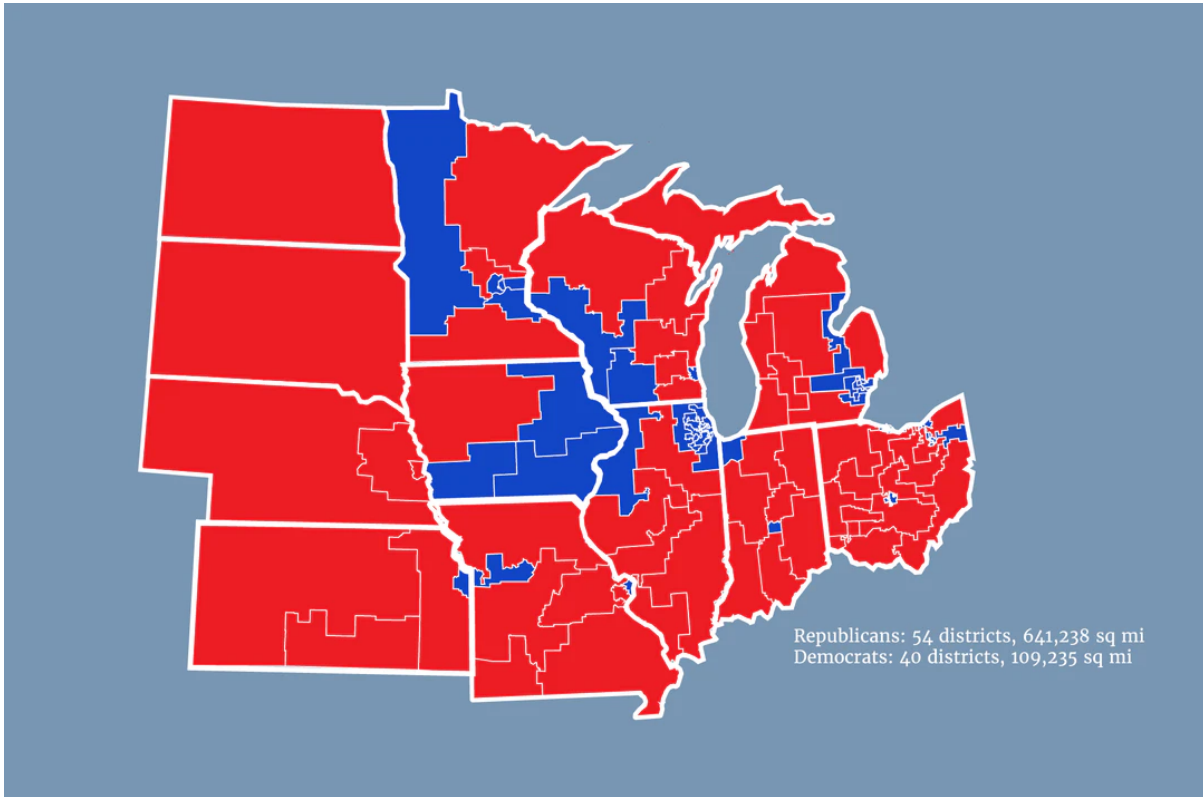


# In the Midwest, Dem Districts are Marching to the Suburbs



**David de la Fuente**

Senior Political Analyst

[@dpdela Fuente](https://twitter.com/dpdela Fuente)

A lot has been written about how the 2018 midterm wave that delivered Democrats the House was fueled by a realignment towards their party in the nation's suburbs. This was true all around the country, but especially in the Midwest. In fact, Democrats in that region are now almost completely dependent on urban and suburban places to win—in a way that wasn't true in the recent past and isn't as true in the rest of the country. And because many of these Midwestern states are battlegrounds that will likely decide the outcome of the Presidential election in November, their suburbs have truly become Democrats' political proving ground.

At this point in political history, Republicans have been basically shut out of urban House districts, though on the flip side Democrats can still win in more rural or larger districts in certain parts of the country. The Northeast has communitarian New England and certain parts of the Mid-Atlantic where Democrats still win in sparsely populated small towns and therefore can carry larger districts than the urban core. The South and the West are home to several large districts, usually great for agriculture, that have large African American (in the former), Hispanic or Native American (both the latter) populations. But in Midwest, the Democratic shellacking in rural areas is almost complete. With an aging population and stagnant migration, these areas have become inhospitable for Democrats for the last decade. While this trend is decades old, it became especially pronounced after the 2010 midterms, and a combination of voter choice, reapportionment, redistricting, and in some cases partisan gerrymandering, made it worse.

Yet in the wake of the Blue Wall's collapse in 2016, when the Midwest dashed the dreams of Democrats who believed those states would hand the White House to Hillary Clinton, the midterms provided a path back to prominence for that party in the region. Midwestern Democrats picked up suburban districts in 2018 that had stayed red even in back-to-back Democratic wave years in 2006 and 2008. The resulting map shows that where Democrats must win to build a majority has changed dramatically from just a decade ago.

What follows is a look at how Democrats have been able to win back the House thanks to improvement in suburban districts and overall domination in smaller Congressional districts. It examines the entire Midwest as designated by the U.S. Census (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin), and finds patterns to help explain the current Democratic coalition in the region through the lens of geography. Of course, land doesn't make people Democrats or Republicans, but this is a look at how in a purple place like the Midwest, geographical differences can tell a fascinating story about diverging party coalitions in our current era.

## **Comparing the Waves**

While Democrats did not technically win the Midwest in 2018, their improvement in that region, coupled with results from around the country, allowed Democrats to win back the House and procure a crucial check on the power of Donald Trump. Since 2012, there have been 94 House districts in the Midwest. Republicans won 54 of them in 2018 to Democrats' 40. However, this is a marked improvement from the 61 to 33 margin that occurred in both 2014 and 2016.

Looking back in time, Democrats actually won the Midwest in both the 2006 and 2008 waves. In those cycles, there were 101 districts in the Midwest, and Democrats won them 51 to 50 in 2006 and 54 to 47 in 2008. Our analysis compares the 2008 results and 2018 results and focused on averages and overall trends, in order to account for the loss of 7 districts due to reapportionment.

### Party Control of Midwestern House Districts 2006-2018

Year	Democratic	Republican	Rep - Dem
2006	51	50	-1
2008	54	47	-7
2010	35	66	31
2012	35	59	24
2014	33	61	26
2016	33	61	26
2018	40	54	14



Right now, Democrats are representing most of the smallest districts in the Midwest. All have the same approximate population so smaller only means more densely populated, meaning that small districts are typically urban and immediate suburban areas. Bigger districts are the most spread out and likely to contain rural areas. As stated above, they currently represent 40 districts, and this includes the 23 smallest districts. They also represent another seven of the smallest 40, which means 30 of their 40 districts are among the smallest in the region. On the flip side, Democrats only represent 7 of the largest 40 Midwestern districts.

**In the 2018 midterms, six of the Democrats' net-seven pickups came from the smallest 40 districts.** Democrats also picked up two of the largest 40 while Republicans flipped two of largest 40 from blue to red, meaning Democrats did not net-gain a single district among the largest subset.

The smallest district currently held by a Republican House Member in the Midwest is Missouri's 2<sup>nd</sup> district at 465 square miles, while the largest district currently represented by Democrats is a bit of an anomaly. It is Minnesota's 7<sup>th</sup> district, which is a Romney-Trump district represented by Blue Dog Collin Peterson. Minnesota's 7<sup>th</sup> clocks in at 33,429 square miles and is the fifth largest in the Midwest. Peterson is a Blue Dog and arguably the most conservative Democrat in the House. Peterson is a strong advocate for gun owner rights and opposes many environmental regulations impacting the agriculture industry. He has been in

opposes many environmental regulations impacting the agriculture industry. He has been in Congress since 1991 and is only able to win this seat due to his own personal popularity and brand, and this seat will almost certainly flip hands when Peterson decides to retire.

