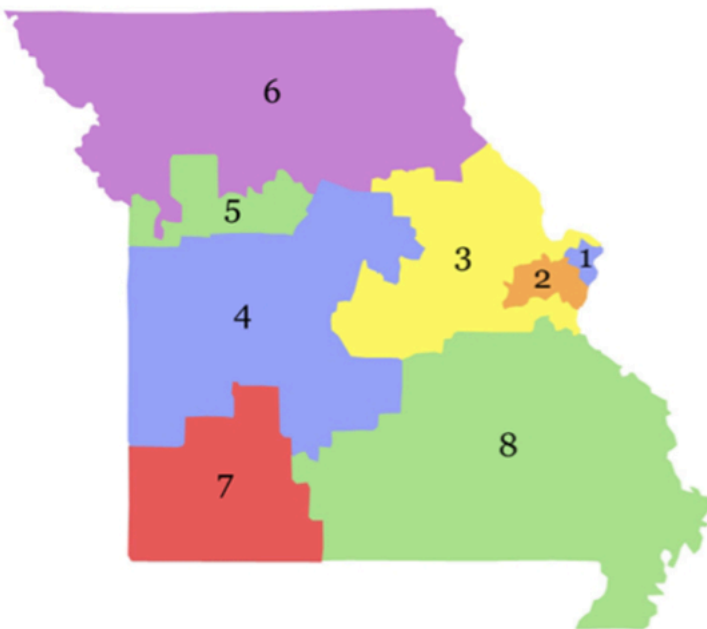
1 <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0411/53415.html#ixzz1fgeV1dX8>

2 <http://www.fairvote.org/what-is-choice-voting>

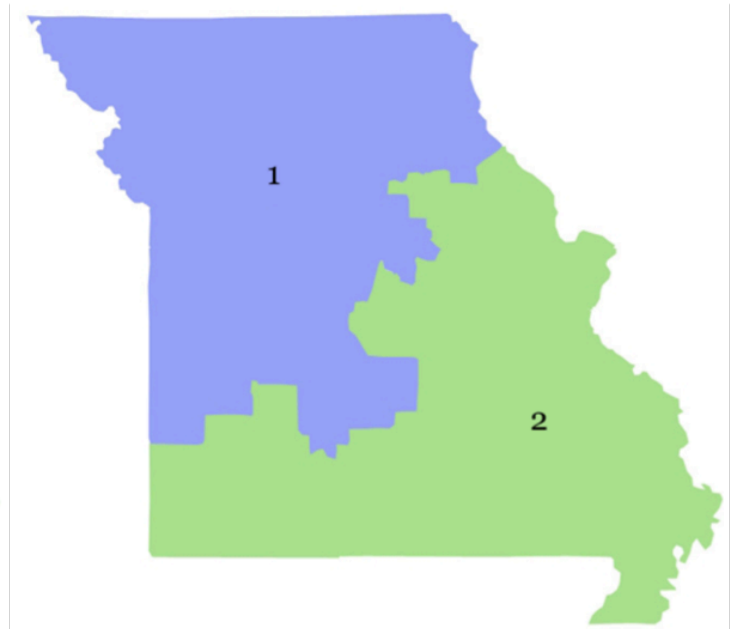
Winning with Fair Voting in a Super-District: If FairVote were working from scratch, we could draw the super-district lines with more geographical compactness. Because we created the super-districts from the recently approved congressional districts, however, our super-districts also appear to look somewhat gerrymandered. Even so, the super-district approach demonstrates that full representation can be attained even within these highly gerrymandered confines.

From the eight congressional districts in Missouri, the FairVote proposal creates two super-districts: one three-seat district and one five-seat district. Each congressional seat still represents 748,616 people, but with a fair voting system, representation is far more likely to reflect the political opinion and demographic makeup of the state. In a three-seat district, like-minded voters are assured of a representative if they consist of at least 25% of the electorate, while in a five-seat district, like-minded voters can win representation in Congress if they comprise at least 16.67% of the vote.

