

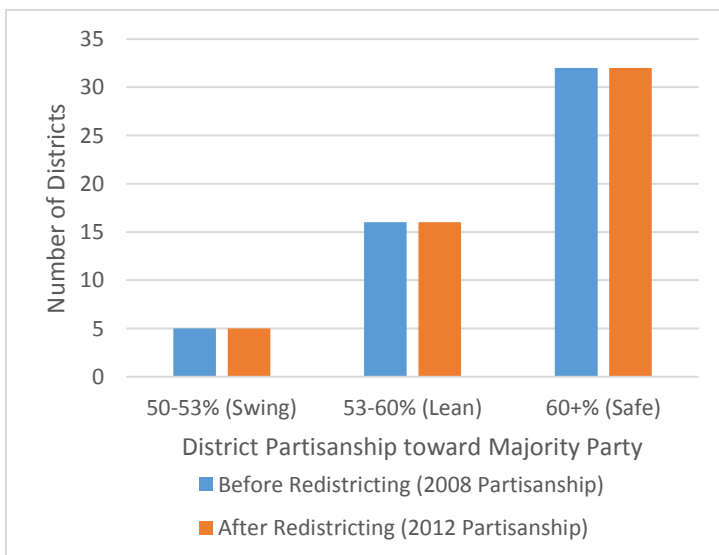
INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING AND HOUSE ELECTION COMPETITION IN CALIFORNIA

FairVote, The Center for Voting and Democracy: www.fairvote.org

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Evaluating the Effect of California's Redistricting Commission on U.S. House Competition

The California's Citizens Redistricting Commission has been praised for taking the redistricting process out of the hands of partisan lawmakers and causing an unusual degree of incumbency turnover in 2012. In terms of the underlying partisanship of districts, however, the commission did little to increase the number of competitive districts. In fact, the number of districts within the competitive partisanship band (47%-53%) is the same now as before the 2011 round of redistricting: **5 out of 53 seats**. The number of safe districts (>60% partisanship for one party) is also identical: **32**. As a result, California is unlikely to see a high degree of competition in its House elections for the remainder of the decade. Its districts may even become less competitive than ever if polarizing trends continue.



Charting Lack of Competition over Time

FairVote's partisanship methodology, based on relative votes in presidential elections, is highly accurate for projecting U.S. House race outcomes. The [graph to the left](#) compares 2008 partisanship to partisanship after redistricting and the 2012 election. The [graph below](#) adds a third category: post-redistricting lines using 2008 results. Redistricting did briefly appear to create a few more competitive districts. However, the trend of increasing district polarization associated with the "big sort" thesis completely negated that modest effect by the time of the 2012 election.

