



# CHANGE ILLINOIS

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## Partisan Advantage and Competitiveness in Illinois Redistricting

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An Updated and Expanded Look

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Using data from the 2014 legislative elections and digging deeper into election results from the past four decades, Cynthia Canary and Kent Redfield have updated their research in *Backroom Battles & Partisan Gridlock: Redistricting in Illinois*.

## **New research answers important questions about partisan redistricting in Illinois**

When boundaries for Illinois General Assembly districts are drawn to give maximum advantage to one political party, there is ample evidence that gerrymandering “works” for that party in the first election under the new maps. On average, the party in control of the process has gained nearly a dozen seats in the General Assembly in the first election under the new maps in 1982, 1992, 2002 and 2012.

### ***Do partisan maps carry lasting effects beyond the first post-redistricting election?***

District boundaries drawn for partisan advantage decrease the likelihood that voters will have a choice between candidates of both major parties in the general election. In November 2014, only one candidate was on the ballot in 58 percent of House elections, and only 63 percent of Senate elections.

### ***Does the lack of competition in general elections extend to primary elections?***

**YES** is the answer to both questions, and the new research includes some of the following findings:

- Data from the 2014 general election further illustrate the magnitude of partisan bias in the 2011 maps. While the margin in total votes cast for Democrats in legislative elections shrank to a near-tie statewide, Democrats still won 71 House seats, a 60 percent majority. The Democrats also won 11 of the 19 Senate seats that were up in 2014 while receiving less than a majority of the total votes cast in those 19 districts.
- The percentage of Illinois legislative elections featuring at least two candidates has decreased significantly over time. In the first election under a new map in 1982 and 1992, a strong majority of the elections were contested. By 2012, 60 percent of House elections and 51 percent of Senate elections were uncontested. In 2014, 58 percent of House elections were uncontested. Due to staggered terms, there was an election in only one-third of the Senate districts, and 12 of the 19 (63 percent) were uncontested.
- The degree of competition in Illinois legislative elections is low and declining. When a winning candidate’s vote total is 55 percent or less, the district is considered “competitive.” On average over the past four decades, 88 percent of voters (104 of 118 House races, 52 of 59 Senate races) had no choice at all on the ballot or a choice between a sure winner and a sure loser.
- There has been a dramatic increase in the number of legislators elected without even a token opponent in the primary or the general election. In 1982, 20 of the 177 legislators elected faced no opponent in either the primary or the general. In 2012, 69 legislators were given a free pass.

- The number of “free pass” legislators elected increased in 2014 even though only one-third of the Senate was up for election. In 2014, 58 (49 percent) of the men and women elected to the House did not have an opponent in the primary or the general election, and 12 of 19 (63 percent) were elected to the Senate by virtue of a “free pass.”
- Voters in primary elections have even fewer choices for participation, engagement, and communication than voters in general elections. In 2012, 84 percent of House and 76 percent of Senate legislative primaries were uncontested, and the percentages increased in 2014 to 89 percent of House and 95 percent of the Senate legislative primaries.
- Even in districts dominated by one party in the general election, voters were rarely presented with meaningful choices in the primaries. Under the 1981 and 1991 maps, the average number of same-party competitive primaries in districts dominated by one party was 14 percent for the House and 2 percent for the Senate. For the 2001 and 2011 maps, the average was 11 percent in the House and 4 percent in the Senate.

By any measure, the level of competition and competitiveness in legislative elections under the last four partisan maps has been extremely low and getting worse.

Looking at electoral advantage over the life of the legislative maps shows the tremendous staying power of the electoral edge that a political party gains from drawing a partisan map. An extended and more in-depth examination of competition in legislative elections under these maps reveals even fewer contested elections or competitive elections in the out-years after the adoption of a map. It also shows significantly fewer contested election and competitive elections occur in primaries than in general elections.

Perhaps more disturbing, the trend lines show these effects are getting worse.

### **Summary of findings and conclusions from Backroom Battles & Partisan Gridlock: Redistricting in Illinois:**

- **The process is not transparent and does not welcome public involvement.**
- **Partisan intent produces partisan outcomes.**
- **The quality and nature of representative government has been diluted and distorted.**
- **Partisan redistricting decreases voter choice in legislative elections.**
- **Partisan redistricting places a political party’s interests ahead of minority voting interests.**



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## Introduction

Illinois has a crisis in redistricting. The process of drawing the boundaries of legislative districts has evolved in ways that threaten the legitimacy and effectiveness of our democracy. Redistricting in Illinois falls consistently short of creating fair and effective representation. One political party gains control of the process, and then uses it to advance its partisan interest above nearly all other considerations. When redistricting become a secret, backroom game of creating political advantage and disadvantage of the next election, goals like keeping communities of interest together, generating competition, and giving voters the choice to hold officials accountable are lost.