Missouri 2011 Redistricting Plan



Fair Voting Plan with Super-Districts



Turning Districts into Super-Districts with Fair Voting

Super-District	Number of House Seats	Population Per Seat	Threshold of Exclusion	Districts Used to Make SD
1	3	748,616	25% + 1	4, 5, 6
2	5	748,616	16.67% + 1	1, 2, 3, 7, 8

Meaningful Elections and Shared Representation: The failure of our voting system to offer voters both accurate representation and meaningful contests is symptomatic of winner-take-all. Under the current winner-take-all system, candidates must receive over 50% of the vote to be sure

of winning a seat. Consequently, nearly half of an electorate can be left without representation in a competitive district, and substantial blocs may find their vote meaningless in a district that heavily favors one party. For instance, one party's candidate could get just one vote shy of the 50% threshold, and all of that candidate's voters would lose out on representation. Similarly, if a voter lives in a district that widely supports one party, that voter might feel like an individual vote does not make a difference, especially if that voter favors the less popular party.

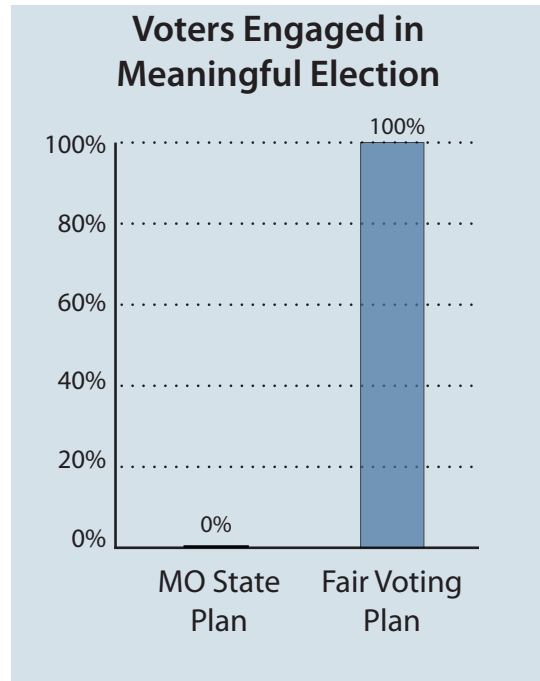
For decades, most Missourians have been subjected to the latter circumstance, in which elections are no longer a measure of the state's political climate but a ceremonious exercise to reinstate incumbents by insurmountable margins. FairVote's *Dubious Democracy Report 1982-2010*¹ shows that in the five congressional elections since 2001, only one

incumbent out of 41 (2.4%) lost, while 38 of the 40 (95%) victorious incumbents prevailed in blowouts (20%+ margin of victory) or uncontested races. Strikingly, over the past decade, Missouri's House winners were victorious over their opponents by an average margin of 35%. Though the 2010 elections saw sweeping changes in the composition of the U.S. House, in Missouri, only three of nine races were competitive, including just one of the six races won by Republicans.

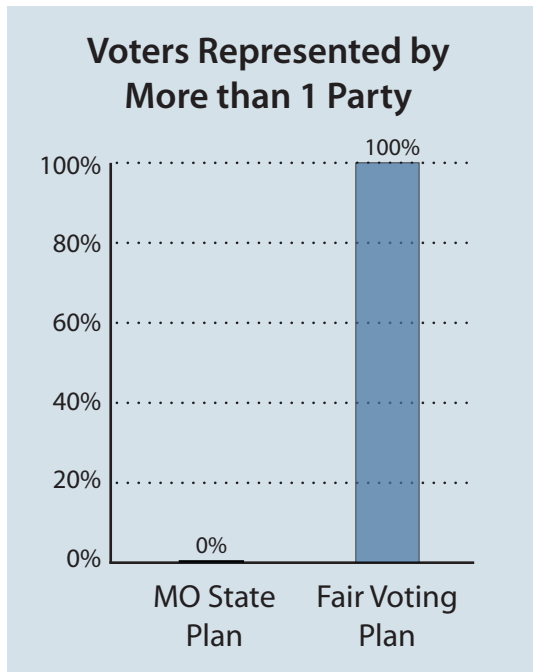
Rather than use the 2011 redistricting process to correct for this deficit of meaningful elections, the state legislature has exacerbated the problem: our analysis shows that none of Missouri's eight districts fall within our toss-up range (partisanship index $\pm 4\%$ of the 50% threshold). When voters know that their vote will not affect a district's representation, they are less likely to engage in the political process. Unsurprisingly, just 43% of all eligible voters in Missouri turned out to vote in 2010.

By solidifying these incumbents' districts, Missouri has locked in a congressional delegation dominated by men for years. Currently, just two of Missouri's nine districts (22%) are represented by women, and the state has never sent more than three women to the U.S. House at any one point. This ratio is unlikely improve over the next decade, since it is doubtful that a woman — let alone any challenger — can overcome the incumbent advantages under Missouri's plan.

