



Draw the Lines

Lesson Title: Redistricting in Pennsylvania

ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

How are Pennsylvania's voting lines determined?

I HAVE:

Two days

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Students will be able to:

1. Read and analyze a secondary source on PA's voting lines.
2. Think critically about motivations and incentives when legislators draw the maps.
3. Simulate the legislative and commission process.
4. Map their own communities.

In order to...

Understand how PA determines its voting borders.

TYPE OF ACTIVITIES:

1. Review "How are Pennsylvania's voting lines determined?"
2. Simulate legislative process for determining PA's congressional maps
3. Simulate commission process for determining PA's state legislative maps
4. Map your own community.

MATERIALS:

- Attached handouts and simulation materials

STEP-BY-STEP:

How does Pennsylvania draw its congressional and legislative district lines? Pass out the handout "How are PA's voting lines drawn?" Give students five minutes to review and ask questions if they don't understand.

Then assign randomly the following roles to the class, perhaps through a random drawing.

1. Governor (1)
2. State House Majority Leader (1)
3. State House Minority Leader (1)
4. State Senate Majority Leader (1)
5. State Senate Minority Leader (1)
6. State House majority member (3)
7. State House minority member (2)
8. State Senate majority member (3)
9. State Senate minority member (2)
10. Majority party voter (4)
11. Minority party voter (3)
12. Independent voter (3)

First, the class will draw the state's congressional map. Students can pretend that there are two bills (maps) for discussion: one preferred by the majority party, and one preferred by the minority party. For purposes of this simulation, maps produced by a PA elected official showing how both sides can gerrymander serve as our proposals. See <https://www.ydr.com/story/news/2018/02/06/pennsylvania-redistricting-decision-gives-democrats-boost/313765002/> for the graphic. See attached for map copies.

The map needs to pass through the State House and State Senate separately before going to the governor's desk for his/her signature.

Role play 1... the Red Party is the majority party in both chambers of the General Assembly, and the governor is a Red Party member.

1. Convene both chambers of the General Assembly.
2. Have the Majority Leader of both chambers call a vote between the two bills. The majority party members should vote for their party's bill, while minority party members should vote for theirs.
3. After both chambers pass their bills, the governor will sign.

Role play 2... the Red Party is the majority party in just the House, while the Blue party is in the majority in the Senate and the governor is a Blue Party member.



Draw the Lines

STEP-BY-STEP (cont.):

1. Convene both chambers of the General Assembly.
2. Have the Majority Leader of both chambers call a vote between the two bills. The majority party members should vote for their party's bill, while minority party members should vote for theirs.
3. Since each chamber will pass different bills, the two chambers will need to conference together to determine which map to pass to send to the governor for his/her signature. They would ideally produce a compromise map (map #3).
4. The governor will sign the bill.

Role play 3... the Red Party is the majority party in both chambers of the General Assembly, but the governor is a Blue Party member.

1. Convene both chambers of the General Assembly.
2. Have the Majority Leader of both chambers call a vote between the two bills. The majority party members should vote for their party's bill, while minority party members should vote for theirs.
3. Both chambers will pass the same bill, but the governor will veto. The two chambers will need to pass a compromise bill to send to the governor for his/her signature.
4. The governor will sign the bill.

After these three scenarios, reconvene the class and discuss the following questions:

1. What are your initial reactions to this activity? What did you see? What did you hear? What did you feel? What did you discover? Why?
2. What happened when a single party controlled all phases of the process? What about when control was split between the two parties?
3. Which group of students did not get to participate in this process at all? How did that make them feel?
4. Do you have any ideas for how to improve the process?

Next, the class will draw the state's legislative maps (House and Senate). The four default members of the Legislative Reapportionment Commission (House and Senate majority and minority leaders) shall convene.

