

# More Democratic Government

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# Expensive Elections

- Candidates sell out for campaign funds
- Politicians work for donors, not the people
- USA is a plutocracy, not a democracy
- See “Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens”
- "Multivariate analysis indicates that economic elites and organized groups representing business interests have substantial independent impacts on U.S. government policy, while average citizens and mass-based interest groups have little or no independent influence."  
<https://scholar.princeton.edu>

# Fixing Campaign Finance

- Outlaw PACs and secret money
- Political campaigns should be publicly funded
- What's the best implementation?
- Vouchers for voters?
- Prescribed allotment for each candidate?

# District Size

- Bigger voting districts have more costly campaigns
- Small districts allow door-to-door campaigns
- Teeny districts should be more ethical
- How small do districts need to be for ethical government?
- Research is needed
- Idea inspired by a colleague

# Test Tiny Districts

- If research was promising ...
- Keep city's current small council (like the Senate)
- Add a legislative house with tiny districts
- See how well it works

# Determining Election Winner

- Sioux Falls uses first-past-the-post method (whoever gets the most votes wins)
- Ranked choice voting is better
- Allows people to vote for who they really want
- Eliminates spoiler effect
- Eliminates runoff elections with short timelines that favor well-funded candidates
- Switch to ranked choice voting

# Promoting Civic Participation

- Government should encourage voter registration
- Combine city, school, state, federal elections
- City should distribute notice of meetings and elections to registered voters
- Candidates should submit multiple policy questions
- City randomly selects questions from all candidates
- City should distribute candidate response to policy questions
- See "Promoting Civic Participation" February 2, 2021 by David Zokaite

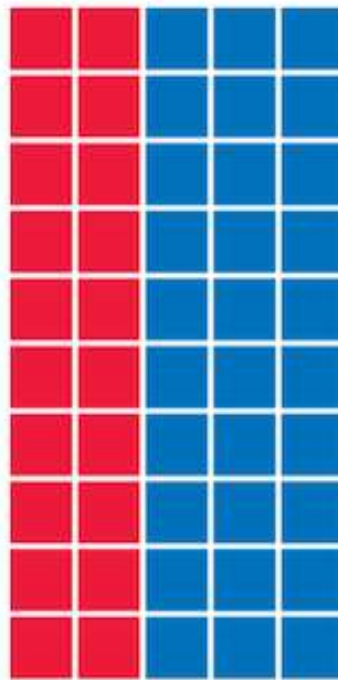
# Labeling Candidates

- Putting party affiliation on ballot encourages ideological voting
- Sioux Falls has non-partisan ballots – nice!
- Not identifying parties encourages policy-based voting
- Partisan elections make gerrymandering more effective

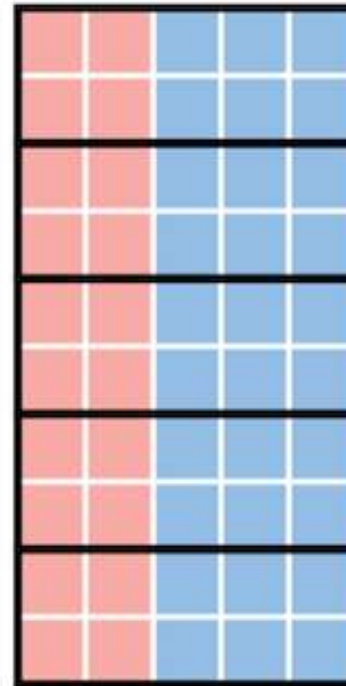


# Gerrymandering

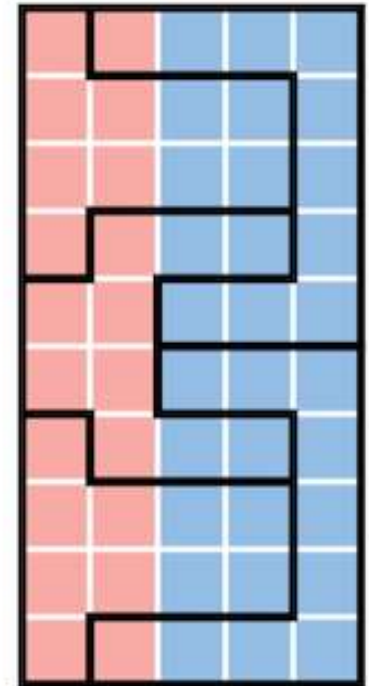
- Biases elections in favor of ruling political party
- Should be outlawed
- Image from [fairvote.org](http://fairvote.org)