The next largest blue Midwestern district is Iowa's 2<sup>nd</sup> which is 12,261 square miles and is the 16<sup>th</sup> largest district in the region. Where Democrats do represent larger districts in the Midwest, it is thanks to those candidates significantly overperforming compared to results at the presidential level. The six largest districts in this region represented by Democrats in the House (IA01, IA02, IA03, IL17, MN07, WI03) are all Trump-won districts.

## The Shrinking Blue Maps

Right now, Midwestern Democrats in the House are representing a lot fewer square miles than they did after the blue wave in 2008. Part of this is because they represent fewer districts (40 compared to 54), but that's not the entire story. **In fact, the average size of a Democratic Congressional district in the Midwest has shrunk by more than half over the last decade.**

The Midwest as a whole is a little over 750,000 square miles. After the 2008 elections, Democrats and Republicans represented about the same amount of land at 386,000 square miles for Democrats and 364,000 square miles for Republicans. However, after 2018, Republicans now represent 641,000 square miles to Democrats' 109,000 square miles, meaning instead of a close to 50/50 split, Republicans now represent over 85% of all land in the Midwest.

Driving this shift, Republican districts have gotten somewhat larger, but Democratic districts have shrunk considerably. This is due to fewer districts existing but also to the fact that the parties are swapping districts, with Republicans picking up larger ones and Democrats picking up smaller ones. **After 2008, the average Republican district was 7,749 square miles to the Democrats' 7,154 square miles—relatively close in size. Today, the average Republican district in the Midwest is 11,875 square miles, while the average Democratic district is only 2,731 square miles.**

Obviously, the smallest district in the Midwest (Illinois' 4th) is just as important as the largest district in the Midwest (South Dakota), both in terms of their constituents and in determining control of the House. On those measures, winning one is worth exactly the same as winning the other. But this trend of shrinking blue districts offers yet another indication that Democrats should look to geography as a way to understand the changing party coalitions in the Midwest (and elsewhere in the country). It should come as no surprise that the smallest district in the Midwest currently represented by a Republican (Missouri's 2<sup>nd</sup>) is one of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee's top targets to flip to blue in November. In the Midwest, even more so in other parts of the country, Democrats must look to build a coalition that heavily leans on suburban voters to pull off the kind of margins needed to win

the Presidency, the Senate, and the House.

Next will be a look at this state-by-state that shows how the political geography of the Midwest has changed over the past decade.

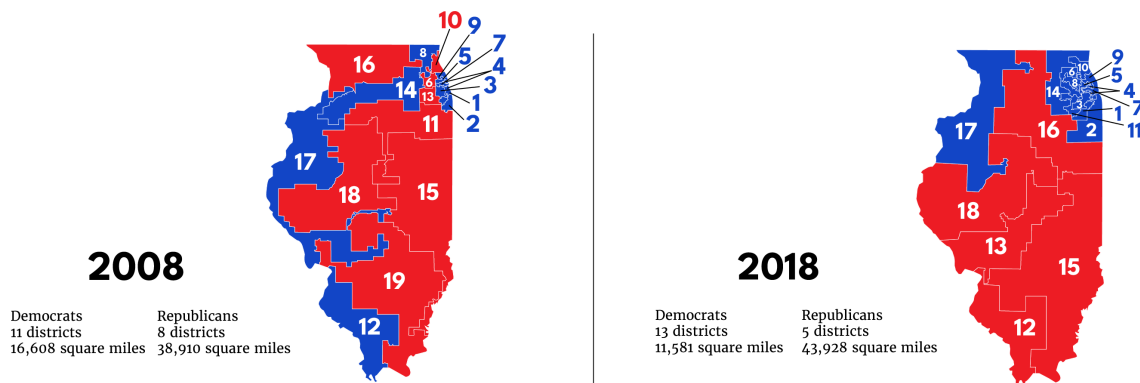
## Illinois

Illinois is unique in the Midwest in that it is the only state that had a partisan gerrymander in favor of Democrats in 2011. This redrawing occurred as Illinois dropped from 19 to 18 Congressional districts. In both 2006 and 2008, Democrats won 11 districts in Illinois to Republicans' eight. In 2010, Republicans knocked off three Democrats to switch the delegation to 11 Republicans to eight Democrats. It shouldn't come as a surprise that in that shift, Republicans won three of the four largest districts held by Democrats (IL08, IL14, IL17). Of the eight districts that Democrats held at that point, only one (IL12) was larger than 200 square miles with the other seven being urban Chicago and its immediate super-dense suburbs.

After the 2010 election, Democrats in Illinois redrew the new Congressional map so that 10 of the 18 districts would be reliably and safely Democrat. Ever since, Democrats have won all 10 of these districts in every cycle. Nine of the 10 are in Chicago and its immediate dense suburbs. Seven of the 10 were holdovers from 2010, while three were newly configured districts made more Democratic by shrinking them.

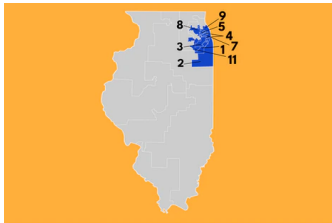
THIRD WAY

### Illinois Congressional Districts

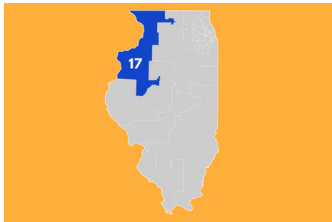


Heading into the 2020 elections, Democrats hold the 12 smallest district in Illinois while Republicans hold five of the six largest districts. Republicans currently represent three fewer district after 2018 than after 2008 (five vs. eight), but actually represent slightly more land at 38,910 square miles after 2008 to 43,928 square miles today.

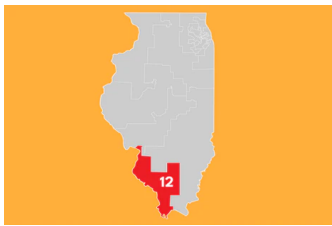
## IL Districts



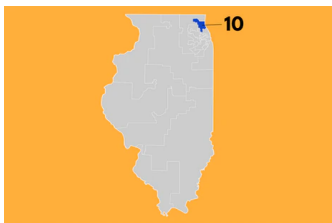
IL01, IL02, IL03, IL04, IL05, IL07, IL08, IL09



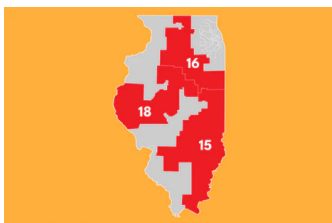
IL17



IL12



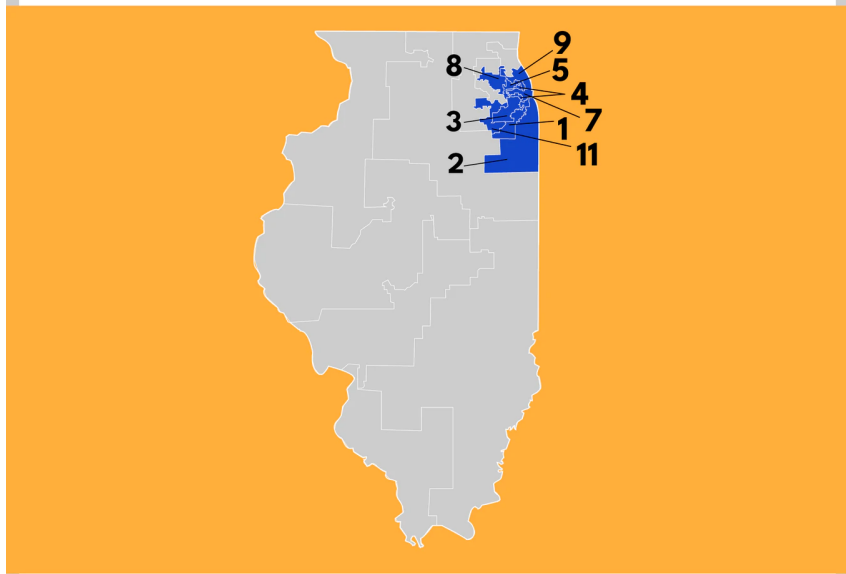
IL10



IL15, IL16, IL18

## SMALL SAFE DEM DISTRICTS

Since Democrats continued to control the state government, they worked to create a new congressional map for 2012 that would favor them. A lot of this was done by cracking the city of Chicago and its dense suburbs in a way that wouldn't endanger incumbents or disempower Chicago, but rather tentacle out.