1. The four members shall pick a fifth member who will serve as chair from among the voters. The Red party wants to pick one of their party members, while the Blue party wants to pick one of theirs. However, the State Supreme Court (the teacher) is controlled by the Blue party. (This is a good opportunity to tell students that State Supreme Court justices are elected in Pennsylvania.) The teacher selects a Blue party voter to chair the commission.



Draw the Lines

STEP-BY-STEP (cont.):

2. The three Blue party members can choose any map they wish that will favor their political goals.
3. Voters can provide feedback on those maps. In this simulation, the Red party members in the public can argue that these maps are unfair, while the Blue party members in the public can argue that they are fair.
4. The Blue party chooses to adopt the map. Voters wishing to challenge the map can bring a challenge to the state Supreme Court, which is again held by the Blue party. The court (the teacher) can choose to disregard any challenges to the plan, unless someone moves them so otherwise.

Reconvene and discuss the following questions. These could be used as an exit ticket:

1. Who holds the most power across all of these simulations?
2. Did either process value citizen input?
3. What are some of the motivations that politicians have when drawing these district lines?
4. Do you have any ideas for how to improve the process ?

Finally, Pennsylvania is a big state. Odds are students aren't going to be familiar with many communities outside of their own. Draw the Lines is engaging in a crowd-sourcing project for students to define their own community, and share it with other classrooms across the commonwealth so that Pennsylvanians can educate each other about their own communities. It's called the Hometown Portrait, which can be completed here.

<https://drawthelinespa.org/participate/make-a-hometown-portrait>.

This can be done for homework.

Another fun option is called "Draw Your Own Personal PA." Invite students to map PA as they see it. This can be filled with pop culture references (what are the sports fandom dividing lines?), or the Wawa/Sheetz line, or however they see the rest of the state. Creativity encouraged. See our website,

<https://drawthelinespa.org/participate/draw-your-own-personal-pennsylvania>, for examples.



Draw the Lines

How are PA's voting lines drawn?

United States Congress



Image from clipartxttras.com

Senate

N/A. Every state has two senators, regardless of population

House of Representatives

Pennsylvania State House and State Senate (a.k.a. PA General Assembly) propose and pass a bill of the new map through both houses. This occurs through the normal legislative process, like any other bill.

The Governor then signs or vetoes the bill. If signed, the new voting lines are now law.

For further consideration:

1. What incentives do lawmakers have to control how election boundaries are drawn?
2. What do you think would happen if one party controls all three branches of state government (state House, state Senate, the governor's office)?

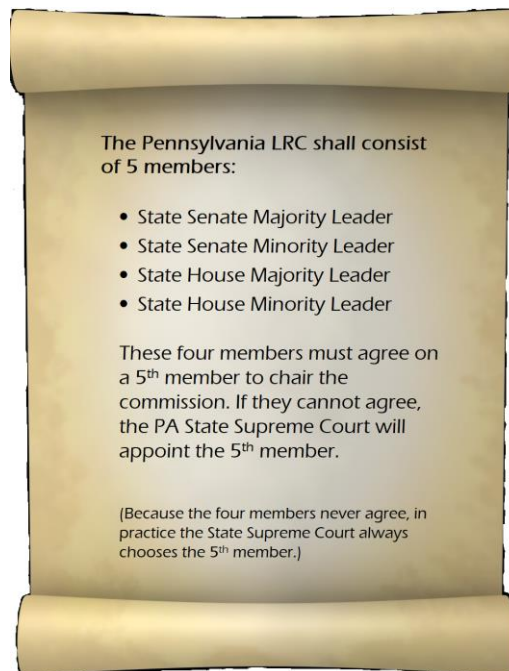


Draw the Lines

Pennsylvania General Assembly (state House and state Senate)

Drawn by:

PA Legislative Reapportionment Commission (LRC)



Process:

1. The LRC has three months to publish its first draft of State Senate and State House maps.
2. The public can file an “exception” (basically, a disagreement) with the maps.
3. The LRC then files revised maps, where they may take consider the public’s feedback.
4. If a citizen still disagrees with the maps from Step Three, they can file an appeal with the Pennsylvania State Supreme Court.

