

**State Defendants' Response to Brooks, LULAC, and
MALC Plaintiffs' Joint Motion for Preliminary Injunction**

Exhibit O

Nathaniel Rakich and Tony Chow, Illinois May Be The Worst Democratic
Gerrymander In The Country, FiveThirtyEight (May 6,
2022), <https://fivethirtyeight.com/videos/illinois-may-be-the-worst-democratic-gerrymander-in-the-country/>.

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Illinois May Be The Worst Democratic Gerrymander In The Country

By [Nathaniel Rakich](#) and [Jony Chow](#)

Filed under [Redistricting](#)

Published May 6, 2022

The worst Democratic gerrymander in the country is arguably in Illinois, as it set off a high-stakes game of musical chairs among the state's five Republican House members.

Nathaniel Rakich: One of our greatest presidents, Abraham Lincoln, was a Republican from Illinois. But the state's new gerrymandered congressional map seems hell-bent on making Republican congressmen from Illinois an endangered species.

There are currently five Republicans in Illinois's U.S. House delegation. But that was apparently too many for the Democrats who were in charge of Illinois redistricting last fall. They drew a map that packed all five Republicans into just three congressional districts.

That kicked off a high-stakes game of electoral musical chairs. At first,

that was apparently too many for the Democrats who were in charge of Illinois redistricting last fall. They drew a map that packed all five Republicans into just three congressional districts.

That kicked off a high-stakes game of electoral musical chairs. At first, Congressman Mike Bost and Congresswoman Mary Miller were thrown together into the 12th District, while Congressman Rodney Davis was alone in the 15th District. But the far-right Miller apparently decided she had a better shot of staying in Congress if she ran for reelection in the 15th against Davis, who is more moderate. Meanwhile, over in the 16th District, Congressmen Darin LaHood and Adam Kinzinger were also double-bunked, a situation that was only resolved when Kinzinger decided not to seek reelection.



As a result, Democrats could hold 14 of Illinois's 17 congressional seats after the 2022 election. That's 82 percent of seats, even though they'll probably win less than 60 percent of the state's popular vote. That's possible only because of how many Republican votes are "wasted" under the new map — either because they're being cast in a district that's already safely red or because they're outnumbered by Democratic votes. Either way, those votes don't count toward a win.

Based on the 2020 presidential election results, this map wastes 1.9 million Republican votes. That's almost twice the number of Democratic votes that are wasted under the map.

Theoretically, if Republicans and Democrats had the same number of wasted votes in Illinois, Republicans would win 2.2 more congressional seats than under a gerrymander of this caliber. By that measure, Illinois is the worst gerrymander in the country drawn by Democrats.

Illinois's aggressive gerrymander is a big part of the reason Democrats have gained seats from redistricting nationwide this year. But it could also backfire. In order to draw so many blue seats, Democrats had to spread their voters thin, leaving some districts with only a small Democratic lean. If Republicans have a strong 2022 election, they could end up winning not only their three safely red seats but also those light-blue seats. This gerrymander could end up being the biggest blunder in Illinois since Mrs. O'Leary's cow knocked over that lantern.

To be sure, this map will most likely help Democrats in their quest to hold onto the House. But it's also possible that they've bitten off more than they can chew.

Nathanial Rakich is a senior editor and senior elections analyst at FiveThirtyEight. |  

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Tony Chow is a video producer for FiveThirtyEight. |  |  *@tonychow*

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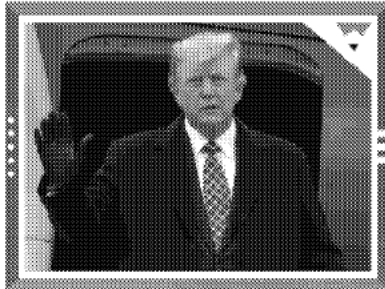
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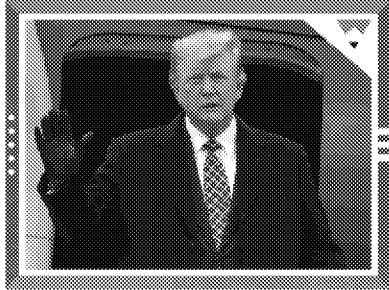
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