

Position Statement: Voting Rights
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The right to vote is the bedrock of our democratic republic. Unfortunately, gerrymandering – manipulating an electoral constituency’s boundaries to favor one group or political party – often makes it challenging for citizens to elect candidates who represent their interests.

Minority communities and historically marginalized groups frequently feel the impact of gerrymandering, which violates the principle of fair representation for all citizens. And, when voting districts are drawn to favor certain political groups or interests, the wishes of the majority of voters may not be reflected in the laws passed.

For example, a recent poll* shows that 60% of Texas voters believe abortion should be available “in all or most cases.” Only 11% of Texas voters believe there should be a total ban on abortions. And yet we have one of the most draconian anti-abortion laws in the nation – a perfect example of legislators passing laws that do not represent what the majority of voters want.

Gun safety provides another example of how the wishes of Texas voters run contrary to the laws passed. In a recent poll** 66% of Texas voters indicated support for red-flag laws, and 52% supported stricter gun safety laws. Only 14% of Texas respondents said they supported loosening gun laws. Yet, Texas’ elected state officials have passed gun laws that are among the weakest in the nation, ranking 32nd in terms of gun law strength.**

Gerrymandering is not only about political parties. Districts can be drawn to ensure the re-election of specific incumbents, often resulting in uncompetitive races and limiting voters' choices. That appears to be the case in District 32. Our current district map, drawn by Senator Joan Huffman (R-Houston), was presented on the floor of the House by Todd Hunter (R-Corpus Christi) – our state representative who was then serving as the chair of the House Committee on Redistricting.

Mr. Hunter ran unopposed in the last election partially because of the belief that no challenger could win his seat. When districts are gerrymandered to favor one party, elections become less competitive. In non-competitive districts, voters may feel that their votes matter less because the outcome is predetermined. This can lead to voter apathy and a sense of disenfranchisement.

“... while Texans wait on courts and Congress, Texas will have one of the least competitive maps in the nation, and its booming communities of color once again will be shut out of their fair share of power.” — Brennan Center for Justice

*<https://www.npr.org/2022/09/01/1120472842/poll-one-year-after-sb-8-texans-express-strong-support-for-abortion-rights>

** <https://www.everytown.org/press/new-polling-shows-majority-of-texas-voters-support-stronger-gun-safety-laws/>