In 2014, the authors conducted an extensive examination of the redistricting process in Illinois. The results were presented in *Backroom Battles & Partisan Gridlock: Redistricting in Illinois*, published in October 2014. A brief summary of our findings and conclusion is presented below, with the entirety available on the CHANGE Illinois website (<http://www.changeil.org/blog/5-ways-redistricting-warps-illinois-democracy/>). A slightly different version of the same paper was published by the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at SIUC in September of 2014 as *Partisanship, Representation and Redistricting: An Illinois Case Study – Simon Review #38*. A copy can be downloaded from the Simon Public Policy Institute website ([http://paulsimoninstitute.siu.edu/\\_common/documents/simon-review/Canary-Redfield%20Redistricting%20Paper%20Final%20Text.pdf](http://paulsimoninstitute.siu.edu/_common/documents/simon-review/Canary-Redfield%20Redistricting%20Paper%20Final%20Text.pdf)).

The purpose of this report is to update the analysis with data from the 2014 legislative elections and to examine two questions in greater detail. The first question is whether the partisan advantage gained through a new legislative map has lasting effects beyond the first post-redistricting election. The second is whether the lack of contested and competitive elections under such partisan legislative maps extends to primary elections as well as general elections. Our findings in both cases reinforce the findings and conclusion from our original study.

### Summary of findings and conclusions from *Backroom Battles & Partisan Gridlock: Redistricting in Illinois (2014)*

- *The process is not transparent and does not welcome public involvement.*
- *Partisan intent produces partisan outcomes.*
- *The quality and nature of representative government has been diluted and distorted.*
- *Partisan redistricting decreases voter choice in legislative elections.*
- *Partisan redistricting places a political party's interests ahead of minority voting interests.*

### The Long-term Effect of Partisan Advantage

Whichever party controls the redistricting process in Illinois is free to pursue maximum partisan advantage in drawing the map—as long as it works within the constraints of constitutional law and the population and racial demographics of the state. The mapping process in Illinois is dominated by partisan concerns. Whether Democrats or Republicans hold the majority, their top priorities are maximizing partisan advantage and protecting incumbents. As mapmaking technology has improved, this manipulation has been conducted with increasing precision.

In each of the last four Illinois legislative maps, the party in control of the process has gained seats in the first election held under the new map. In the first post-redistricting election, the party in control of redistricting has gained an average of 7.25 seats in the House and 4.5 seats in the Senate.

**Table 1 - Partisan Gains Resulting from Adopting a New Illinois Legislative Map**

	Map	House Gains	House Control	Senate Gains	Senate Control
1982 Election	Democrat	D +13	Turns D	D +3	Stays D
1992 Election	Republican	R +4	Stays D	R +4	Turns R
2002 Election	Democrat	D +5	Stays D	D +5	Turns D
2012 Election	Democrat	D +5	Stays D	D +5	Stays D

Another way of measuring the impact of partisanship on the election results is the votes-to-seats ratio. This metric compares the percentage of votes won by Republican and Democratic candidates with the number of seats each party wins in the statehouse. In legislative elections with single-member districts, there can be a number of factors that introduce bias into the outcome: the process of creating districts itself, incumbency, political, demographic, and partisan bias. Illinois' extremely large number of uncontested legislative races complicates measurement further.

Yet votes-to-seats remains a useful way to assess the relationship between public opinion and the partisan identities of its representatives under a given map. Despite winning a smaller percentage of the total vote for legislative seats in 2012 than 2002, the 2011 map produced significant gains in both chambers for the Democrats versus the 2001 map (Table 2). The percentage of seats held by the Democrats in the House increased from 56 percent to 60 percent in 2012, and the percentage of seats they held in the Senate increased from 54 percent to 68 percent.

**Table 2 - Number of legislative seats in relation to percent total vote**

	House	Senate
2002	53% of Vote won by Democratic candidates	55% of Vote won by Democratic candidates
	56% of Seats won by Democratic candidates	54% of Seats won by Democratic candidates
	3% gain	1% loss
2012	52% of Vote won by Democratic candidates	54% of Vote won by Democratic candidates
	60% of Seats won by Democratic candidates	68% of Seats won by Democratic candidates
	8% gain	12% gain
2014	50.5% of Vote won by Democratic candidates	46% of Vote won by Democratic candidates (1/3 of Senate seats up, 19 total)
	60% of Seats won by Democratic candidates	58% of Seats won by Democratic candidates
	9.5% gain	12% gain (The 19 sets up in 2014 was not a representative sample of all 59 Senate Districts)

Data from the 2014 general election further illustrate the magnitude of partisan bias in the 2011 maps. Public dissatisfaction with the state of Illinois affairs among voters was very high. A political newcomer defeated the incumbent in the election for Governor. But the Democrats retained their majority in House—in fact, they did not lose a seat. One-third of the Senate was up for election in 2014; only one Senate district (the 36th) changed parties.

