

ABOLISH PRISON GERRYMANDERING: NOW IS THE TIME FOR A LEGISLATIVE SOLUTION

What is prison gerrymandering?

“Prison gerrymandering” is the practice of counting incarcerated people where they are imprisoned, rather than their home communities, for purposes of redistricting. Ten states have enacted legislation to end this practice, but not Connecticut.

Why should Connecticut end prison gerrymandering?

Prison gerrymandering harms both incarcerated people and the residents of incarcerated people’s home communities, with a disproportionate impact on people of color. By counting incarcerated people in the prison towns where they have no connections, **prison gerrymandering effectively denies incarcerated people meaningful representation**. At the same time, prison gerrymandering unfairly inflates the population and political power of districts in which prisons are located.

Prison gerrymandering has a pronounced racial effect. Most state prisons are in rural areas that are overwhelmingly white. Most incarcerated persons come from urban areas and are Black or Latinx. Urban residents receive proportionately less representation, political power, and influence than those in prison districts.

*Due to prison gerrymandering, in some areas of New Haven, a resident’s vote counts for only about **85%** of the vote of a resident of Enfield or Somers, as of 2010 redistricting data.*

Prison gerrymandering in Connecticut violates the U.S.

Constitution’s “one person, one vote” standard. It is also inconsistent with Connecticut law, which treats incarcerated people who are eligible to vote as residents of their home communities for voting purposes.

With redistricting imminent, **the 2021 legislative session is the last opportunity of the decade** to enact legislation to end prison gerrymandering, correct these legal violations, and ensure Connecticut adopts fair maps.

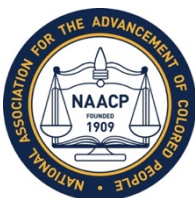
Won’t ending gerrymandering cripple town budgets where prisons are located?

An unfortunate myth is that ending prison gerrymandering will have serious negative impacts on municipal funding. The truth is that these issues are separate. As in past sessions, the current bill being considered this session to end prison gerrymandering, S.B. 753, applies only to redistricting, and not to funding. Legislation can, and should, be funding neutral.

Who supports ending prison gerrymandering?

Numerous organizations have called for an end to prison gerrymandering in Connecticut, including the Connecticut State Conference of the NAACP, ACLU of Connecticut, the League of Women Voters of Connecticut, Common Cause Connecticut, Prison Policy Institute, CONECT, LatinoJustice PRLDEF, NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., Campaign Legal Center, the Anti-Defamation League of Connecticut, the Connecticut AFL-CIO, SEBAC, and SEIU 1199 NE. Governor Lamont, Secretary of the State Merrill, Speaker Ritter, and President Pro Tem Looney have also supported legislation to end prison gerrymandering.

**With strong leadership, Connecticut can end this unfair practice
and be a voting rights leader.**



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