For instance, Illinois' 2nd district in South Chicago went from a district of only 185 square miles to one of 1,080 square miles—an over five times increase in land. Most Chicago-area districts doubled in land with IL01 going from 98 square miles to 258, IL03 going from 124 to 237, and IL05 going from 57 to 95. One district that barely budged was IL04 which went from 39 square miles to 52 square miles today and is the smallest district in the entire Midwest. This oddly shaped district couldn't be significantly altered because it serves as an opportunity district for Chicago's Hispanic population which is large enough for just one district.

## Illinois Congressional Districts

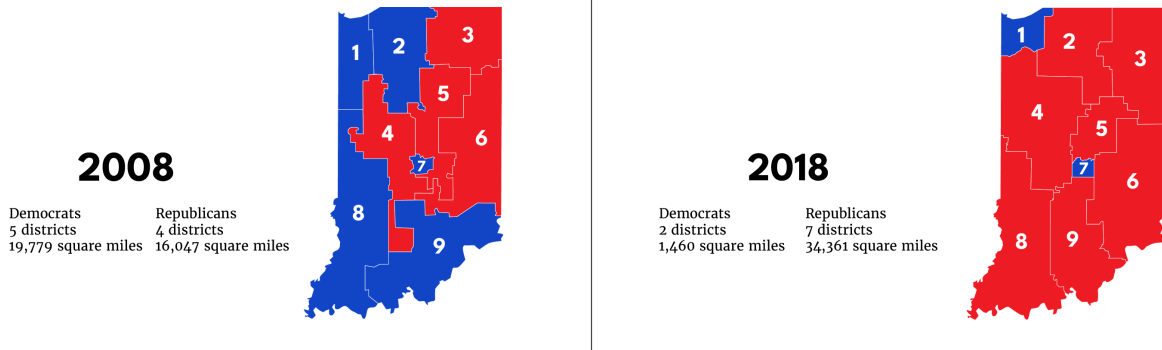
2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018
IL04	IL04	IL04	IL04	IL04	IL04	IL04
IL07	IL07	IL07	IL07	IL07	IL07	IL07
IL05	IL05	IL05	IL05	IL05	IL05	IL05
IL09	IL09	IL09	IL09	IL09	IL09	IL09
IL01	IL01	IL01	IL08	IL08	IL08	IL08
IL03	IL03	IL03	IL03	IL03	IL03	IL03
IL02	IL02	IL02	IL01	IL01	IL01	IL01
IL06	IL06	IL06	IL11	IL11	IL11	IL11
IL10	IL10	IL10	IL10	IL10	IL10	IL10
IL13	IL13	IL13	IL06	IL06	IL06	IL06
IL08	IL08	IL08	IL02	IL02	IL02	IL02
IL14	IL14	IL14	IL14	IL14	IL14	IL14
IL16	IL16	IL16	IL12	IL12	IL12	IL12
IL11	IL11	IL11	IL13	IL13	IL13	IL13
IL12	IL12	IL12	IL17	IL17	IL17	IL17
IL17	IL17	IL17	IL16	IL16	IL16	IL16
IL18	IL18	IL18	IL18	IL18	IL18	IL18
IL15	IL15	IL15	IL15	IL15	IL15	IL15
IL19	IL19	IL19				

Note: Districts sorted by size, smallest-to-largest. District lines changed in 2011.  **THIRD WAY**

## Indiana

Indiana didn't lose any districts during reapportionment, and Republicans instituted a gerrymander in their favor in 2012. While it helped them pick up one seat, this district almost certainly would be considered safely GOP under the old lines in today's political environment.

## Indiana Congressional Districts



Indiana has had nine districts for both of the last two decades. In 2006 and 2008, Democrats won three of the larger districts in the state and held a five to four advantage in the delegation. In 2010, Republicans picked up two districts, and after redistricting they have held a consistent seven to two advantage in the delegation, with no districts flipping under the new maps. **Heading into the 2020 elections, Democrats hold the two smallest districts in Indiana while Republicans hold the seven largest districts.**

## IN Districts





IN01, IN07



IN02, IN03, IN04, IN06, IN08, IN09



IN05

## SMALL SAFE DEM DISTRICTS

The two safe Democratic districts in Indiana are the two smallest. They are IN01, in the outer Chicago suburbs including Gary, and IN07 which is the core of the Indianapolis metro area.



IN01 was nearly halved in redistricting to take in more Democratic areas from IN02 to make the latter more Republican and went from 2,211 square miles to 1,157 square miles.

IN07 actually expanded from 261 square miles to 303 square miles, but this could be contributing to a bit of a 'dummy-mander' that is described more below.

## Indiana Congressional Districts

2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018
IN07	IN07	IN07	IN07	IN07	IN07	IN07
IN01	IN01	IN01	IN01	IN01	IN01	IN01
IN03	IN03	IN03	IN05	IN05	IN05	IN05
IN05	IN05	IN05	IN02	IN02	IN02	IN02
IN02	IN02	IN02	IN03	IN03	IN03	IN03
IN04	IN04	IN04	IN09	IN09	IN09	IN09
IN06	IN06	IN06	IN06	IN06	IN06	IN06
IN09	IN09	IN09	IN04	IN04	IN04	IN04
IN08	IN08	IN08	IN08	IN08	IN08	IN08

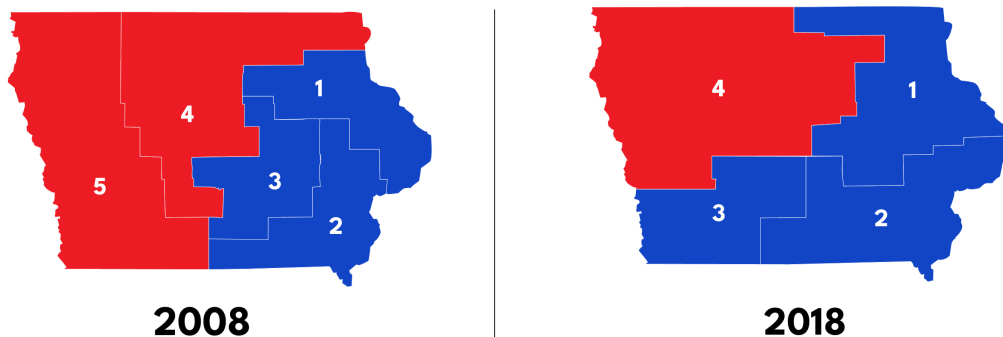
Note: Districts sorted by size, smallest-to-largest. District lines changed in 2011.  **THIRD WAY**

## Iowa

Iowa has a non-partisan commission draw its Congressional maps. It does so in a way that tries to make the districts geographically and politically diverse for Iowa standards. The districts each generally consist of the quadrant of the state since 2012, when reapportionment dropped Iowa from five districts to four. The three Iowa districts that Democrats currently hold are the second, third, and fifth largest in the entire Midwest, due in part to Iowa's quirky redistricting.