To read more on how this process played in 2011, when a Pennsylvania citizen challenged the political establishment using exactly this process, visit: <https://drawthelinespa.org/about-us/video-the-amanda-holt-story>.



Draw the Lines

Redistricting Simulation

Your Role:

Governor of Pennsylvania



Draw the Lines

Redistricting Simulation

Your Role:

State House Majority Leader



Draw the Lines

Redistricting Simulation

Your Role:

State House Minority Leader



Draw the Lines

Redistricting Simulation

Your Role:

State Senate Majority Leader



Draw the Lines

Redistricting Simulation

Your Role:

State Senate Minority Leader



Draw the Lines

Redistricting Simulation

Your Role:

**State House
majority member (1 of 3)**



Draw the Lines

Redistricting Simulation

Your Role:

**State House
minority member (1 of 2)**



Draw the Lines

Redistricting Simulation

Your Role:

**State Senate
majority member (1 of 3)**



Draw the Lines

Redistricting Simulation

Your Role:

**State Senate
minority member (1 of 2)**



Draw the Lines

Redistricting Simulation

Your Role:

Majority party voter (1 of 4)



Draw the Lines

Redistricting Simulation

Your Role:

Minority party voter (1 of 3)



Draw the Lines

Redistricting Simulation

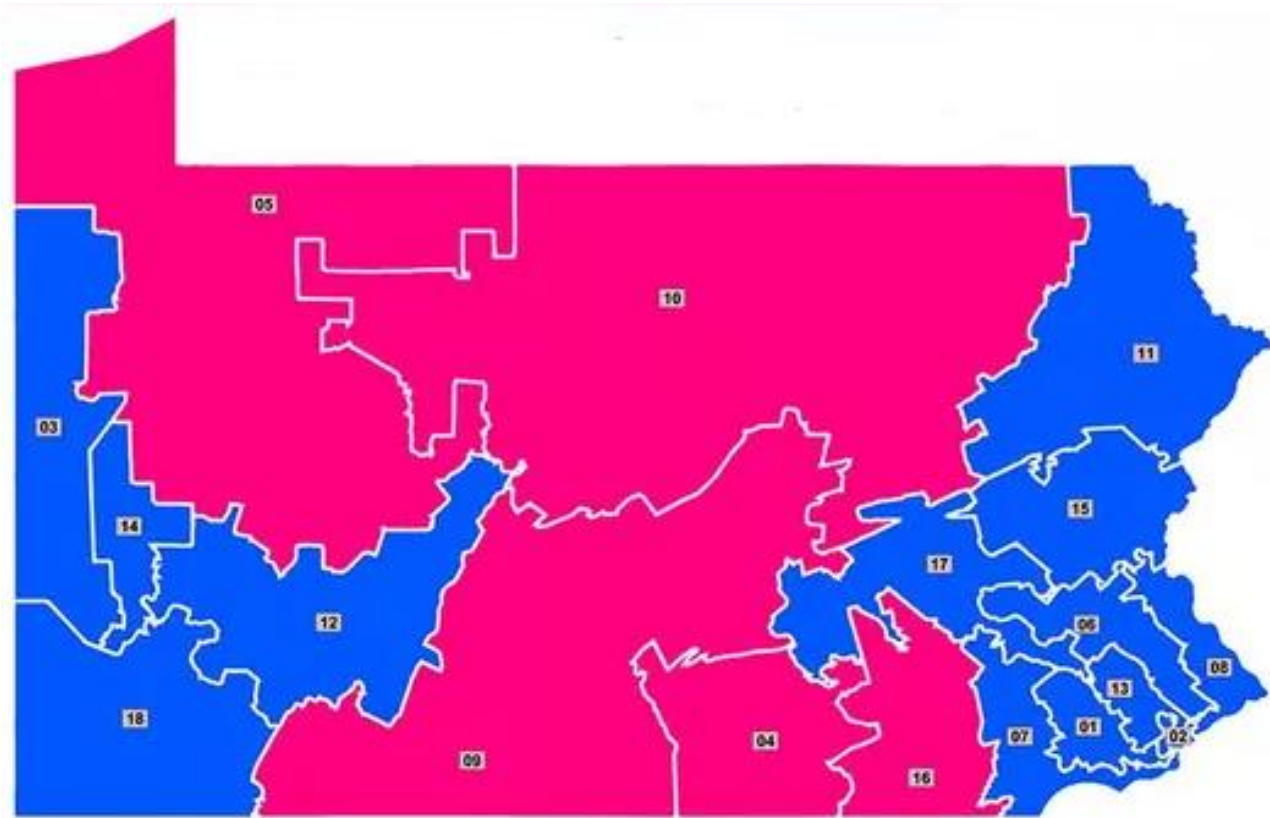
Your Role:

Independent voter (1 of 3)



Draw the Lines

Congressional Map Proposed by the minority party - predicted 13-5 blue

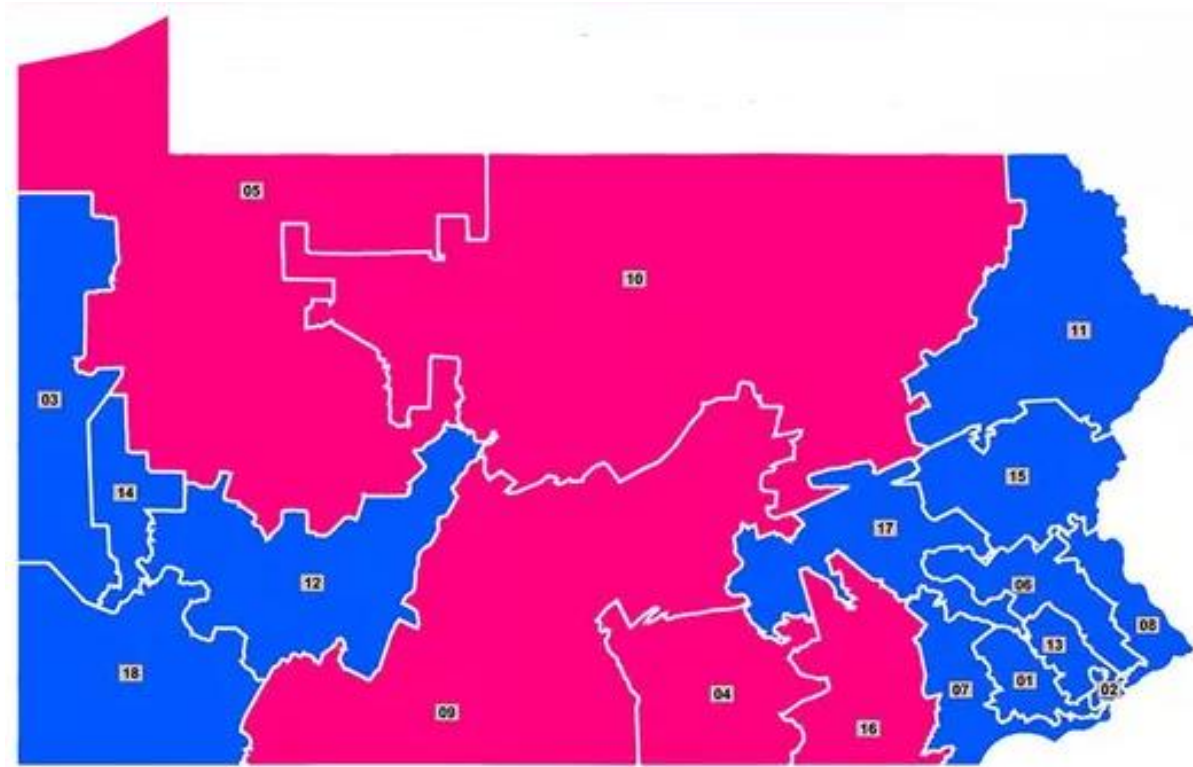


Map graphic courtesy of York Daily Record:
<https://www.ydr.com/story/news/2018/02/06/pennsylvania-redistricting-decision-gives-democrats-boost/313765002/>