In addition to uncompetitive elections, Missouri's plan fails to provide representation to hundreds of thousands of voters. About 37% of votes cast in the last congressional election were wasted on a candidate not elected to the U.S. House. We have to question whether our system truly promotes democratic principles when such a large share of the population is left without a voice to represent them in the halls of Congress.



¹ <http://www.fairvote.org/dubious-democracy-1982-2010>



Such distorted representation provokes concerns over fairness, but these issues extend beyond the abstract, as political gridlock runs rampant in Washington. Poll after poll shows that Americans are increasingly displeased with congressional performance,¹ and this is no mere happenstance. Heightened political tensions and legislative stalemates can be attributed partially to our flawed electoral system. As parties draw lines around their pockets of supporters, they have greater cushion to elect members of their party who have rigidly partisan positions. With no chance for the minority party or independent voters to impact elections in districts widely favoring one party, seats in Congress become occupied primarily with members possessing unyielding positions.

Fair voting systems, in contrast, facilitate meaningful elections and could improve the culture in Washington by creating competition in every super-district and by

offering nearly every voter a chance for representation. In this fair voting plan, voters would elect representatives of more than one party in each super-district. Once in Congress, these representatives would share constituents of super-districts and, therefore, have new incentives to cooperate on at least some legislative initiatives. There also would be more representatives bridging the gap that currently exists between the major parties, as fair voting means a more balanced representation of the left, right, and center.

Fair voting also increases voter interest since almost all Republican and Democratic voters can elect a candidate in their super-district, who represents their political views — and have a real choice within their party’s candidates as well. No longer would Democrats in rural parts of Missouri have to rely on urban representatives from across the state to fight for issues of great concern; likewise, metropolitan Republicans would not have to settle on conservatives from rural areas for representation. Rather, super-districts would encompass more geography, and candidates would have to compete for the support of different sects of the party. Furthermore, having super-districts creates more opportunities for women candidates; studies show that more women run and win when state legislative elections have super-districts instead of one-seat districts. While the current Missouri plan offers zero competitive districts and gives most voters little reason to participate in elections, every voter would experience a meaningful election in a fair voting plan.

Partisanship Analysis: Based on the 2008 presidential election, Missouri has a partisanship index of 46.33% Democratic, a narrow margin reflecting its status as a competitive state in presidential elections. However, the recent plan passed by the state legislature does not reflect the close partisan split of the entire state. Based on district partisanship, the Missouri plan would result in six Republican seats (five safe and one leaning), two safe Democratic seats, and zero toss-ups.

¹ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/11/16/congress-approval-rating-porn-polygamy_n_1098497.html

Missouri 2011 Redistricting Plan

District	Population Per Seat	Partisanship (D)	Safe Seats (D)	Leaning Seats (D)	Toss-Up	Leaning Seats (R)	Safe Seats (R)
1	748,616	77.24%	1	0	0	0	0
2	748,616	43.28%	0	0	0	1	0
3	748,616	39.89%	0	0	0	0	1
4	748,616	39.10%	0	0	0	0	1
5	748,616	59.02%	1	0	0	0	0
6	748,616	40.30%	0	0	0	0	1
7	748,616	32.52%	0	0	0	0	1
8	748,616	35.58%	0	0	0	0	1
Statewide	5,988,927	46.63%	2	0	0	1	5

Partisanship percentages are based on an interpretation of the 2008 presidential election. Our source for the data is Daily Kos. The seats were allocated according to the following ranges: toss-up districts have a partisanship between 46% and 54%, leaning seats have a partisanship between 54% and 58%, and safe seats have a partisanship greater than 58%. This does not reflect incumbent advantages.

To put this in perspective, the statewide Democratic partisanship index of 46.33% should theoretically translate to the Democratic Party winning at least three seats and the Republican Party coming away with four seats at a minimum, while an additional seat would swing to the party or individual candidate performing well that election cycle. Yet, the Missouri plan guarantees Republicans more than their expected share. To win four seats, Democratic candidates would need to succeed in flipping two solidly Republican districts. This gerrymandered setup presents a daunting challenge for Democrats every election year, regardless of the party's national momentum.