 **THIRD WAY**

### Iowa Congressional Districts



Democrats  
3 districts  
21,759 square miles

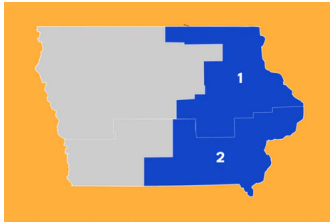
Republicans  
2 districts  
34,097 square miles

Democrats  
3 districts  
33,098 square miles

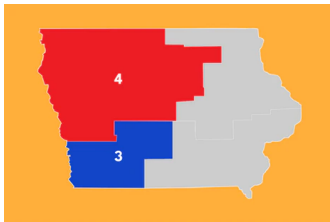
Republicans  
1 district  
22,756 square miles

Heading into the 2020 elections, Democrats hold the three smallest districts in Iowa while Republicans hold the largest district.

## IA Districts



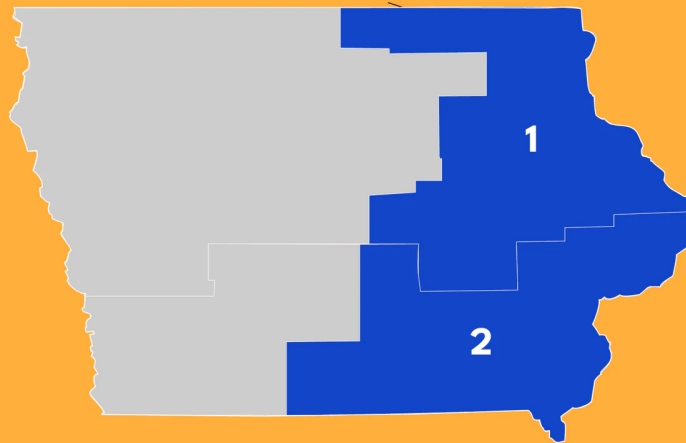
IA01, IA02



IA03, IA04

## EASTERN IOWA

The eastern Iowa districts of IA01 and IA02 are relatively similar. Both clock in at just over 12,000 square miles at 12,048 and 12,261 respectively. They both took in about the same amount of extra land in 2012 after redistricting as they were 7,212 and 7,563 square miles respectively before.



Both these districts are Obama-Trump districts. IA02 has been in Democratic hands for the last decade while Republicans nabbed IA01 for four years starting in 2014. Democrats won it back in 2018. These two districts take in several mid-sized Iowa metro areas like Cedar Rapids, Davenport, Dubuque, Iowa City, and Waterloo.

## Iowa Congressional Districts

2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018
IA03	IA03	IA03	IA03	IA03	IA03	IA03
IA01	IA01	IA01	IA01	IA01	IA01	IA01
IA02	IA02	IA02	IA02	IA02	IA02	IA02
IA04	IA04	IA04	IA04	IA04	IA04	IA04
IA05	IA05	IA05				

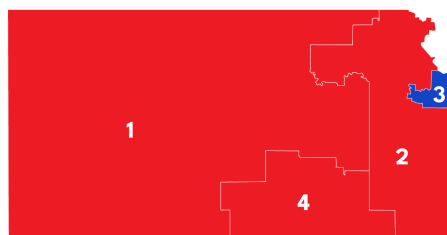
Note: Districts sorted by size, smallest-to-largest. District lines changed in 2011.  **THIRD WAY**

## Kansas

Kansas had a Republican gerrymander in 2011, which helped to cement the gains they made in 2010 when they flipped the Kansas City-based KS03 district from blue to red. Republicans continued to hold this district until it flipped back to Democrats in 2018. This district is the only small suburban one in the state while the three larger districts have been in Republican hands since 2008; though, KS02 has seen close elections thanks to housing mid-sized cities including a large college town.



### Kansas Congressional Districts



**2008**

Democrats  
1 district  
773 square miles

Republicans  
3 districts  
80,986 square miles



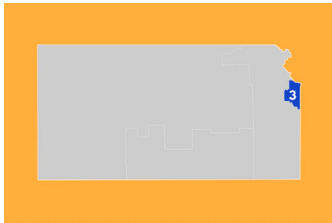
**2018**

Democrats  
1 district  
757 square miles

Republicans  
3 districts  
81,000 square miles

Heading into the 2020 elections, Democrats hold the smallest district in Kansas while Republicans hold the three largest districts.

# KS Districts



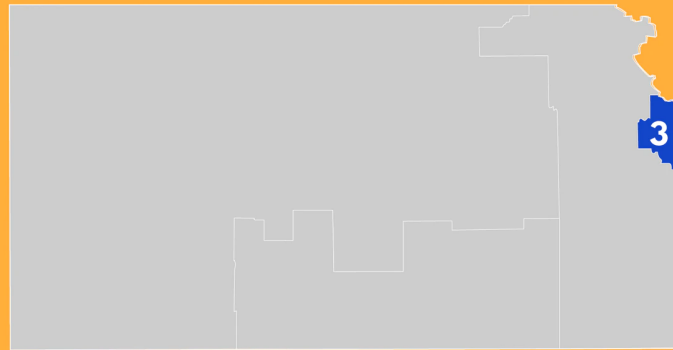
KS03



KS01, KS02, KS04

## SUBURBAN 2018 FLIP

Democrats had long held Kansas' 3rd district when Rep. Dennis Moore (D) decided to retire in 2010 and it flipped to the Republicans. After that bloodbath of a cycle, Republicans removed parts of Democratic Douglas county, home of Lawrence, and replaced it with parts of Republican Miami county.



The district slightly shrunk from 773 square miles to 757 square miles, but this was more necessitated by the fact that Johnson county, the core of the district, had exploded in population, growing over 20% in the 2010 census. But this growing suburban Johnson county is what caused KS03 to flip back to the Democrats in 2018. It had voted Republican by double digits in every congressional election from 2010 to 2016 but 2018 Democratic nominee Sharice Davids was able to win Johnson by six points and coast to a larger than expected victory based on dominating the inner Kansas City suburbs.

## Kansas Congressional Districts

2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018
KS03	KS03	KS03	KS03	KS03	KS03	KS03
KS04	KS04	KS04	KS02	KS02	KS02	KS02
KS02	KS02	KS02	KS04	KS04	KS04	KS04
KS01	KS01	KS01	KS01	KS01	KS01	KS01

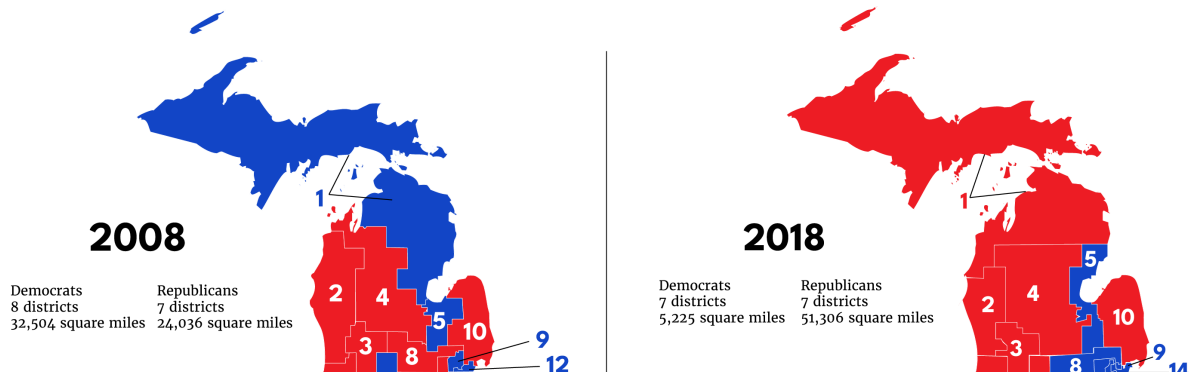
Note: Districts sorted by size, smallest-to-largest. District lines changed in 2011.  **THIRD WAY**

## Michigan

Michigan is great example of how Democrats and Republicans are representing different types of districts than they have historically. After the 2008 elections, Democrats held an 8-7 advantage delegation in the Michigan Congressional delegation. That advantage flipped to Republicans in 2010 when Republicans picked up two districts—and it held with that party until 2018. In the most recent midterms, Democrats won two Republican districts to bring the delegation back to an even 7-7 (Michigan lost a district during reapportionment). However, those two pick-up districts for Democrats were suburban ones that had been held by Republicans for more than a decade—including through the 2006 and 2008 blue waves. On the flip side, the two districts Democrats lost in 2010 stayed Republican. Perfectly encapsulating the parties' changing coalitions in the Midwest over the past decade, the two districts Democrats lost in 2010 and haven't been able to recapture were their two largest districts, while the two Republicans lost in 2018 were their two smallest districts.