Draw the Lines

Congressional Map Proposed by the majority party - predicted 13-5 red

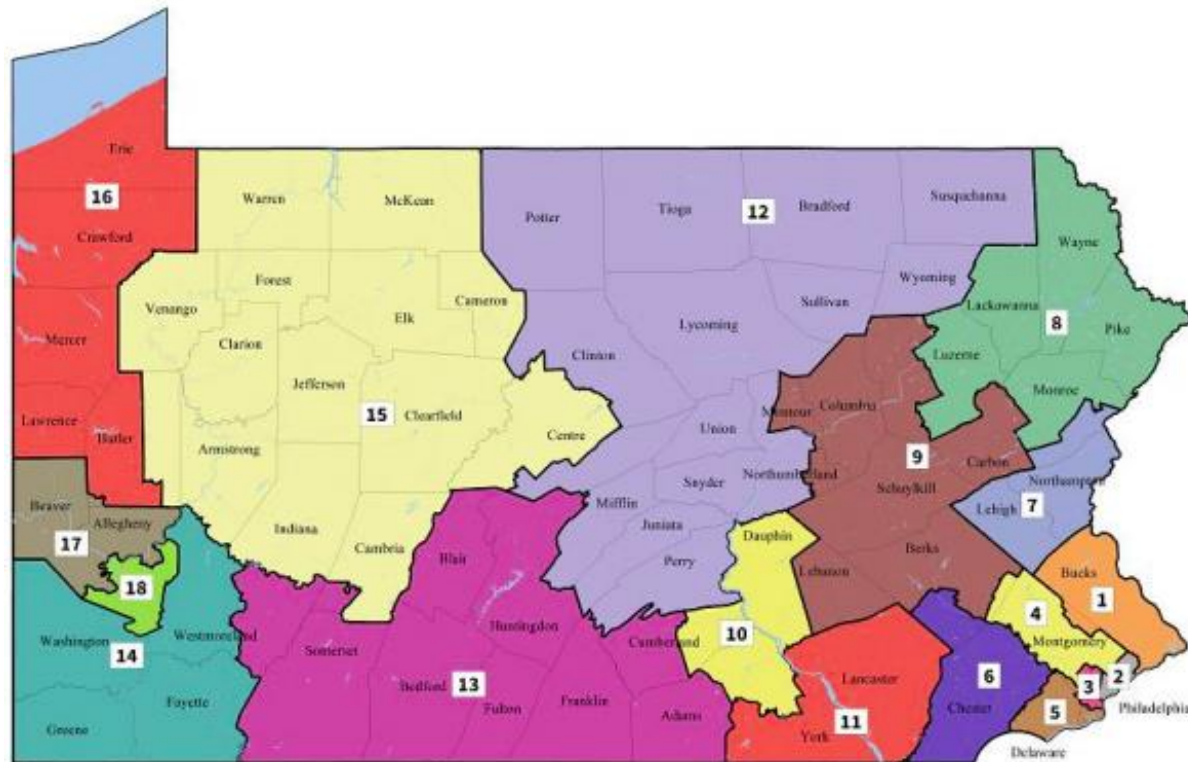


Map graphic courtesy of York Daily Record:
<https://www.ydr.com/story/news/2018/02/06/pennsylvania-redistricting-decision-gives-democrats-boost/313765002/>