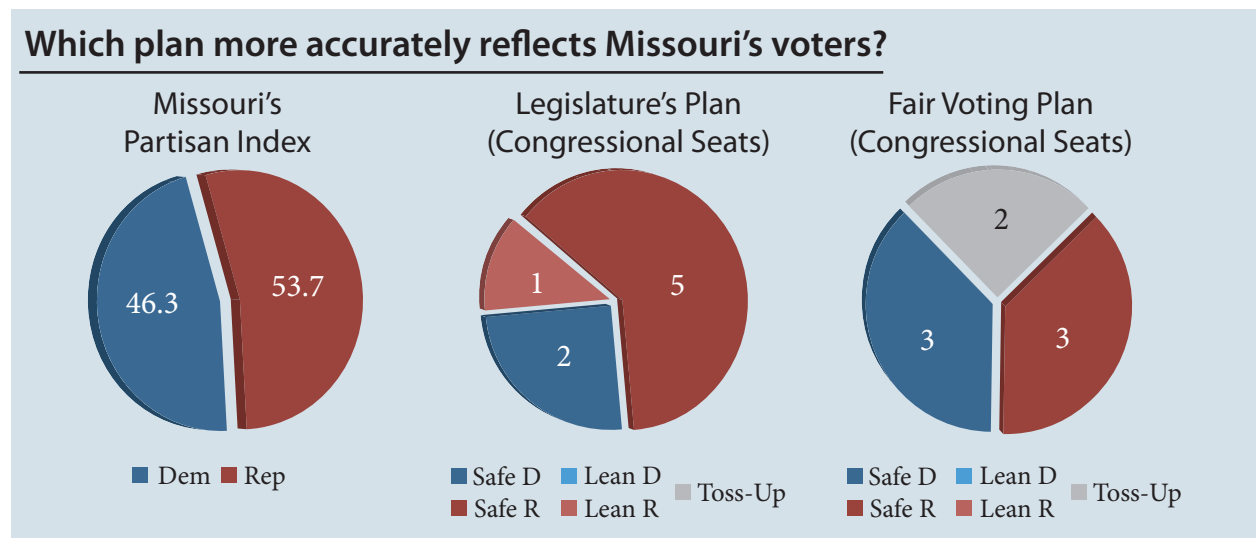
Fair Voting Plan Partisan Breakdown

Super-District	Number of Seats	Partisanship (D)	Safe Seats (D)	Leaning Seats (D)	Toss-Up	Leaning Seats (R)	Safe Seats (R)
1	3	46.33%	1	0	1	0	1
2	5	46.34%	2	0	1	0	2
Statewide	8	46.63%	3	0	2	0	3

Partisanship percentages are based on an interpretation of the 2008 presidential election. Our source for the data is Daily Kos. The seats were allocated according to the following ranges: toss-up districts have a partisanship $\pm 4\%$ of the threshold, leaning seats have a partisanship 4-8% greater than the threshold, and safe seats have a partisanship greater than 8% of the threshold. This does not reflect incumbent advantages.

In stark contrast, a fair voting plan would accurately represent the state’s partisan divide and provide representation to voters from all parts of the state. FairVote’s super-district plan shows that in every super-district, each party would have the opportunity to gain one or both of the swing seats, depending on the quality of their candidates and the national partisan swing. FairVote’s plan clearly offers a far more reflective representation of the state’s political division than the 75% of representation Republicans would earn even when losing the statewide vote.

While these partisan breakdowns are based on the current two-party duopoly, the FairVote proposal would open the door for third-party and independent candidates, unlike the single-member district, winner-take-all plan. Because challengers to the major parties are rarely able to acquire over 50% of the vote, their backers are left typically unrepresented. Fair voting methods lower the threshold and provide third parties a better chance to win seats. Fair voting is not just fair for Democrats and Republicans; it is fair for voters of all political opinions, including innovative thinkers within the major parties.



Race and Voting Power: When a racial minority group votes as a bloc and meets the threshold, it has the power to elect a strongly preferred candidate, although it may not choose necessarily a candidate of the same race. To evaluate the racial impact of a state’s redistricting plan, we tabulate the number of districts in which the voting age population (VAP) of a racial minority group exceeds the threshold to win a seat (50% + 1 vote). For districts where a racial minority group is within three percent of the threshold, we designate the seat as a strong “opportunity” to win.

In Missouri, the black VAP consists of nearly 11% of the statewide VAP, and despite the state’s relatively small black population, two of Missouri’s eight seats (25%) belong to African American Congress members, William Lacy Clay, Jr. (D-1) and Emanuel Cleaver II (D-5). Under Missouri’s new plan, no district has a black VAP greater than the 50% threshold; however, as noted earlier, pundits generally regard the newly drawn 1st Congressional District as the state’s only majority-minority district. Latinos, for their part, currently make up less than three percent of the state’s total population and have negligible influence in any single-member district.

