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Georgia congressional map favoring GOP moves toward passage

By JEFF AMY November 20, 2021



ATLANTA (AP) — A redistricting plan likely to increase Republicans' advantage among Georgia's 14 congressional representatives moved to the cusp of final passage on Saturday, as a state House committee voted to approve it.

The Republican-majority state House is likely to pass [Senate Bill 2EX](#) on Monday, wrapping up a special redistricting session that began Nov. 3. Republicans have already pushed through [new state House](#) and [Senate maps](#) aimed at securing their majorities

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The 10-4 vote by the House Legislative and Congressional Reapportionment Committee came after one last round of public comment slamming the new map for redrawing Georgia's 6th Congressional District to add Republican voters in Forsyth, Cherokee and Dawson counties north of Atlanta, making it unlikely that two-term Democratic incumbent Lucy McBath can hold the seat.

Republicans now hold an 8-6 edge in Georgia's 14 congressional districts, down from 10-4 a decade ago. The proposed map would shift that edge to 9-5, despite a roughly even divide among the electorate statewide that delivered Democratic victories in the 2020 presidential race and January's two U.S. Senate runoffs.

"It's appalling to see her seat be targeted like this and gerrymandered in attempts to gain party power. It all ties into the question of people versus power," Mehar Nemani, a student from Fulton County, told the committee. "The current proposed maps choose power over people. This map is nothing less than a power grab."

Rep. Ed Setzler, an Acworth Republican, rejected the argument by Nemani and others.

"I think the suggestion than this map is a gerrymandered attack on the things that she described is just factually, and as a premise, wrong," Setzler said. "I

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Also at issue Saturday is the displeasure by some residents in the southwest corner of Cobb County at potentially being drawn into northwest Georgia’s heavily Republican 14th district, now represented by Republican Marjorie Taylor Greene.

“We do not have the chance to elect a representative that represents our values,” said Andrea Espinosa of Powder Springs. “Through this map, I have now become an outlier.”

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McBath is considering instead jumping to the 7th Congressional District, which will become much more Democratic under the new plan. That could set up a primary challenge with Democratic U.S. Rep Carolyn Bourdeaux, who took the seat away from Republicans in 2020 for the first time in decades.

Georgia’s population rose nearly 10% to 10.7 million people over the last decade, but Census results showed the growth has been uneven. Atlanta, Savannah and other cities boomed, while rural areas mostly lost population.

Fair Districts Georgia, a nonpartisan group, has argued that an 8-6 split would most fairly represent Georgia’s current political landscape, where many Democrats are tightly clustered in urban areas. That group and some others are also critical of the Republican map because none of its proposed districts

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the redistricting process to try to increase their party’s edge in the narrowly divided Congress. Republicans control more of the 50 statehouses, and hope to leverage this advantage to flip the U.S. House to a GOP majority next year.

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