Draw the Lines

Congressional Map Compromise bill

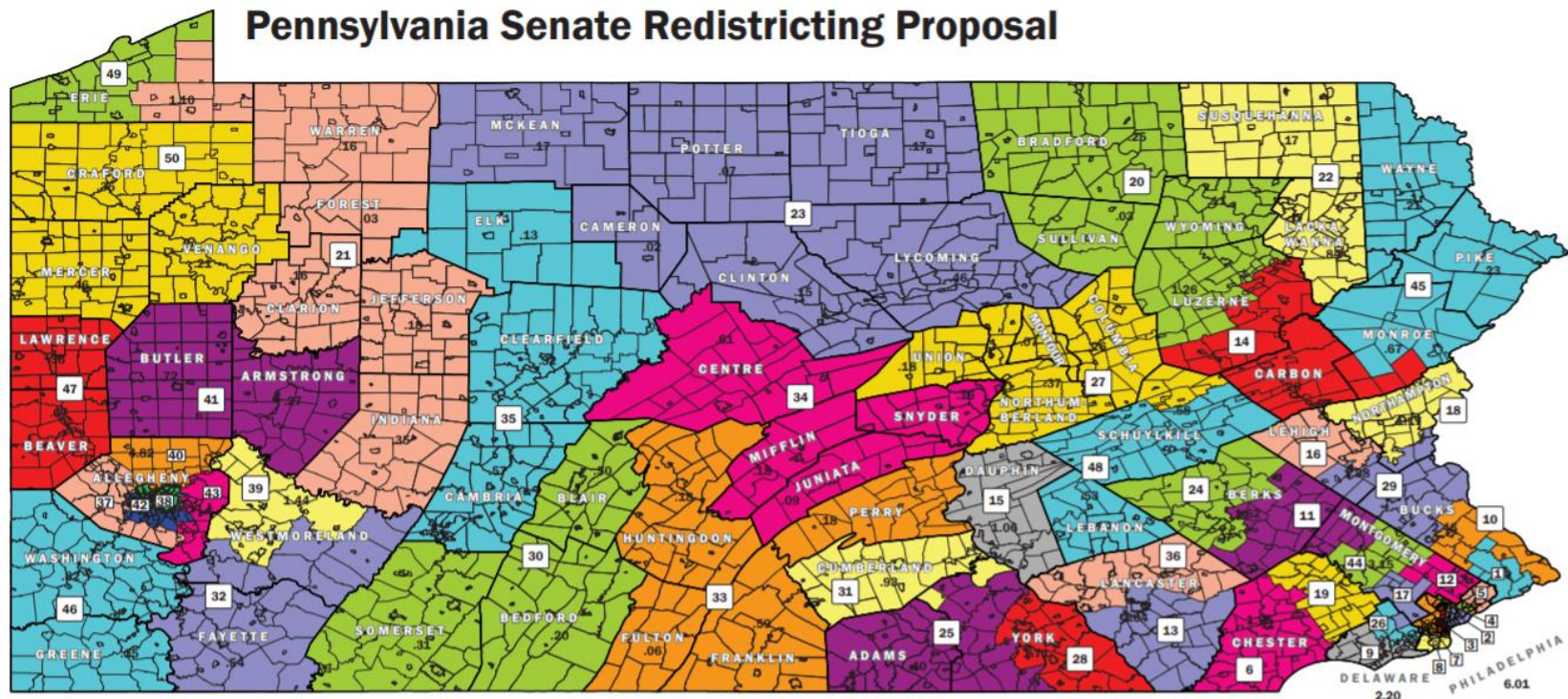


Map graphic is from 2018 State Supreme Court decision, creating new congressional maps for Pennsylvania. League of Women Voters, et al. v. the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, et al.