 **THIRD WAY**

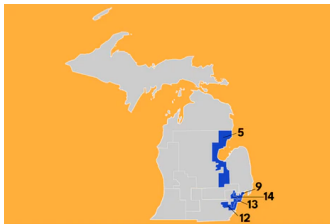
### Michigan Congressional Districts





Heading into the 2020 elections, Democrats hold the seven smallest district in Michigan while Republicans hold the seven largest districts. Republicans control the same number of districts now as they did after 2008 (seven each time), but the amount of total land they represent has more than doubled from 24,036 to 51,306 square miles.

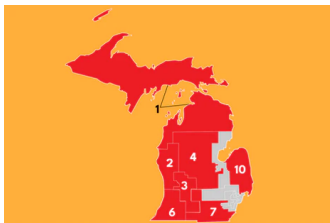
## MI Districts



MI05, MI09, MI12, MI13, MI14



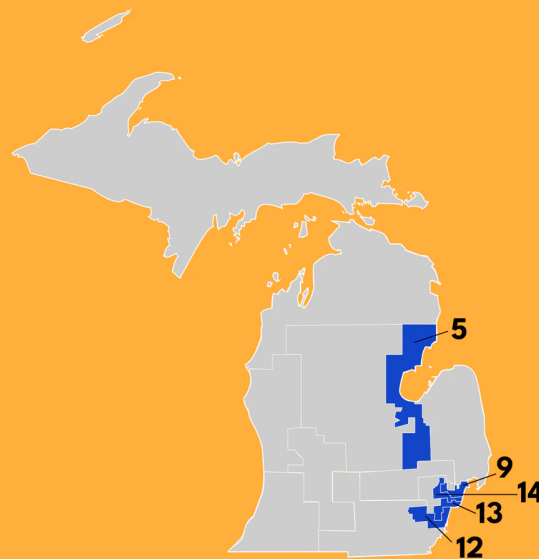
MI08, MI11



MI01, MI02, MI03, MI04, MI06, MI07, MI10

### SMALL SAFE DEM DISTRICTS

Most of the safe Democratic districts are tiny urban or dense suburban districts based in Wayne, Macomb, Oakland, and Washtenaw counties.



Michigan's 9th, 12th, 13th, and 14th districts are all under 500 square miles coming in at 183, 403, 184, and 185 respectively. Michigan's 5th is centered in Flint and comes in at 2,348 square miles, which still makes it the seventh smallest in the state. These five districts were drawn to be safely Democratic.

## Michigan Congressional Districts

2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018
MI13	MI13	MI13	MI09	MI09	MI09	MI09
MI14	MI14	MI14	MI13	MI13	MI13	MI13
MI12	MI12	MI12	MI14	MI14	MI14	MI14
MI09	MI09	MI09	MI12	MI12	MI12	MI12
MI11	MI11	MI11	MI11	MI11	MI11	MI11
MI15	MI15	MI15	MI08	MI08	MI08	MI08
MI05	MI05	MI05	MI05	MI05	MI05	MI05
MI03	MI03	MI03	MI03	MI03	MI03	MI03
MI08	MI08	MI08	MI02	MI02	MI02	MI02
MI06	MI06	MI06	MI06	MI06	MI06	MI06
MI10	MI10	MI10	MI10	MI10	MI10	MI10
MI07	MI07	MI07	MI07	MI07	MI07	MI07
MI02	MI02	MI02	MI04	MI04	MI04	MI04
MI04	MI04	MI04	MI01	MI01	MI01	MI01
MI01	MI01	MI01				

Note: Districts sorted by size, smallest-to-largest. District lines changed in 2011.  **THIRD WAY**

## Minnesota

Minnesota lost no seats due to reapportionment earlier this decade and had a non-partisan drawing of their maps which has allowed for many competitive districts.

Democrats picked off two Republican districts while Republicans picked off two Democratic districts meaning the delegation stayed five-to-three Democratic but four of the eight districts in the state switched hands. Minnesota was a unique state in 2018 in that it was the only one in the country where Republicans picked up congressional districts.

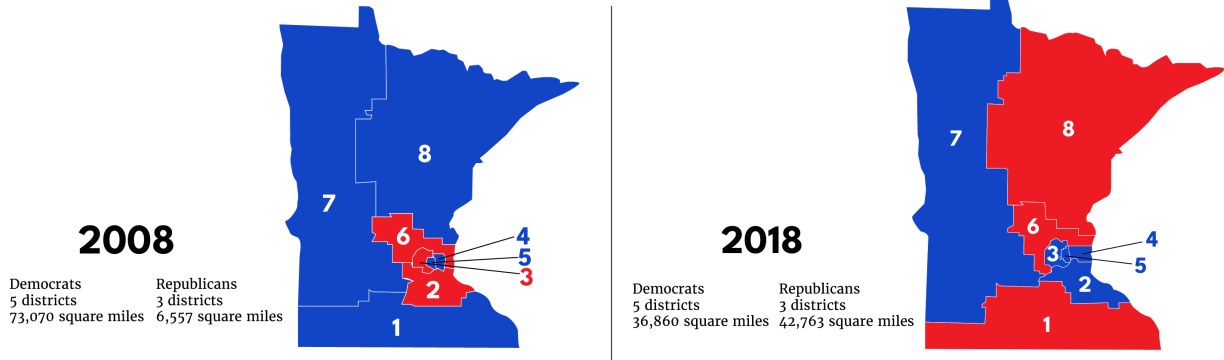
After 2018, Democrats now control the four smallest districts in the state, while Republicans control the second through fourth largest. Minnesota's largest district is controlled by a Democrat, but one who has massive cross-appeal in a district that usually votes almost two-



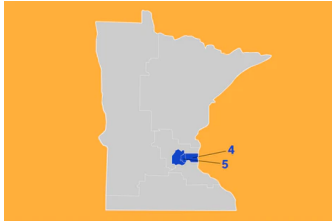
to-one Republican at the presidential level. Republicans control the same amount of districts after 2018 as they did after 2008 (three) but the amount of square miles they represent in Minnesota has skyrocketed from 6,557 to 42,763.