Using our methodology to evaluate the racial dynamics of Missouri’s plan, we would expect the white population in each district to have the voting power to elect a preferred candidate. Within a partisan system in which African Americans are heavily concentrated in the Democratic primary, however, the near-plurality for African Americans in Congressional District 1 gives those voters the ability to nominate a candidate of choice in the primary, with that candidate highly favored in the general election in a safely Democratic district. This district was the first in the state to elect an African American to the U.S. House (William Lacy Clay, Sr.) in 1968 and has continued to send an African American representative to Congress in every election since. In addition, the 5th Congressional District is currently represented by Emanuel Cleaver, first elected in 2004. The black share of the district’s VAP is 20%, and Cleaver has won the primary and the general election, with many white Democrats in the district backing representatives of color.

Missouri Plan: Race and Voting Power							
District	Total Population	White VAP%	Black VAP%	Latino VAP%	White Voters	Black Voters	Latino Voters
1	748,616	48.60%	45.66%	2.69%	1 opportunity	0	0
2	748,616	92.21%	2.79%	1.88%	1	0	0
3	748,616	92.72%	3.63%	1.78%	1	0	0
4	748,616	91.90%	4.32%	2.66%	1	0	0
5	748,616	71.95%	20.40%	6.82%	1	0	0
6	748,616	93.04%	3.62%	2.68%	1	0	0
7	748,616	92.93%	1.52%	3.31%	1	0	0
8	748,616	93.39%	4.13%	1.28%	1	0	0
Statewide	5,988,927	84.54%	10.81%	2.89%	7 + 1 opportunity	0	0

Source data for race voting age population (VAP) provided by the Missouri State Senate. Voters might not necessarily vote for a candidate of their same race. Rather, voting power measures the ability of voters from different racial groups to elect strongly preferred candidates.

While the fair voting plan puts political representation in balance, it sustains the influence that black communities hold in the new map, even after combining the highly concentrated minority population in District 1 with neighboring districts. Similar to the black constituency’s prospects for voting power in District 1, this group in Super-District 2 (11.61%) falls merely two percentage points below our threshold for an “opportunity” to win representation (13.67%). Just as District 5 consistently elects an African American representative to Congress, we would anticipate black voters in Super-District 2 to have comparable influence in electing a candidate who best represents their interests. Super-District 1, which encompasses District 5, offers black voters significant influence (9.46% VAP in a super-district with a threshold of 25%), as candidates in congressional elections would presumably cater to the black community, given the competitive nature of super-district elections and the need to solidify relationships with large voting blocs.

Fair Voting Plan: Race and Voting Power

District	Number of Seats	White VAP%	Black VAP%	Latino VAP%	White Voters	Black Voters	Latino Voters
1	3	85.61%	9.46%	4.06%	3	0	0
2	5	83.90%	11.61%	2.19%	4 + 1 opportunity	0	0
Statewide	8	84.54%	10.81%	2.89%	7 + 1 opportunity	0	0

Source data for race voting age population (VAP) provided by the Missouri State Senate. Voters might not necessarily vote for a candidate of their same race. Rather, voting power measures the ability of voters from different racial groups to elect strongly preferred candidates.

CONCLUSION

Although Missouri Republicans clearly engineered a partisan gerrymander, electoral problems do not rest solely with Democrats and Republicans. Rather, the problem lies with the winner-take-all nature of single-member district elections, which allow district lines to determine most outcomes no matter how they are drawn. In this analysis, we have not touched the blatantly partisan lines that were our building blocks; we merely changed the rules and showed that fair voting provides immediate dividends to all voters.

If the redistricting games of winner-take-all continue, voters are likely to become even more disenchanted with our political system. Under Missouri's redistricting plan and many others like it across the country, a vast amount of voters are left with diminished representation and no real choices. Many of these congressional elections lack competition or offer just two candidates to the diverse array of voters. It is also clear that one candidate cannot possibly reflect the makeup of everyone in a district, as winner-take-all assumes. Therefore, we need a new approach that will more accurately reflect the makeup of each state. By adopting fair voting methods in super-districts, we can attain a more representative democracy.



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FairVote is a non-partisan electoral reform organization seeking fair elections with meaningful choices. Our vision of “the way democracy will be” includes an equally protected right to vote, instant runoff voting for executive elections and proportional voting for legislative elections.

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