While the Democratic margin in total votes cast in legislative elections shrank to a near-tie statewide, Democrats still won 71 House seats, a 60 percent majority. The Democrats also won 11 of the 19 Senate seats that were up in 2014 while receiving less than a majority of the total votes cast in those 19 districts. Because turnout was higher in uncontested races won by Republicans than in uncontested races won by Democrats, the Democrats percentage of the total vote (46 percent) was probably artificially low. When the data from the other 40 Senate districts that are up in 2016 are added to the 2014 total the partisan bias will still be evident, but the magnitude of the gain will be smaller. The 2011 map does not make Illinois Democrats invincible, but it does afford them a huge advantage in each election cycle—just as Republican-drawn maps have provided similar electoral benefits to the GOP.

Looking at partisan effects over the life of a map provides additional insight. Table 3 shows the partisan makeup of the legislature after the first election under each of the last four legislative maps. Under the 1981 Democratic map, the Democrats gained control of the House in 1982 and retained control of the Senate. Control of both chambers did not shift during the life of the map. Under the 2001 map, the Democrats regained control of the Senate and retained control of the House in 2002. Control of both chambers remained the same for the next four elections. Under the 2011 Democratic map the Democrats retained control of both chambers after the 2012 and 2014 elections. The same pattern occurred for the Senate in the 1992 election under the 1991 Republican map. The Republican won control of the Senate and retained it over the next four elections.

The one outlier from this pattern of control is the House under the 1991 Republican map. The Republicans picked up five seats in the 1992 election, but that was not enough to win control of the chamber. In 1994, an historic wave election year favoring Republicans nationwide, the Illinois GOP picked up 13 seats, winning control of the House. But two years later, the Democrats won back the House, retaining the majority in 1998 and 2000. As we noted in our original paper, the 1991 Republican map failed to project demographic changes in suburban Cook County over the course of the decade. This oversight created opportunities for Democrats as district populations became less conservative.

**Table 3 - Partisan Makeup of the Illinois General Assembly**

Year	House	Senate
1982	D+22 (70 D, 48R)	D+7 (33 D, 26R)
1984	D+16 (67 D, 51R)	D+3 (31 D, 28R)
1986	D+18 (68 D, 50R)	D+3 (31 D, 28R)
1988	D+16 (67 D, 51R)	D+3 (31 D, 28R)

 **Democratic Map**  
 **Republican Map**

Year	House	Senate
1990	D+22 (72 D, 46R)	D+3 (31 D, 28R)
1992	D+16 (67 D, 51R)	R+5 (27 D, 32R)
1994	R+10 (54 D, 64R)	R+7 (26 D, 33R)
1996	D+2 (60 D, 58R)	R+3 (28 D, 31R)
1998	D+6 (62 D, 56R)	R+5 (27 D, 32R)
2000	D+6 (62 D, 56R)	R+5 (27 D, 32R)
2002	D+14 (66 D, 52R)	D+7 (33 D, 26R)
2004	D+12 (65 D, 53R)	D+5 (32 D, 27R)
2006	D+16 (67 D, 51R)	D+15 (37 D, 22R)
2008	D+22 (70 D, 48R)	D+15 (37 D, 22R))
2010	D+10 (64 D, 54R)	D+11 (35 D, 24R)
2012	D+24 (71 D, 47R)	D+21 (40 D, 19R)
2014	D+24 (71 D, 47R)	D+19 (39 D, 20R)

 **Democratic Map**

 **Republican Map**

The new data from the 2014 House election strongly reinforce our original findings that control of the redistricting process has produced a strong partisan advantage for the party drawing the map, and that this advantage has long-lasting effects. While the Democrats showed in 1996 that a legislative map is not indestructible, the overall record of the last four maps is clear. Partisan maps produce partisan advantage in elections.

## Competition in Elections and Representation Under Partisan Maps

Competition in elections is directly related to important goals like engaging citizens in the political process, public discussion of policy issues, and holding public officials accountable. The very legitimacy of government rests on a belief that elections are open and fair and that voters' voices are being heard. Without any competition in elections, democracy suffers.

### Competition and competitiveness in general elections

Our research on the last four legislative maps produced by Illinois' partisan redistricting process clearly shows the level of competitiveness in general elections is very low and has been declining over time. Voters are faced with fewer choices, and fewer contests where a district's minority party has any chance of winning.

