**Partisan Gerrymandering Lawsuit**

**Talking Points for Advocates from the Public Interest law Center**

* Partisan gerrymandering is a threat to democracy, allowing politicians to select their voters rather than allowing voters to select politicians
* Pennsylvania’s current congressional map is one of the worst partisan gerrymanders in the country, by many analyses.
* I live in [insert town or city] in the X district. Talk about your experience as a voter. For example, “I have voted in every election since I became eligible to vote.” or “I am an active member of my community and I vote in every election, including all primaries.”
* As a voter, I feel I have been discriminated against because the current map does not allow for competitive elections and my individual vote has been diminished.
* My district… Be prepared to talk about your district. Does it span multiple counties? Has your town been divided? Are you in a district that has been “packed” (1, 2, 13, 14 and 17) or a district that has been “cracked” (3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 18). Did your district change after the 2011 map was put in place?
	+ Packing is the process by which similar voters are piled into as few districts as possible.
	+ Cracking is the process by which voters are spread out into multiple districts to minimize the collective power of their votes.
* The data speaks for itself. In the 2012 election, Republican candidates won 49% of the statewide vote, but secured a majority of 13 of the 18 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives.
* This means Republicans hold a severely disproportionate share – 72% – of congressional seats. They held onto this majority in both the 2014 and 2016 election, even though they only captured 55% and 54% of the statewide vote in those elections
* This lawsuit is not about supporting one political party over another. This is not a pro-Democrat or pro-Republican issue. Redistricting is an issue that affects all voters.
* As voters, we are paying the price. Elected officials face less competition. Gridlock is at an all-time high. Incumbents are protected to do whatever they please and ignore issues voters care about. Voter turnout is down. People do not have faith in our democracy.
* We have a right to a redistricting process that is transparent, accountable and includes public participation.

**Sample Letter to the Editor**

* Be brief and to the point. Your letter should be no more than 200-250 words.
* Feel free to use the talking points that are listed above or write a letter from scratch.
* Include your name, address, email and phone number. The newspaper will contact you to confirm who you are.
* Find submission information and guidelines for local newspapers here: <http://fairdistrictspa.com/take-action/write-an-op-ed>

Dear Editor:

I am writing in support of the recently filed lawsuit challenging Pennsylvania’s congressional voting district map, which is one of the most gerrymandered maps in the country, by many analyses. Partisan gerrymandering is a threat to democracy, allowing politicians to select their voters rather than allowing voters to select politicians

As a voter in the X district, I feel the current map makes my individual vote count less and is unconstitutional. [Insert details on your district, if possible. Have voters in your district been “cracked” or “packed.” Is it split across too many counties? Was your district changed?]

Data shows that Republican candidates hold 72% – or 13 out of 18 – of Pennsylvania’s seats in the U.S. House of Representatives. But in 2012, they won 49% of the statewide vote. This means they hold a majority of seats even though there is not a 72% majority of registered voters in our state.

Voters like me are paying the price. Elections are being decided before we even get a chance to cast our ballots. And there is no incentive for our representatives to find common ground or compromise with one another when they are assured re-election.

I want a map that reflects the people of Pennsylvania, not the politicians.

Name

Address

Email

Phone