Draw the Lines

PA State Senate Map LRC Submission



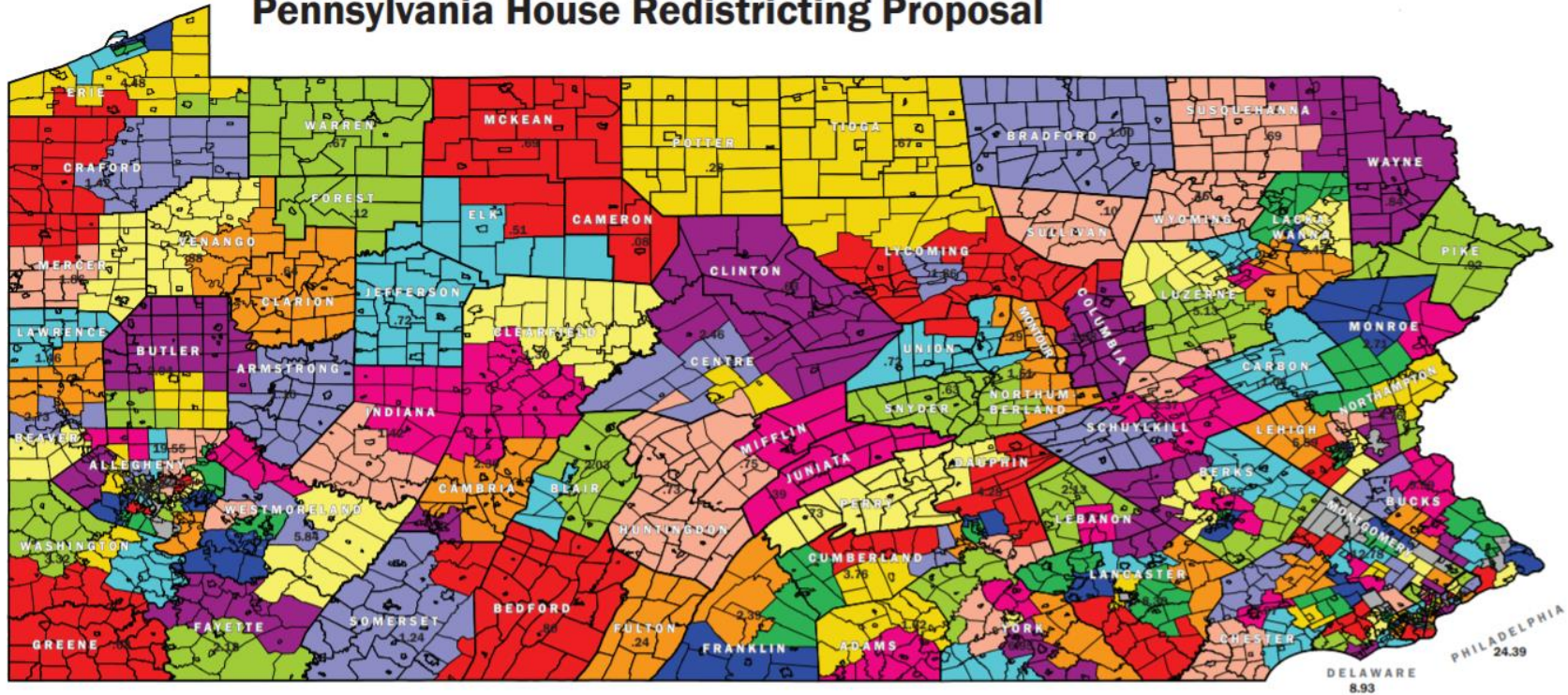
Map is map that was produced by Amanda Holt in 2011 to demonstrate to LRC a map that minimized county and municipality splits. <http://www.poonorecord.com/assets/pdf/PR1384914.PDF>