50 PRECINCTS  
**60% BLUE**  
**40% RED**

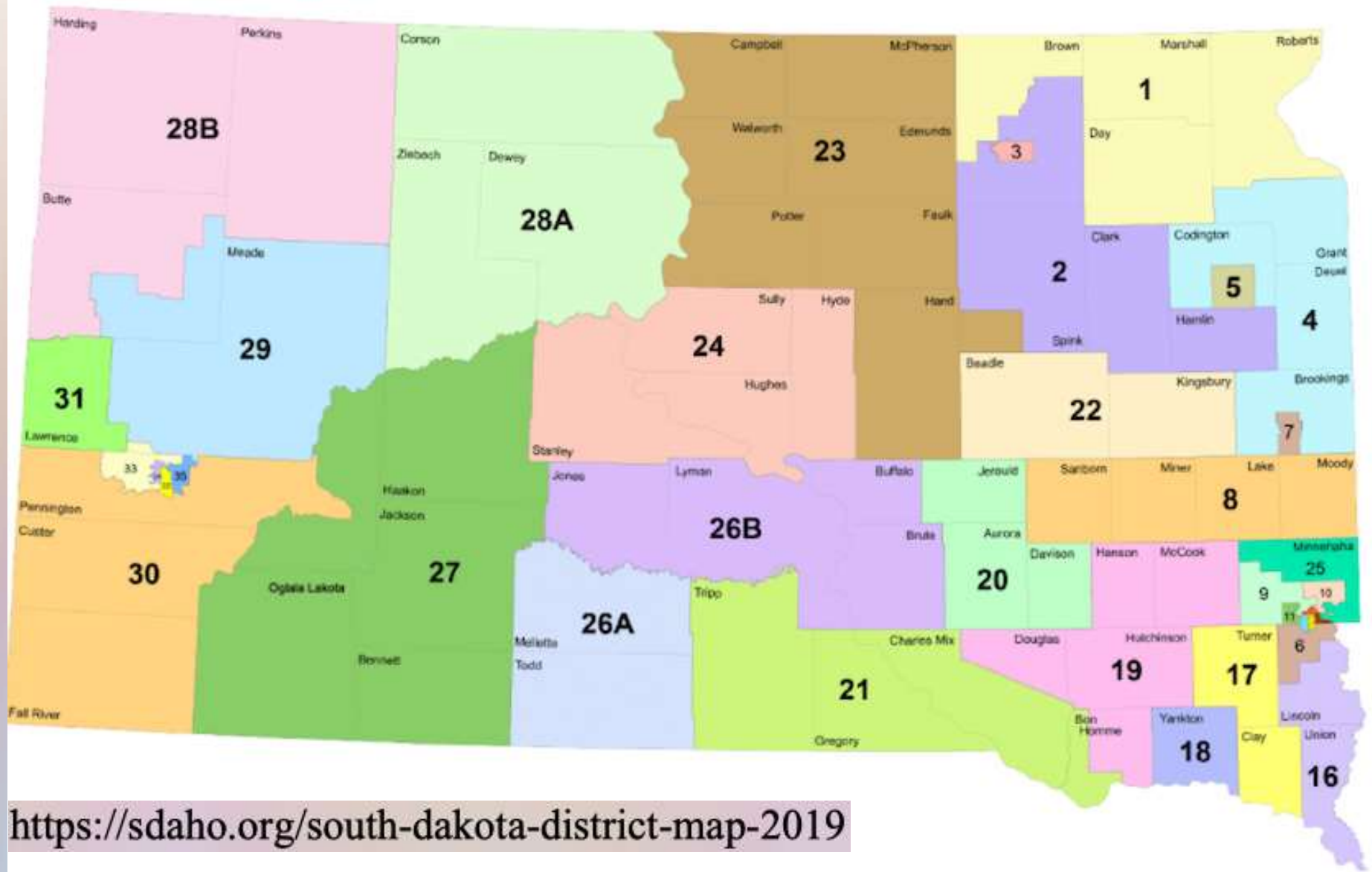


5 DISTRICTS  
5 BLUE  
0 RED  
**BLUE WINS**



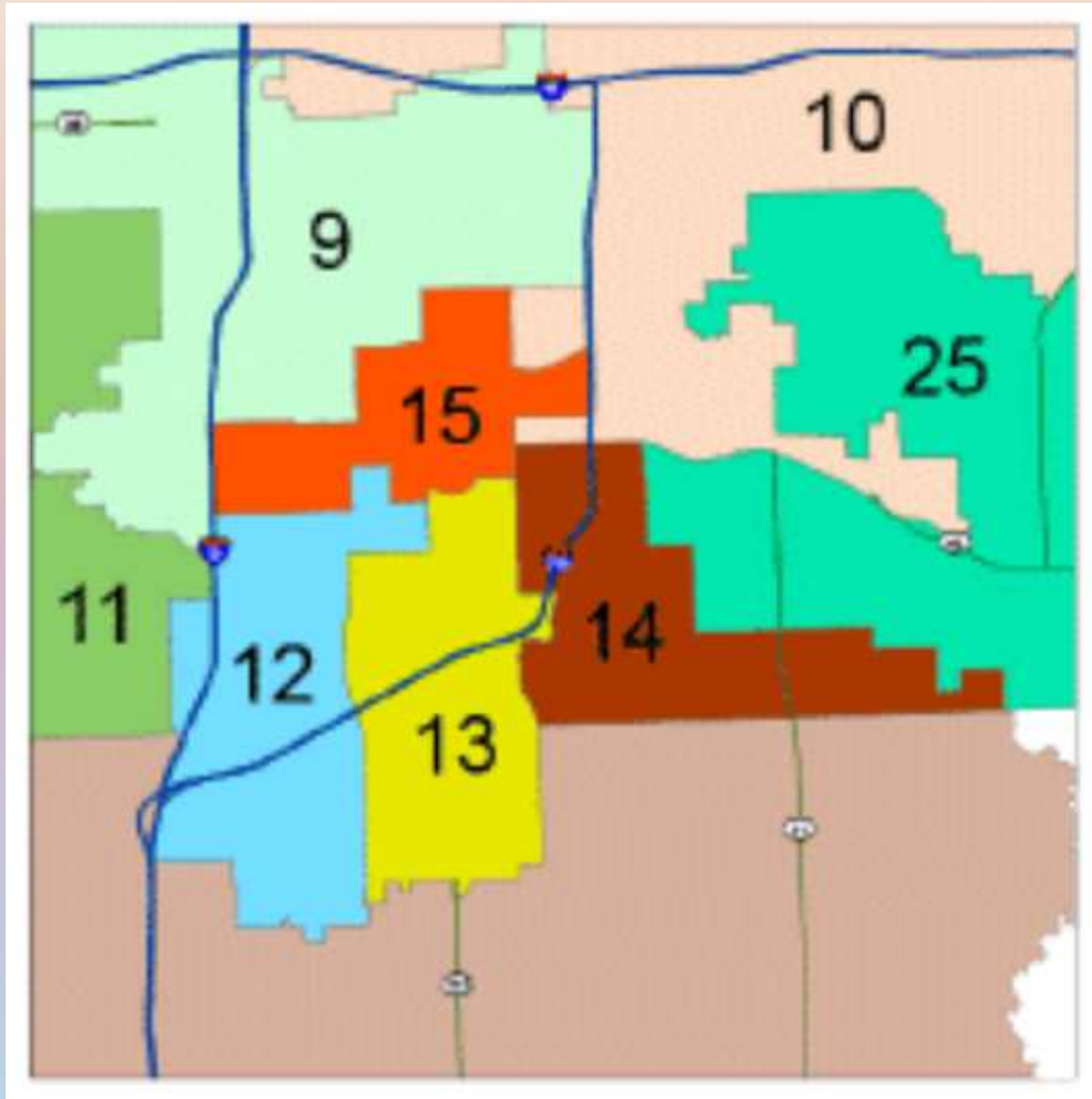
5 DISTRICTS  
3 RED  
2 BLUE  
**RED WINS**

# SD Legislative Districts



<https://sdaio.org/south-dakota-district-map-2019>

# Problem Sioux Falls Districts



# Supreme Court Ruling

- Lawsuit reported violations of "the First Amendment, the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, the Elections Clause, and Article I"
- Court said, not my problem, gerrymandering is ok
- "Partisan gerrymandering claims present political questions beyond the reach of the federal courts"
- See *Rucho v. Common Cause* (2019)

# Reducing Minority Vote

- Supreme Court nullified Voting Rights Act of 1965 via Shelby County v Holder (2013)
- "The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was enacted to address entrenched racial discrimination in voting"
- Court said racism is no longer a problem:  
"discriminatory evasions of federal decrees are rare"
- "voting became rapidly more difficult after the Shelby County decision, particularly for poor and elderly black people and Latinos"
- see "How Shelby County v. Holder Broke America" on [TheAtlantic.com](http://TheAtlantic.com)

# SD Voter Disenfranchisement

- Felons can't vote until (frequently unpayable) restitution is paid. See “Felony Voter Disenfranchisement” by David Zokaites, June 16, 2020
- Natives have long trip to polls (sometimes 150 miles)
- Nontraditional addresses make registering to vote difficult
- Slow mail makes mailing ballots impractical
- Can't use tribal ID to register for voting
- See "In South Dakota, Native Americans face numerous obstacles to voting" on [PublicIntegrity.org](https://www.PublicIntegrity.org)

# Recommendations

- Be nice to other people
- Share vote
- Share power
- **Share wealth – the establishment hates this idea**
- Promote democracy!

# Enjoy Nature

- Lake Alvin  
Saturday  
night

