

SAMPLE

Letter to the Editor

[Note: Newspapers are more likely to publish letters from readers if they relate to a story they have recently covered. So if your letter starts with something like "Regarding your Sept. 20 article on the upcoming election... or "So-and-so makes a good point in the Sept. 20 article about redistricting." Also, don't forget to sign your name, including your address, phone number and email address. Most newspapers include guidelines for submitting Letters to the Editor on their website; submitting electronically is quite easy. Also feel free to follow up with the editorial page editor a day or two after you submit.]

Home-Grown System Rigging

In November, we have more to fear at the ballot box than foreign meddling. Here at home, right under our noses, lurks an insidious home-grown threat that is already damaging the foundation of our democracy.

Gerrymandering: a systematic effort to rig state and congressional maps to help the party in power. It's been going on for years, but it's getting worse. In 2011, politicians rigged the system like never before.

The non-partisan organization FairVote says that of the 435 seats up for reelection in the U.S. House of Representatives, only about 10 percent will be competitive, due to gerrymandering.

The good news is it's within our power to stop.

Today, most congressional and state-level map boundaries insulate incumbents in districts with like-minded voters. By design, voters from one party are packed into one district, or diluted by spreading them out into several. Either way, November's election is certain to help the party who drew the maps – and to hurt the opposition.

This system of skewed maps means our voices aren't always heard. And our elected representatives are less accountable to us. This is a key issue now, on the eve of the once-in-a-decade U.S. Census. The 2020 population counts will launch a redrawing of map boundaries. Fully half of the officials who will play a role in redistricting in 2021 will be elected this year – including governors with veto power over maps.

Governors, state representatives, attorneys general and supreme court judges will determine how the reapportionment boards – those who draw the maps – are structured.

I'm letting my state, local and federal candidates know that I'll be watching, and so will other members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, as this has a direct effect on our ability to make a living. And on November 6, I'm voting for fair representation. Because after 2020, it could be too late.

Sincerely,

name, member of IBEW Local ??