The fact that an election is contested says little about the quality of the competition. But without any competition, none of the potential positive benefits of elections are possible. Table 4 presents data on the level of contested elections under the last four legislative maps. The data for the 2011

map for the 2014 Senate election is included in Table 4, but it cannot present a complete picture because only one-third of the Senate seats were up in 2014. When it is available, adding the 2016 data to the 2014 data will provide the complete picture of competitiveness of the second election under the new map for the all 59 Senate districts. The relevant data for the 2014 Senate elections is also included in Tables 5-9, with the same caveat.

Two general trends stand out. First, the percentage of contested elections has decreased significantly over time. In the first election under a new map in 1982 and 1992 a strong majority of the elections were contested. By 2012, 60 percent of House elections and 51 percent of Senate elections were uncontested. In 2014, 58 percent of House elections were uncontested. Due to staggered terms, there was an election in only one-third of the Senate districts in 2014, and 12 of the 19 (63 percent) were uncontested. The increase in uncontested elections occurred despite strong voter dissatisfaction apparent in polls. It is important to note that several factors contributed to this decline: changes in population and political demographics, increased political polarization, and a drop in the strength of political parties.

In addition, the number of contested elections generally decreased in the second election under a new map. This is not surprising, since the first election under a new map has no true incumbents, and the uncertainty of the political environment invites new candidates to run. Yet in a second post-mapping election, the results of the previous contest provide a reality check as to the potential for competitiveness. Interestingly, the differences under the 2001 and 2011 maps in the second election are not as pronounced, suggesting that there may be a ceiling on the number of uncontested elections, regardless of the degree of partisan bias in the redistricting process.

Even using this minimal measure of whether or not an election is contested in the general election, the degree of competition in Illinois legislative election is low and declining.

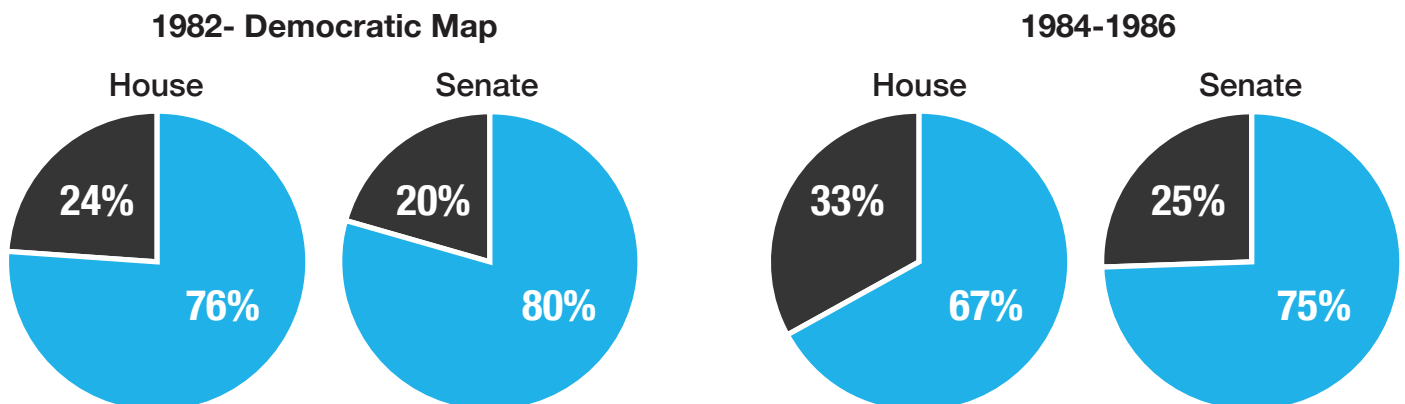
**Table 4 Contested general elections: candidates from each major party on ballot**

House = 118 elections

Senate = 59 elections (19 for 2nd election under new map and 40 for 3rd election under new map)

