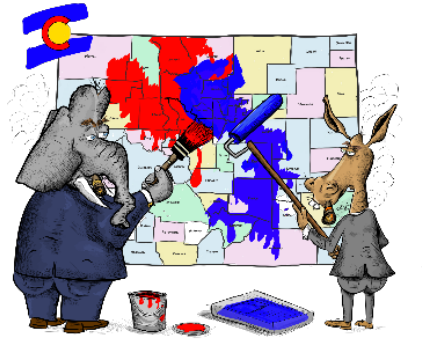

FAIR DISTRICTS FAIR ELECTIONS

A BIPARTISAN EFFORT TO RESTORE TRUST IN GOVERNMENT



Gerrymandering:

The dividing of a state into congressional or legislative districts so as to give one political party a majority in many districts while concentrating the voting strength of the other party into as few districts as possible.

THE PROBLEM

In Colorado, voters don't pick their politicians. Politicians pick their voters. Partisans artfully draw districts for their friends and allies after each Census every 10 years. This highly partisan process featuring maps drawn in back rooms by party operatives results in uncompetitive elections and bad representation. According to the liberal website DailyKos, for instance, the Colorado House currently ranks among the most gerrymandered state house chambers in the nation.

WHY STOP

Gerrymandering?

Unbalanced: Too often, one of the two major parties dominates the map-drawing process and uses its power to minimize the political influence of other parties and Unaffiliated voters.

One-Sided: In every decade in recent history, maps have been drawn to favor one party or the other. There is little incentive for partisans to seek consensus.

Polarizing: Maps are currently drawn by political operatives to the benefit of their respective political parties, resulting in the creation of safe seats, more polarization, and toxic political atmosphere.

Little Transparency: The map-drawing process is highly secretive. In both 2001 and 2011, maps were introduced at the last moment and passed with base majorities, without any public input.

Lack of Competitiveness: Nothing currently requires map drawers to consider competitiveness. And even when they do, it is only through a partisan lens.

HOW WE

End It

Use an independent commission to redistrict the legislative and congressional boundaries, consisting, to the extent possible, of 1/3 Republican appointees, 1/3 Democratic appointees, and 1/3 not beholden to either party.

Require a supermajority of the commission to approve or change any map, so one party cannot hijack the process of approving maps, forcing consensus.

Ensure full transparency, by limiting commissioners and banning staff from any *ex parte* communications and requiring the commission's business be conducted in open, public meetings.

Require the redistricting commission and its staff to draw fair districts, using neutral criteria, and - where practicable - draw competitive districts that give either political party a chance to win.

Require a supermajority of the commission to approve or change any map, so one party cannot hijack the process of approving maps.

Our Principles

Fair Districts Fair Elections is a bipartisan effort to reform redistricting in Colorado which rests on the following principles:

1. Redistricting should be done by an independent commission consisting, to the extent possible, equally of Republicans, Democrats, and non-major party members. It should reflect Colorado's geographic and racial/ethnic diversity. Both parties should have equal input on the composition of the commission, and processes should be put in place to ensure that neither party can gain ownership, so to speak, over the non-major party members.
2. The commission should be required to obtain a supermajority in order to pass any map.
3. Maps should be drawn lowa-style, by nonpartisan staff, instead of political professionals.
4. The commission and its staff should be guided by neutral, good-government criteria in drawing maps, such as U.S. Constitutional requirements, the Federal Voting Rights Act, county and city integrity, compactness, communities of interest, and competitiveness. Districts should not be drawn for the purpose of favoring or discriminating against any political party, candidate or incumbent.
5. The commission should be subject to transparency measures, such as citizen participation, open meetings and open records laws, sunshine laws, and adequate notice and timelines for participation.

The Result?

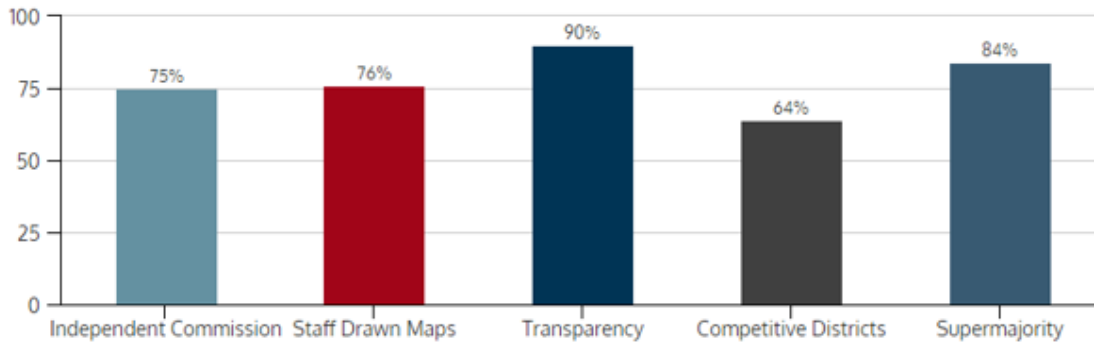
Our effort would turn Colorado into a national model for reform. The end result?

- More competitive elections, giving both parties a chance to win majorities in the Legislature and Congress
- Legislators who are more attentive to their constituents
- Less polarization between the political parties
- A more collaborative atmosphere between lawmakers
- Unaffiliated voters gain a voice in the redistricting process, for the first time
- An end to back-room deals and partisan gamesmanship, thanks to transparency measures and staff-driven maps

Our Plan

Our effort, organized under a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization known as Fair Districts Fair Elections, plans to run two initiatives on the 2018 ballot: one to reform congressional redistricting and the other to reform legislative redistricting. This will require finalizing the language of the initiatives by early August 2017. By January 2018, we plan to have a team collecting signatures throughout the state, in order to make the fall 2018 ballot. Each initiative will cost roughly \$1 million to secure placement on the ballot. Polling shows an excellent opportunity for success:

VOTERS SUPPORT REFORM



Source: Magellan Strategies poll of 501 Colorado registered voters, October 6-7, 2015. Margin of error +/- 4.38%.

Who We Are

Our team, many of whom have been meeting since summer 2015, is composed of Colorado leaders of all political stripes

- League of Women Voters of Colorado
- Hon. Bernie Buescher (D), former Secretary of State
- Hon. Kathleen Curry (U), former State Representative
- Hon. Mark Ferrandino (D), former House Speaker
- Bill Hobbs (U), former Deputy Secretary of State
- Hon. Frank McNulty (R), former House Speaker
- Hon. Josh Penry (R), former Senate Minority Leader
- Hon. Rob Witwer (R), former State Representative

How to Help

Contributions to “Fair Districts Fair Elections”, a 501(c)(4) nonprofit social welfare organization, are not subject to public disclosure. Corporate, union, trade association and personal contributions are accepted, and there are no limits. Fair Districts Fair Elections does not accept contributions from foreign entities. Contributions to Fair Districts Fair Elections are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes.

Fair Districts Fair Elections
717 17th Street, Suite 2800
Denver, CO 80202
Attn: Bernie Buescher