Draw the Lines

PA State House Map LRC Submission

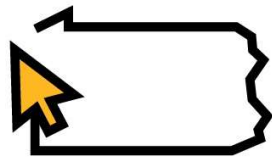
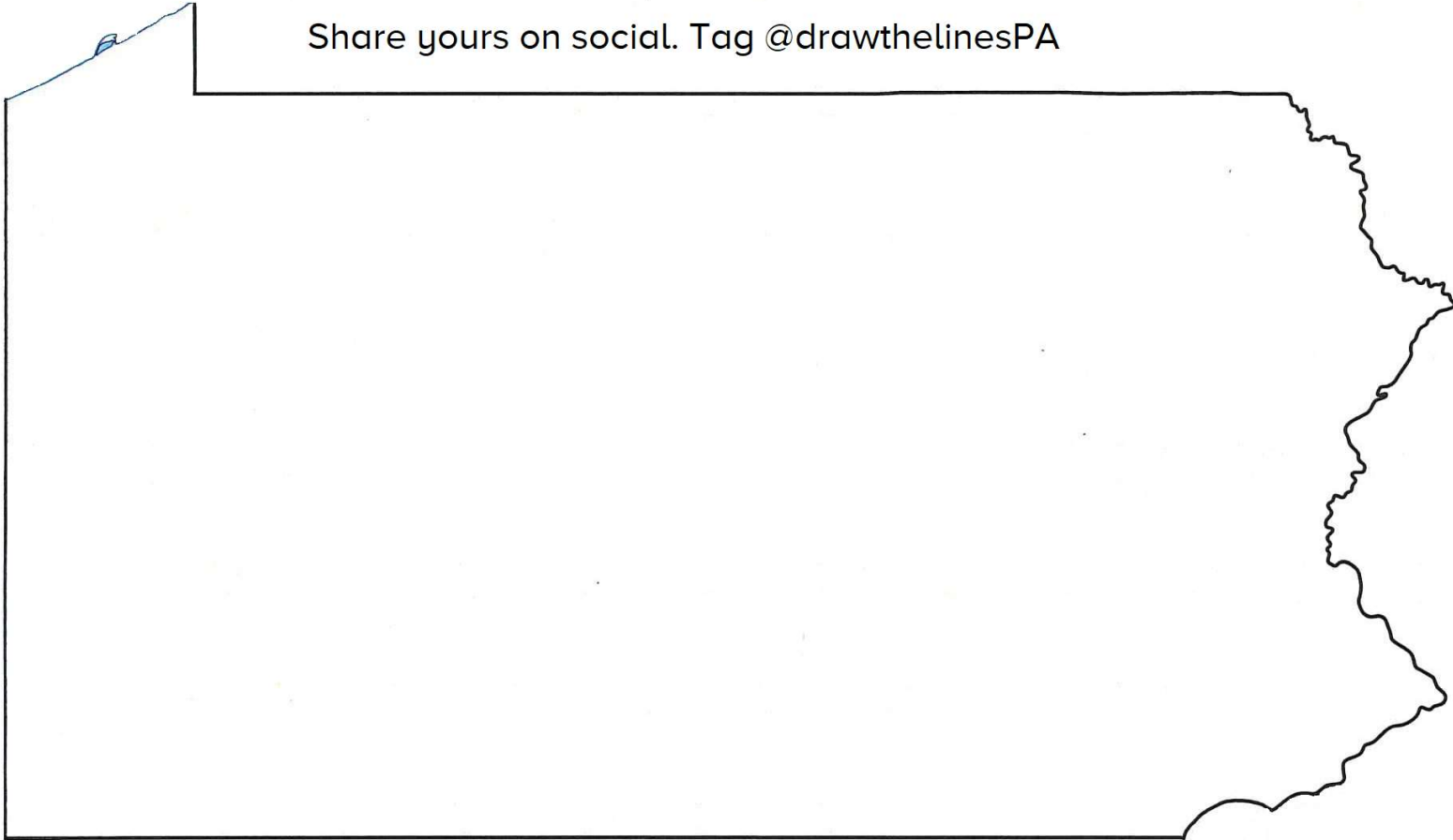
Pennsylvania House Redistricting Proposal



Map is map that was produced by Amanda Holt in 2011 to demonstrate to LRC a map that minimized county and municipality splits. <http://www.poonorecord.com/assets/pdf/PR1384914.PDF>

Draw Your Personal PA

Share yours on social. Tag @drawthelinesPA



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