

H A R L A N R I C H A R D S

April 5, 2019

National Gerrymandering

Statistical analysis has found that Republicans won 16 more House of Representative seats in 2018 because of gerrymandered districts than they would have if there had been competitive elections. Gerrymandering is the process of redrawing legislative districts to favor one political party over another. Since 2010, technology has been available which allows districts to be drawn so precisely that the party in power can guarantee it will never lose another election.

In North Carolina, 9 out of 12 House seats went to Republicans yet in the election they won only 51% of the vote. There has been an ongoing Republican advantage in Florida, Michigan, Wisconsin and South Dakota due to gerrymandering. In 2018, Republicans kept majorities in Iowa, Michigan, Pennsylvania, North Carolina and Wisconsin even though Democratic candidates received more votes. In the Wisconsin legislature, more than 60% of the assembly districts are set up so that there is a Republican majority which guarantees a Republican will win every election.

Every 10 years redistricting occurs. After the 2020 census, the districts will be redrawn. I don't know about the other states, but Wisconsin now has a Democratic governor (gerrymandering cannot affect statewide elections which is why Democrats won every statewide elected position in 2018) so the next drawing of legislative districts will have to be fairly and impartially done. It may have to be done by a federal judge but at least it will put an end to the last 10 years of minority Republicans controlling our state government.

We need a non-partisan redistricting process which levels the playing field for everyone - something the Republicans oppose because it will result in them losing control now and for the foreseeable future.

Governor Evers has proposed changing the redistricting process to a non-partisan system in his current budget but Republican legislative leaders have already declared that to be a nonstarter.