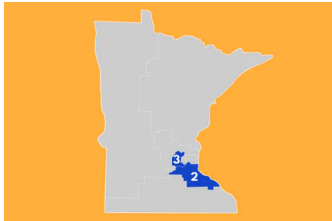
### Minnesota Congressional Districts



### MN Districts



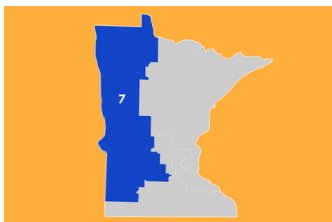
MN04, MN05



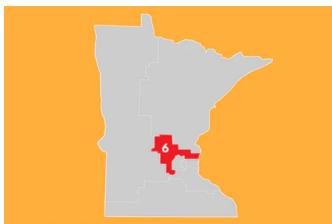
MN02, MN03



MN01, MN08



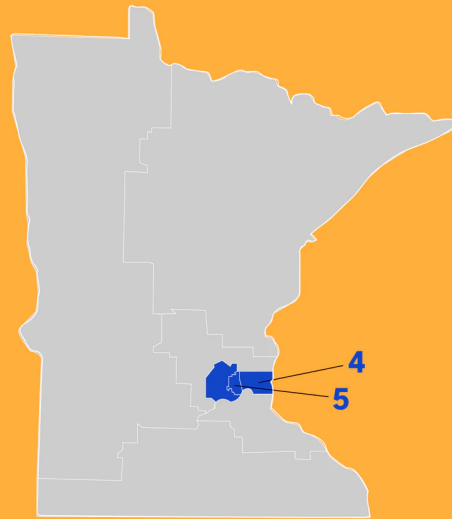
MN07



MN06

## SMALL SAFE DEM DISTRICTS

Minnesota's 4th and 5th districts are home to Minneapolis and St. Paul. They are tiny at 332 square miles and 135 square miles respectively and are the two smallest districts in the state. These two districts make up the urban core of the state.



## Minnesota Congressional Districts

2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018
MN05	MN05	MN05	MN05	MN05	MN05	MN05
MN04	MN04	MN04	MN04	MN04	MN04	MN04
MN03	MN03	MN03	MN03	MN03	MN03	MN03
MN02	MN02	MN02	MN02	MN02	MN02	MN02
MN06	MN06	MN06	MN06	MN06	MN06	MN06
MN01	MN01	MN01	MN01	MN01	MN01	MN01
MN08	MN08	MN08	MN08	MN08	MN08	MN08
MN07	MN07	MN07	MN07	MN07	MN07	MN07

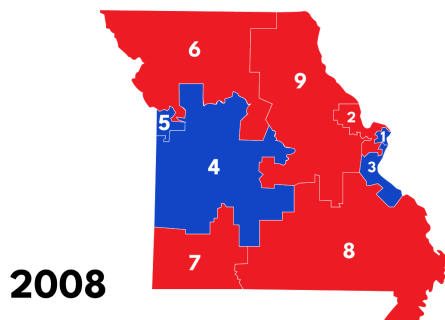
Note: Districts sorted by size, smallest-to-largest. District lines changed in 2011.  **THIRD WAY**

## Missouri

Missouri lost a district due to reapportionment and had a Republican gerrymander. However, one part of it could be cracking. Before the 2010 midterms, Republicans held a five-to-four delegation majority, but today, with one less district total, Republicans hold a six-to-two delegation majority.

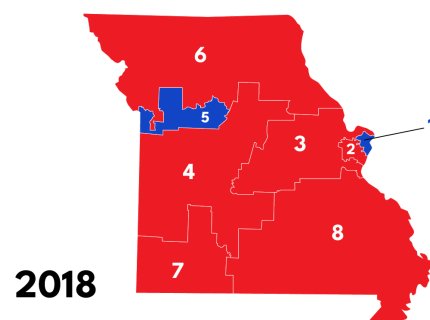


### Missouri Congressional Districts



Democrats  
4 districts  
16,471 square miles

Republicans  
5 districts  
52,269 square miles



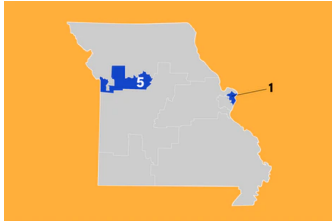
Democrats  
2 districts  
2,649 square miles

Republicans  
6 districts  
66,088 square miles

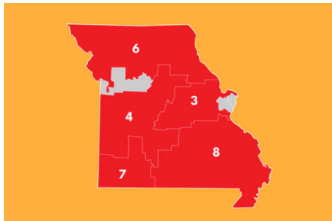
In Missouri, Democrats hold the smallest and third smallest district, while Republicans hold the rest. However, it is the second smallest district in Missouri that is the smallest in the

THE TEST. HOWEVER, IT IS THE SECOND SMALLEST DISTRICT IN MISSOURI THAT IS THE SMALLEST IN THE Midwest with a Republican incumbent and Democrats think they have a shot of picking up.

## MO Districts



MO01, MO05



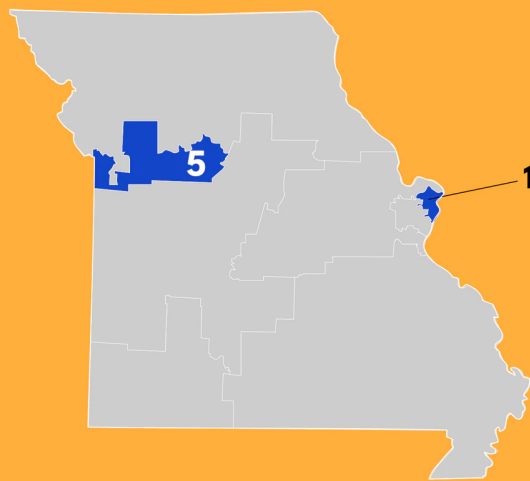
MO03, MO04, MO06, MO07, MO08



MO02

## SMALL SAFE DEM DISTRICTS

The two safe Democratic districts are Missouri's 1st and 5th congressional districts which are St. Louis and Kansas City respectively.



While MO01 is tiny at 225 square miles, MO05 is fairly large for a Democratic urban district at 2,424 square miles. This is because Republicans drew it out of its core metro area to take in three less dense counties to the east to ensure a Democratic representative who lost in 2010 in a neighboring district couldn't run in his old district. In the next round of redistricting, Missouri's 5th could be a lot smaller and dense to protect neighboring incumbents from Kansas City's inner suburbs or it could be cracked to try to produce even more Republican districts.

## Missouri Congressional Districts

2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018
MO01	MO01	MO01	MO01	MO01	MO01	MO01
MO05	MO05	MO05	MO02	MO02	MO02	MO02
MO02	MO02	MO02	MO05	MO05	MO05	MO05
MO03	MO03	MO03	MO07	MO07	MO07	MO07
MO07	MO07	MO07	MO03	MO03	MO03	MO03
MO06	MO06	MO06	MO04	MO04	MO04	MO04
MO09	MO09	MO09	MO06	MO06	MO06	MO06
MO04	MO04	MO04	MO08	MO08	MO08	MO08
MO08	MO08	MO08				

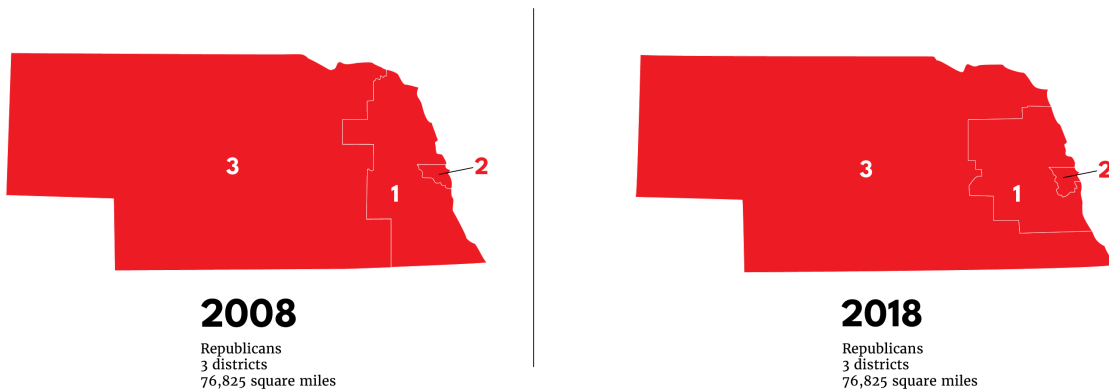
Note: Districts sorted by size, smallest-to-largest. District lines changed in 2011.  **THIRD WAY**

## Nebraska

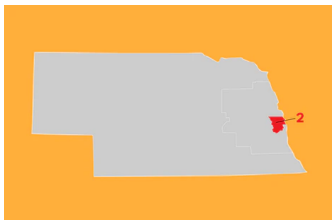
Nebraska is home to both the third largest district in the Midwest overall and the second smallest held by a Republican after 2018. Republicans got to draw the maps and drew the Omaha-based district in a way that could favor them, without cracking the main county.