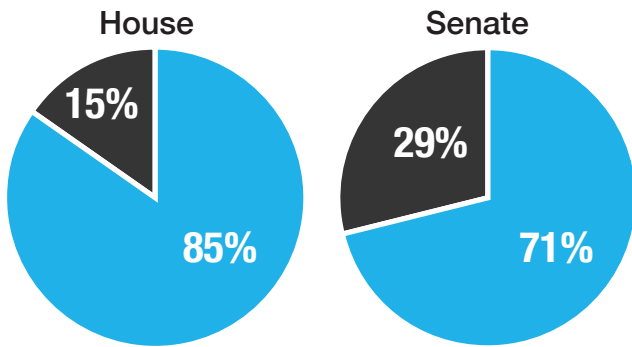
 **Contested**

 **Uncontested**

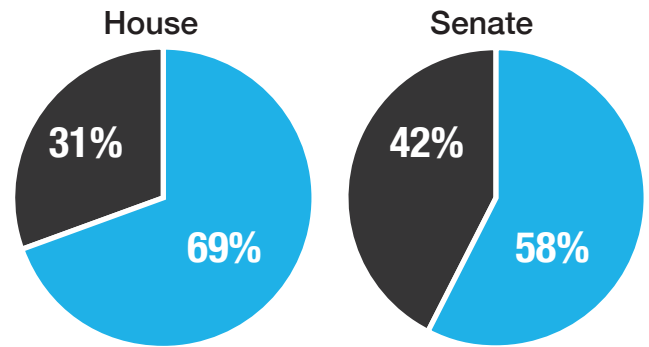




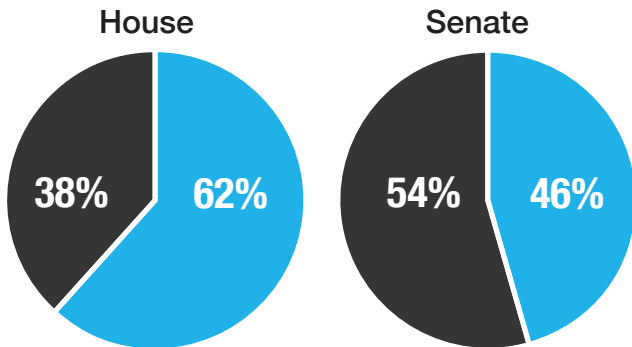
### 1992- Republican Map



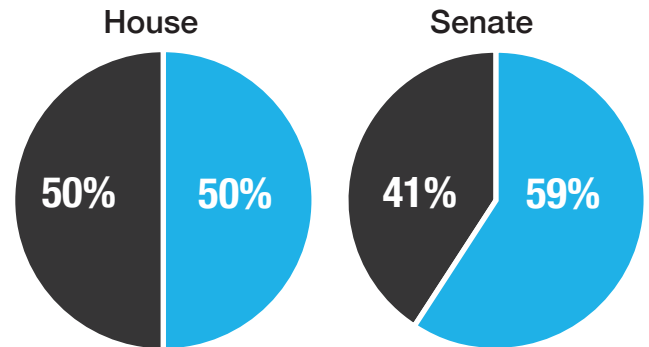
### 1994-1996



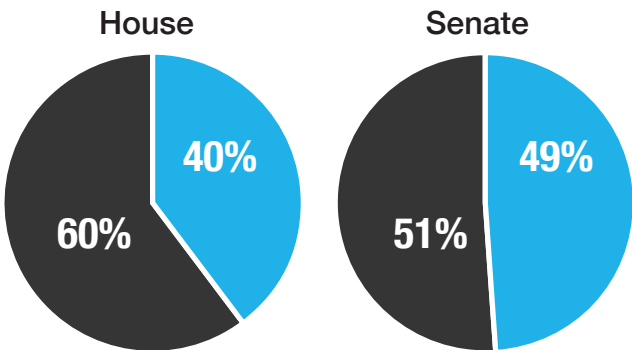
### 2002- Democratic Map



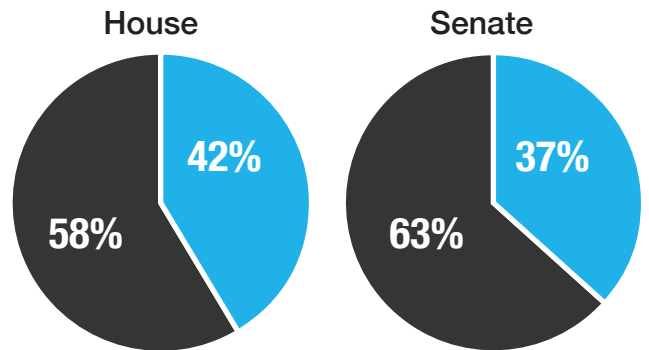
### 2004-2006



### 2012- Democratic Map



### 2014 (1/3 Senate Election)



A more accurate measure of the quality of competition in legislative elections is the competitiveness of those elections that are contested. Table 5 uses a measure of competitiveness in general elections based on whether or not the winning candidate received less than 55 percent of the vote. The average number of competitive election in the four cycles is 12 percent for both the House and the Senate, but the figures are decreasing over time. Projecting those numbers into a typical general election in Illinois over the past four decades means that, on average, 88 percent of voters (104 of 118 House races, 52 of 59 Senate races) had only a choice between a sure winner and a sure loser—or see no choice at all on the ballot.

