

POLITICAL REDISTRICTING FOR FAIR ELECTIONS



Political Redistricting for Fair Elections

UNC system President Emeritus Thomas W. Ross [joined the Sanford School](#) on February 1 as the first Terry Sanford Distinguished Fellow. While in residence, Ross will work on a bipartisan project aimed at improving how political district lines are drawn in the United States. Ross's residence at Duke will include [taking a broad look at redistricting methods across the country](#) and bringing together experts from multiple disciplines, inside and outside the academy, to consider redistricting best practices.

In addition to this general inquiry into redistricting, Ross, in partnership with POLIS and [Common Cause North Carolina](#), is heading up a simulated bipartisan independent commission to draw a new, but unofficial, North Carolina congressional map. More info below.

The Sanford School has created an excellent podcast on Gerrymandering called [Crazy Districts, Lopsided Elections](#) as part of the Ways & Means series. Click the link to listen or [download the podcast](#) at iTunes.

Beyond Gerrymandering: Impartial Redistricting for North Carolina

Objective

We seek to educate the public on how an independent, impartial redistricting process would work. Our independent commission will be made up of ten retired jurists representing an equal number from both political parties. The commission will use strong, clear criteria to create a new North Carolina congressional map. All federal rules related to the Voting Rights Act will be followed. No political data, election results or incumbents' addresses will be allowed for consideration when creating new districts.

The demonstration will be open to the public and the Duke University community. Our independent commission will be guided by a professional staff that includes a former legislative attorney experienced in the redistricting process. Our independent commission will utilize criteria prescribed in the current bi-partisan redistricting reform bill (H92) that was approved by the State House in 2011.

As North Carolina continues to be the most litigated state in America regarding redistricting, our desire is to demonstrate the value of shifting to an independent, impartial process. The criteria we will use mirrors what the state of Iowa follows, which has never had a lawsuit filed against its plans in its 30 plus years of independent redistricting.

All aspects of the project will be open to the public and the Duke community, and opportunities to integrate students into the commission's work will be woven throughout the process.