

How to Read Wattson Plaintiffs' Maps and Reports

1. Plans

This webpage shows two groups of plans for congressional and legislative districts.

- a. **2020.** The first group has names beginning with “2000 PW.” The 2000 plans show the congressional and legislative district boundaries adopted by the Minnesota Supreme Court’s Special Redistricting Panel in 2012 and used by the Secretary of State for the 2020 general election. They are called “Base” plans because they show the 2012 boundaries with 2020 populations. The maps and reports on the 2020 plans show how the Base plans do or do not comply with the constitution and the districting principles proposed by the Wattson Plaintiffs for plans to be drawn by the Panel for 2022.

- b. **2022.** The second group has names beginning with “2022 PW.” They are plans that, after receiving public comments on them and being adjusted as necessary, will be presented by the Wattson Plaintiffs to the Special Redistricting panel later this fall. They show how the proposed plans remedy the unequal populations in the 2020 Base plans and comply with the principles proposed by the Wattson Plaintiffs for the replacement plans to be used in 2022.

2. Principles

The principles filed with the Wattson Plaintiffs’ complaint on February 19, 2021 were based on the Special Redistricting Panel’s principles from last decade, but with modifications to take advantage of improvements made by other states since then via constitutional amendments and court decisions. Especially in the second half of the decade, there were major efforts to measure partisan fairness to deter partisan gerrymandering. These maps and reports reflect that effort.

The principles, in the form currently being negotiated with the other parties for presentation to the Panel, can be found at this link: (coming soon).

Seen here in rank order, they are:

Population equality

Minority representation

Contiguity and convenience

Preserving political subdivisions

Preserving American Indian reservations

Compactness

Communities of Interest

Incumbents

Partisanship

Competition

3. **A Sample Set of Maps and Reports - Base Plan [2020 PW CBase20](#)**

a. **Maps**

As in a Voting Rights Act benchmark plan, the Base plan takes the district boundaries drawn last decade and applies to them the new populations and election history. It shows how far out of population balance the districts are, and their partisan lean as of the last election.

Below the black district number, the number in red shows the population deviation. District 7 is about 40,000 people below the ideal, so will need to grow in area to add that many. District 3 is about 24,000 people above the ideal, so will have to shrink in area to subtract that many.

The blue percentage number is the district's partisan lean. A positive number is a Democratic lean. A negative number is a Republican lean.

The incumbent's icon shows their residence in the district.

You can see at a glance that the Republican districts in rural areas will have to grow, and the Democratic districts in the Twin City metro will have to shrink.

b. **Reports**

i. **Population Summary**

The population report shows the deviations you saw on the map, the percentage deviations, the overall range of deviations, and other summary statistics.

ii. **Minority Representation - Voting-Age Population**

The Minority Representation - Voting-Age Population report lists for each district the voting-age population of each racial or language minority and the total minority voting-age population, according to the categories recommended by the United States Department of Justice. The “Minority Opportunity Districts” box at the top highlights the districts with 30 percent or more total minority voting-age population, because these are the districts where minority voters might be able to elect a representative of their choice, if given the right circumstances.

iii. **Contiguity**

The Contiguity report should have a zero at the top. It doesn't because of an annexation on the border between districts 3 and 6 that left a portion of district 3 surrounded by district 6. (Don't tell anyone.) This is fixed in the 2022 plan.

iv. **Political Subdivision Splits**

The Political Subdivision Splits report shows the number of subdivisions split and the number of times they are split, as well as listing each of the splits.

v. **Compactness**

The Compactness report shows the most popular measures, including three new this decade: Cut Edges, Minimum Convex Hull, and Alternate Schwartzberg. Most take only a couple of seconds to run, but the Population Polygon, Population Circle, and Ehrenburg measures may take several minutes, depending on the speed of your computer.

vi. **Communities of Interest**

This particular Communities of Interest report counts the number of American Indian Reservations that are split and the number of times they are split. The report could be run to count splits of any other community of interest that has been added to the redistricting database. School district boundaries are already there. The boundaries of neighborhoods in Minneapolis and planning districts in St. Paul were added to the 2010 database.

vii. **Incumbents**

The incumbents report shows that, of course, no incumbents are paired in the current plan.

viii. **Partisanship**

In 2001, the Minnesota Legislature contracted with Caliper Corporation, the vendor of Maptitude for Redistricting, to create a Competitiveness report to measure compliance of proposed plans with the competitiveness principle proposed by Governor Ventura. It showed the number of districts likely to be won by each party and the number of competitive and safe seats. For 2020 and 2022, the Legislature paid Caliper modify the report to add several measures of partisan bias accepted in the political science and statistics literature. The Mean-Median Gap, Losided Wins Gap, Declination, and Efficiency Gap are all formatted so that a positive number shows a bias against Democrats and a negative number shows a bias against Republicans. The report shows that the base plan is biased against Democrats.

The district detail shows how the partisan lean (the Dem Plurality) is computed by subtracting from the Democratic Index percentage the Republican Index percentage and rounding to the nearest whole number.

The state totals show that the index is based on almost 35 million votes.

The definitions show the 14 federal and state statewide, partisan races in the five general elections last decade that were included in the index. (Senator Klobuchar's two senate races, which she won by more than 60%, were excluded as not a good measure of the typical Democratic candidate's strength.)

ix. **Swing to Lose Pendulum**

The Swing to Lose Pendulum shows how safe, strong, or competitive each of the districts is. It takes the partisan lean (the report calls it the Dem Plurality; you might think of it as the average winning margin) and divides it in half. If more than half of the winning margin swings to the other party, the incumbent is likely to lose.

The base plan is shown to be a 4-4 plan.

Representatives Omar and McCollum have winning margins of more than 20%, a swing to lose of 10% or more, so they are categorized as "Safe."

The four at the bottom all have a swing to lose of 4% or less, roughly within the margin of error for polling in the district. A 4% swing toward the Republicans in 2022 would turn this into a 6-2 Republican plan. A 3% swing toward the Democrats would turn this into a 6-2 Democratic plan. Each of these districts has flipped once during the last decade, as has the 7th district.