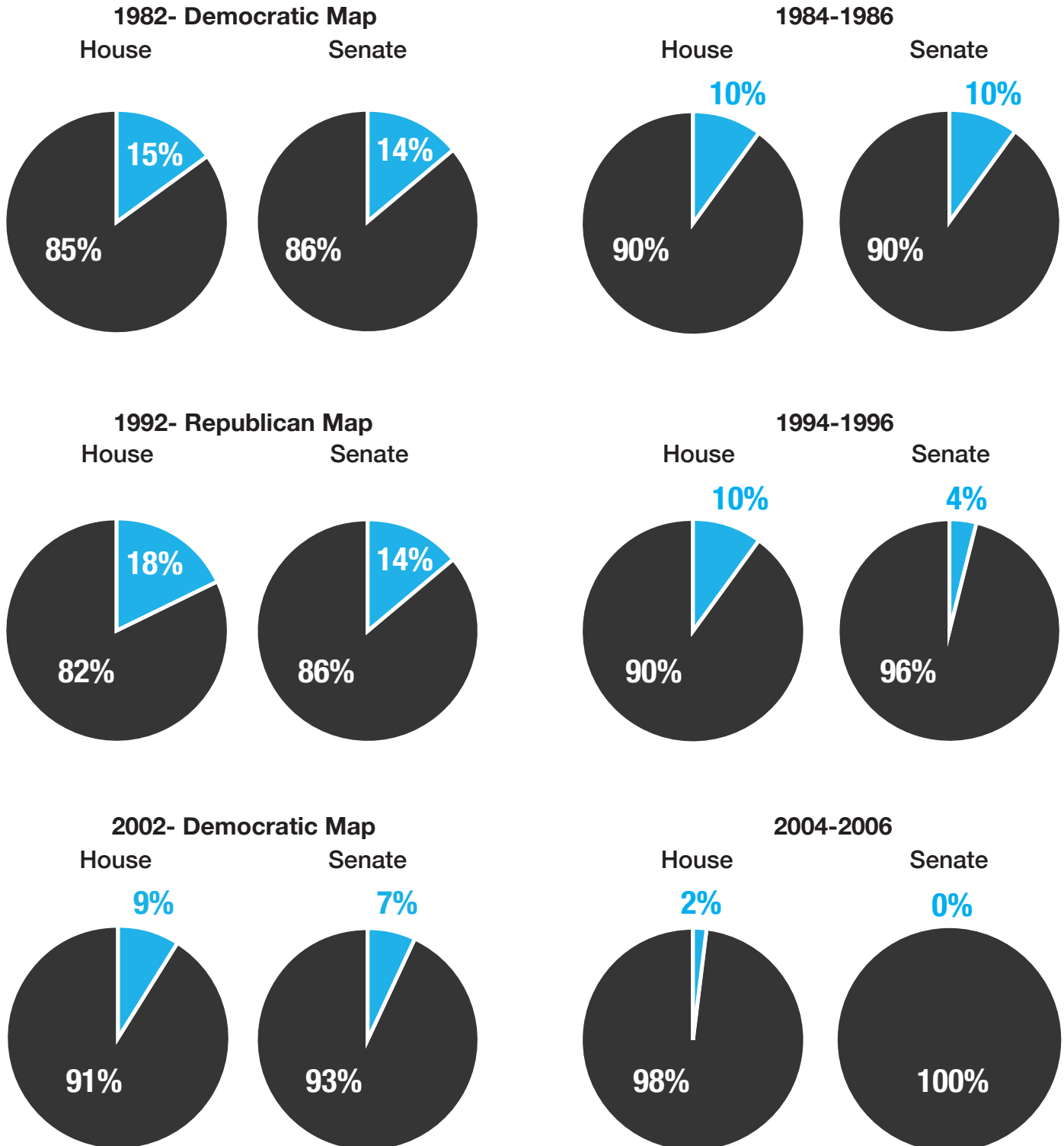
**Table 5 Competitive General Elections – Winner received less than 55 percent of the vote**