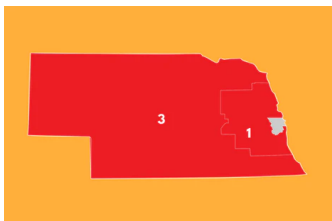
### Nebraska Congressional Districts



# NE Districts



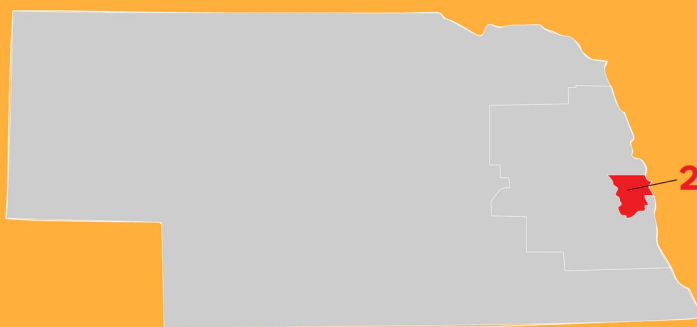
NE02



NE01, NE03

## 2020 DEM TARGET

Democrats actually managed to flip Nebraska's 2nd district in 2014 of all years but lost it in 2016. Republican Congressman Don Bacon proved to be too tough to take out in 2018, but Democrats hope Joe Biden's coattails could help secure a pickup in this district in 2020.



The core of this district is Douglas county, home of Omaha, which is just under 330 square miles. In last decades map, this district took in the densest suburbs in bordering Sarpy county and the total size was 408 square miles. In the 2011 redistricting process, Republicans redrew the district to take in the least dense parts of Sarpy and the district grew nearly a quarter in size and now sits at 510 square miles. Obviously, Democrats have won this district this decade, but by taking out the more competitive and dense suburbs to the east, this district was given a huge Republican boast.

## Nebraska Congressional Districts

2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018
NE02	NE02	NE02	NE02	NE02	NE02	NE02
NE01	NE01	NE01	NE01	NE01	NE01	NE01
NE03	NE03	NE03	NE03	NE03	NE03	NE03

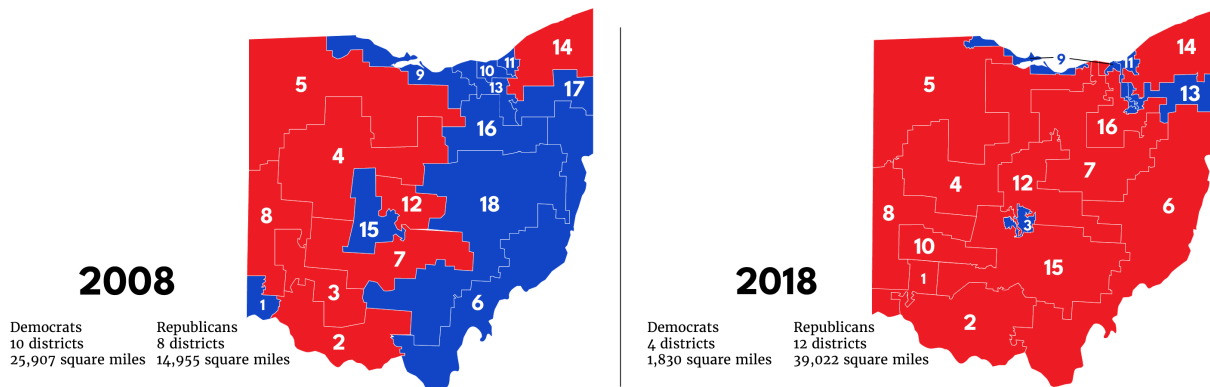
Note: Districts sorted by size, smallest-to-largest. District lines changed in 2011.  **THIRD WAY**

## Ohio

Ohio featured the most successful Republican gerrymander, perhaps in the country for one main reason. They were smart enough to pack Columbus into one district. By giving away one district, they were able to draw an obscene partisan gerrymander overall that locked in a twelve-to-six delegation majority for the entire decade.

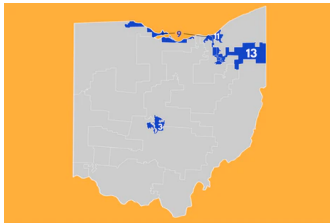
 **THIRD WAY**

### Ohio Congressional Districts

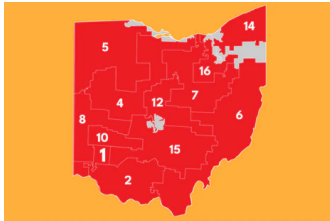


Democrats represent four of the five smallest districts while Republicans represent the 11 largest districts plus the fourth smallest.

## OH Districts



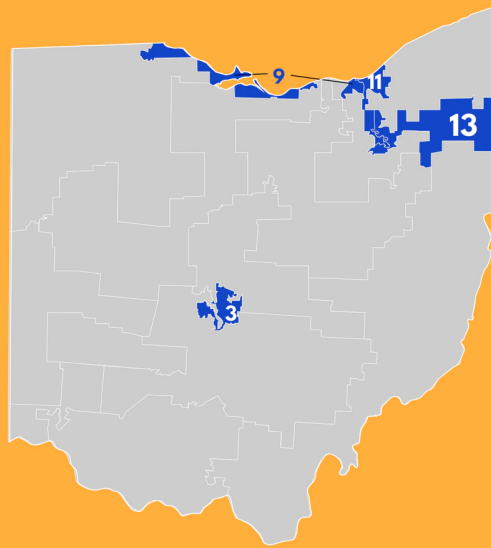
OH03, OH09, OH11, OH13



OH01, OH02, OH04, OH05, OH06, OH07, OH08, OH10, OH12, OH14, OH15, OH16

## SMALL SAFE DEM DISTRICTS

All of these four districts are under 1,000 square miles at 228 for Ohio's 3rd district, 464 for Ohio's 9th district, 244 for Ohio's 11th district, and 894 for Ohio's 13th district. All but Ohio's 11th district shrunk in redistricting. After the 2010 midterms, Democrats were only left with five of Ohio's 18 districts. But Ohio



lost two seats in reapportionment, and Republicans were able to pack the most Democratic parts of these five districts into just three districts including OH09 which snakes across the lake to take in parts of both distant Cleveland and Toledo.

However, Ohio's 3rd district was a genius move to pack all of Columbus into one district to ensure it couldn't hurt any of the neighboring incumbents.

While these four districts are a quarter of Ohio's districts, they only take up 4.5% of its landmass.