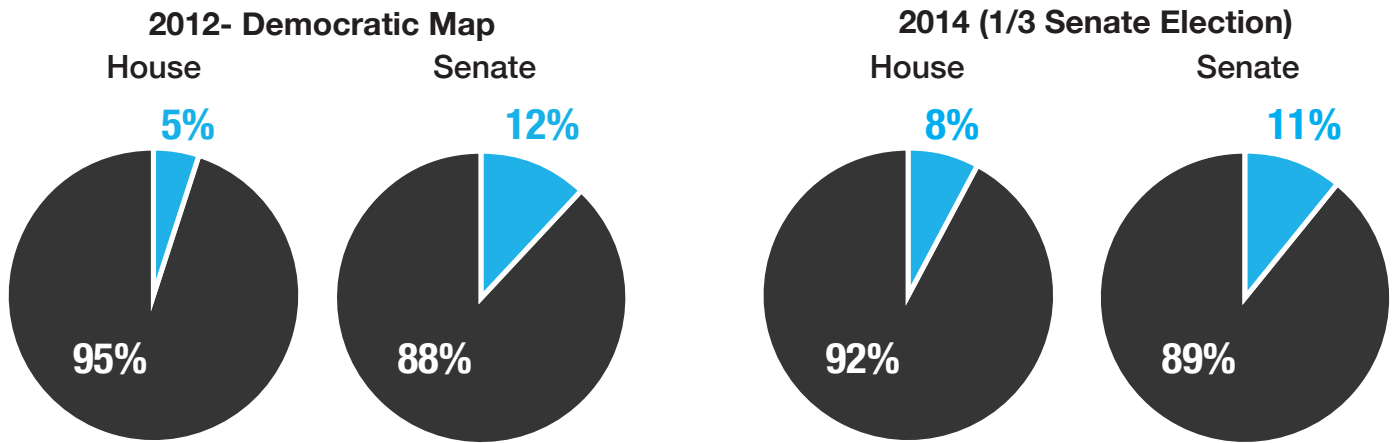
House = 118 elections

Senate = 59 elections (19 for 2nd election under new map and 40 for 3rd election under new map)

 **Competitive (Winner received less than 55% of vote)**

 **Uncompetitive (Winner received more than 55% of vote)**





Another important measure of the level of competition that is occurring in legislative election is to look at the number of districts in which the winning candidate had no opponent in both the primary and general elections. Such candidates essentially have a free pass to office once their position on the primary ballot is certified. Table 6 presents that data under the four most recent legislative maps.

There are again two clear patterns. The number of districts where the winning candidate had neither a primary nor a general election opponent increased under the 2001 map compared to the 1981 and 1991 maps. Under the 2011 maps the percentages increased dramatically. Second, under each of the four maps, the percentage of these “free pass” districts increased significantly in the second election under the new maps when compared to the prior election—demonstrating the enormous dual benefits of incumbency and a safe district. In 2014, nearly half of the members elected to the House of Representatives won their seats without facing any opponent. While only one-third of the Senate Districts were up for a vote, the percentage was even higher – 63 percent.

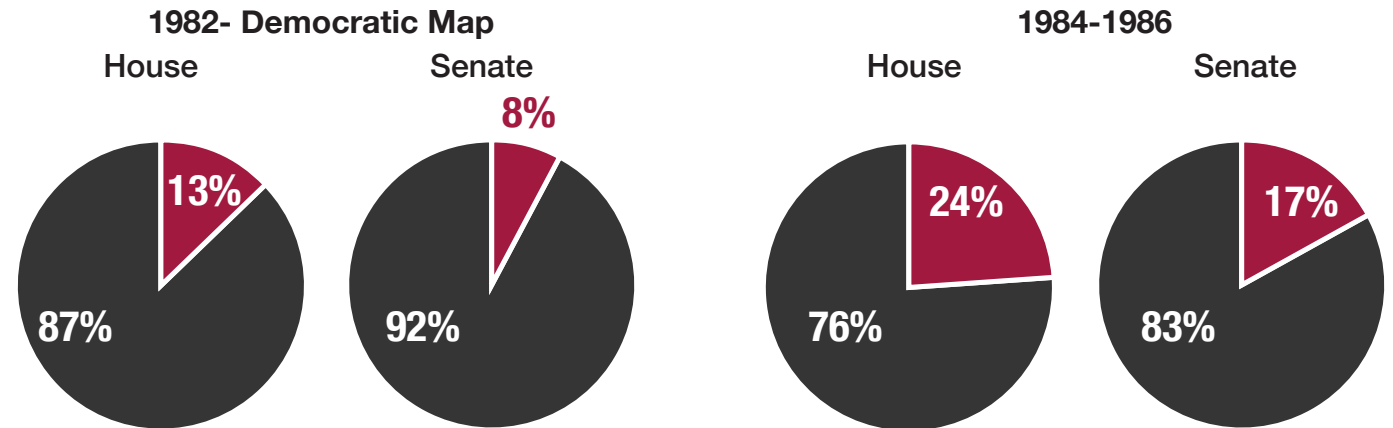
**Table 6 – Districts where winning candidate did not have a primary or general election opponent**