## Ohio Congressional Districts

2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018
OH11	OH11	OH11	OH03	OH03	OH03	OH03
OH10	OH10	OH10	OH11	OH11	OH11	OH11
OH01	OH01	OH01	OH09	OH09	OH09	OH09
OH13	OH13	OH13	OH01	OH01	OH01	OH01
OH17	OH17	OH17	OH13	OH13	OH13	OH13
OH12	OH12	OH12	OH10	OH10	OH10	OH10
OH09	OH09	OH09	OH16	OH16	OH16	OH16
OH15	OH15	OH15	OH14	OH14	OH14	OH14
OH03	OH03	OH03	OH12	OH12	OH12	OH12
OH16	OH16	OH16	OH08	OH08	OH08	OH08
OH14	OH14	OH14	OH02	OH02	OH02	OH02
OH08	OH08	OH08	OH07	OH07	OH07	OH07
OH02	OH02	OH02	OH04	OH04	OH04	OH04
OH07	OH07	OH07	OH15	OH15	OH15	OH15
OH04	OH04	OH04	OH05	OH05	OH05	OH05
OH06	OH06	OH06	OH06	OH06	OH06	OH06
OH05	OH05	OH05				
OH18	OH18	OH18				

Note: Districts sorted by size, smallest-to-largest. District lines changed in 2011.  **THIRD WAY**

## Wisconsin

Wisconsin is the other effective gerrymander and is really the only state in the Midwest that goes against type with Democrats controlling the smallest districts and Republicans controlling the largest. A Republican gerrymander was able to lock-in a five-to-three delegation majority the entire decade that neither party has been able to crack.

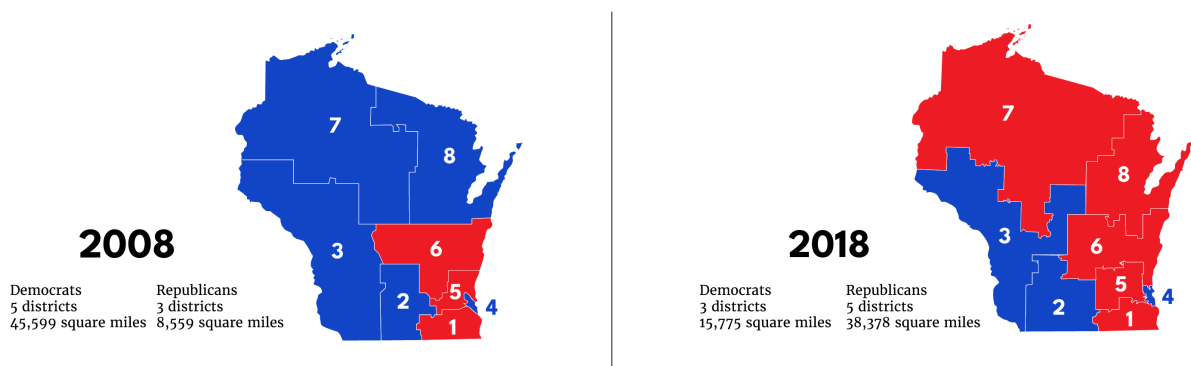
Democrats control the smallest urban district, and Republicans control the second smallest district. Democrats control the third smallest district while Republicans control the fourth and

district. Democrats control the third smallest district while Republicans control the fourth and fifth smallest. Democrats control the sixth smallest, while Republicans control the largest.

Wisconsin is a bit weird in that even in 2018, Democrats failed to really improve in the Milwaukee suburbs, losing in the three WOW counties (Waukesha, Ozaukee, and Washington) while doing very well in some small town and rural areas in the southwest and west part of the state. This could be because suburban Milwaukee is not diversifying at the same rate most other major Midwestern cities are.



### Wisconsin Congressional Districts



It should not be understated how Republicans drew maps to ensure Democrats would have a tough time winning districts like Wisconsin's 1<sup>st</sup> and Wisconsin's 7<sup>th</sup>, but this is the one state where Republicans continue to do great in southeastern Wisconsin's 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> districts which are both just under 2,000 square miles and in the greater Milwaukee metro area, but Democrats have made no headway. Likewise, Democrats easily hold the large Wisconsin's 2<sup>nd</sup> district which clocks in at 4,536; however, it does contain liberal Madison. And despite Trump winning the 11,111 square mile Wisconsin's 3<sup>rd</sup> district, Rep. Ron Kind (D) easily carried all but one county in his 2018 reelection bid where the largest county had less than 60,000 voters. WI03 is now the fourth largest district Democrats hold in the Midwest.

## Wisconsin Congressional Districts

2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018
WI04	WI04	WI04	WI04	WI04	WI04	WI04
WI05	WI05	WI05	WI01	WI01	WI01	WI01
WI01	WI01	WI01	WI05	WI05	WI05	WI05
WI02	WI02	WI02	WI02	WI02	WI02	WI02
WI06	WI06	WI06	WI06	WI06	WI06	WI06
WI08	WI08	WI08	WI08	WI08	WI08	WI08
WI03	WI03	WI03	WI03	WI03	WI03	WI03
WI07	WI07	WI07	WI07	WI07	WI07	WI07

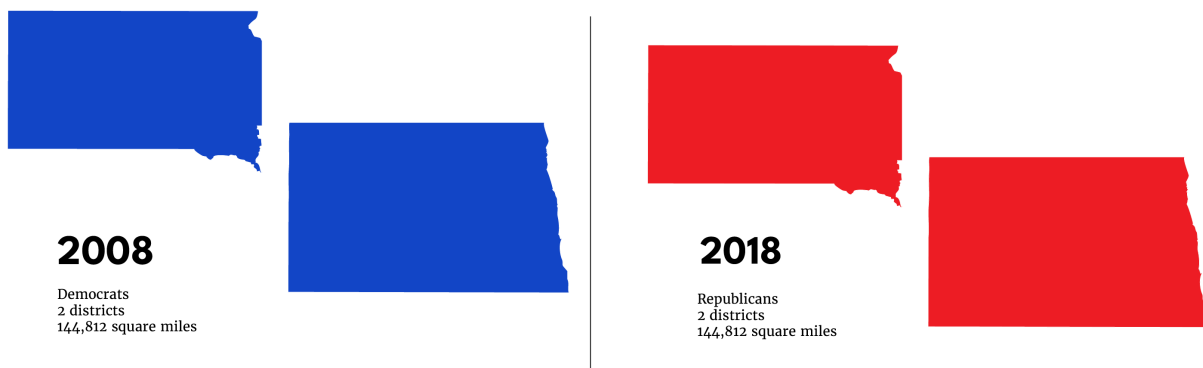
Note: Districts sorted by size, smallest-to-largest. District lines changed in 2011.  **THIRD WAY**

## Dakotas: North & South

North Dakota and South Dakota are obviously separate states, but their electoral history in the past decade is strikingly similar. Each of the two states has a small population, and each has one at-large Congressional district. This means that North Dakota and South Dakota combined have fewer districts than any other singular Midwestern state. These state-wide House districts are the two largest in the region, with South Dakota clocking in at 75,811 square miles and North Dakota at 69,001 square miles.

 **THIRD WAY**

### Dakotas Congressional Districts



In both 2006 and 2008, Blue Dog Democratic Reps. Stephanie Herseth Sandlin (SD) and Earl Pomeroy (ND) won their elections and provided Democrats two representatives from the Dakotas—which are made up of about half rural areas and half small towns. Then the 2010 Tea Party wave happened and wiped them both out. And Democrats haven’t been able to crack 40% in either state’s House election in the elections since. These two districts are extreme examples of how Democrats have become much less able to compete in these large districts over the past decade. This is also true in most of the remaining states where reapportionment and redistricting occurred between 2010 and 2012.

### North Dakota and South Dakota

2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018
ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
SD	SD	SD	SD	SD	SD	SD



## Conclusion

As Democrats look for their future in the Midwest, the route to victory is clear. Democrats must continue to dominate in urban districts while looking for dense suburban ones for potential pickups. There are still some larger districts that are winnable, but they usually contain quite a lot of nearby small urban and suburban areas. And moving forward, the rule will likely be the smaller the better for House Democrats going forward.

#### TOPICS

AMERICAN ELECTORATE 187