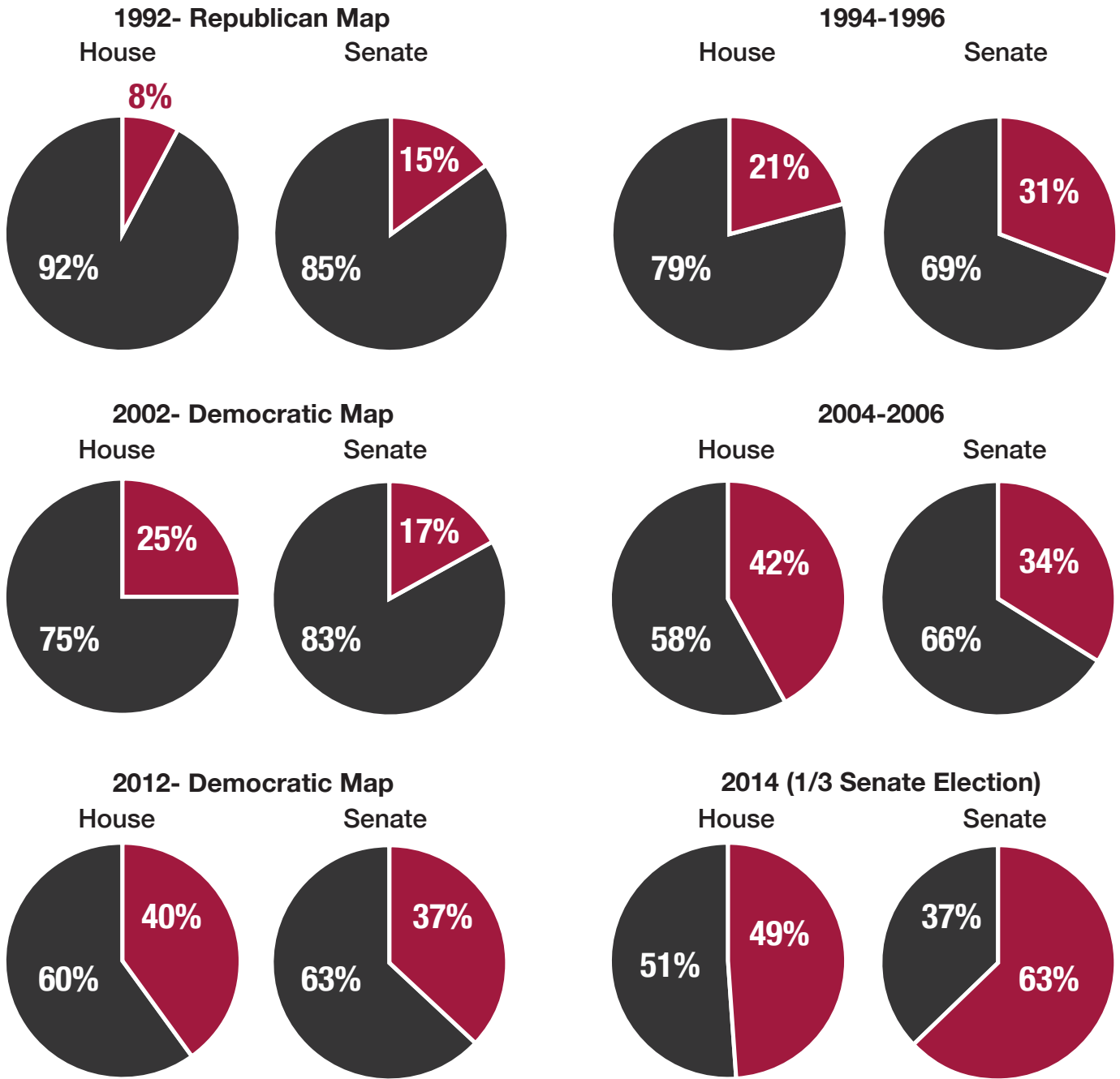
House = 118 elections

Senate = 59 elections (19 elections 2nd election under map, 40 elections 3rd election under map)

 **Eventual Winner had no primary opponent**

 **Eventual Winner had a primary opponent**





### Competition and Competitiveness in Primary Elections

One might imagine that the competitive picture from general elections could be masking a more robust level of competition in primary elections. A full airing of public policy issues and spirited competition at the primary level might provide a counter-balance to a lack of competition and competitiveness in the general election.

With this possibility in mind, Table 7 examines the level of competition in primary election in the first and second elections under new legislative maps adopted in 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011. Only once, in 1992, did the number of primaries that were contested in the House exceed 33 percent. The average was 24 percent, and under the 2001 and 2011 maps, the percentage shrunk to 19 percent and 16 percent. In each case, the percentage of contested primary election in the House declined in the second election under a new map.

The competitive dynamics in Senate primaries were similar. On average, 25 percent of primaries were contested. While the number of contested Senate primaries was greater under the 2011 map than the 2001 map, there were significant decreases in the second election under a new map. Of the 19 senators elected in 2014, only two had contested primaries and neither was competitive. In both House and Senate, voters in primary elections have even fewer choices for participation, engagement, and communication than voters in general elections.

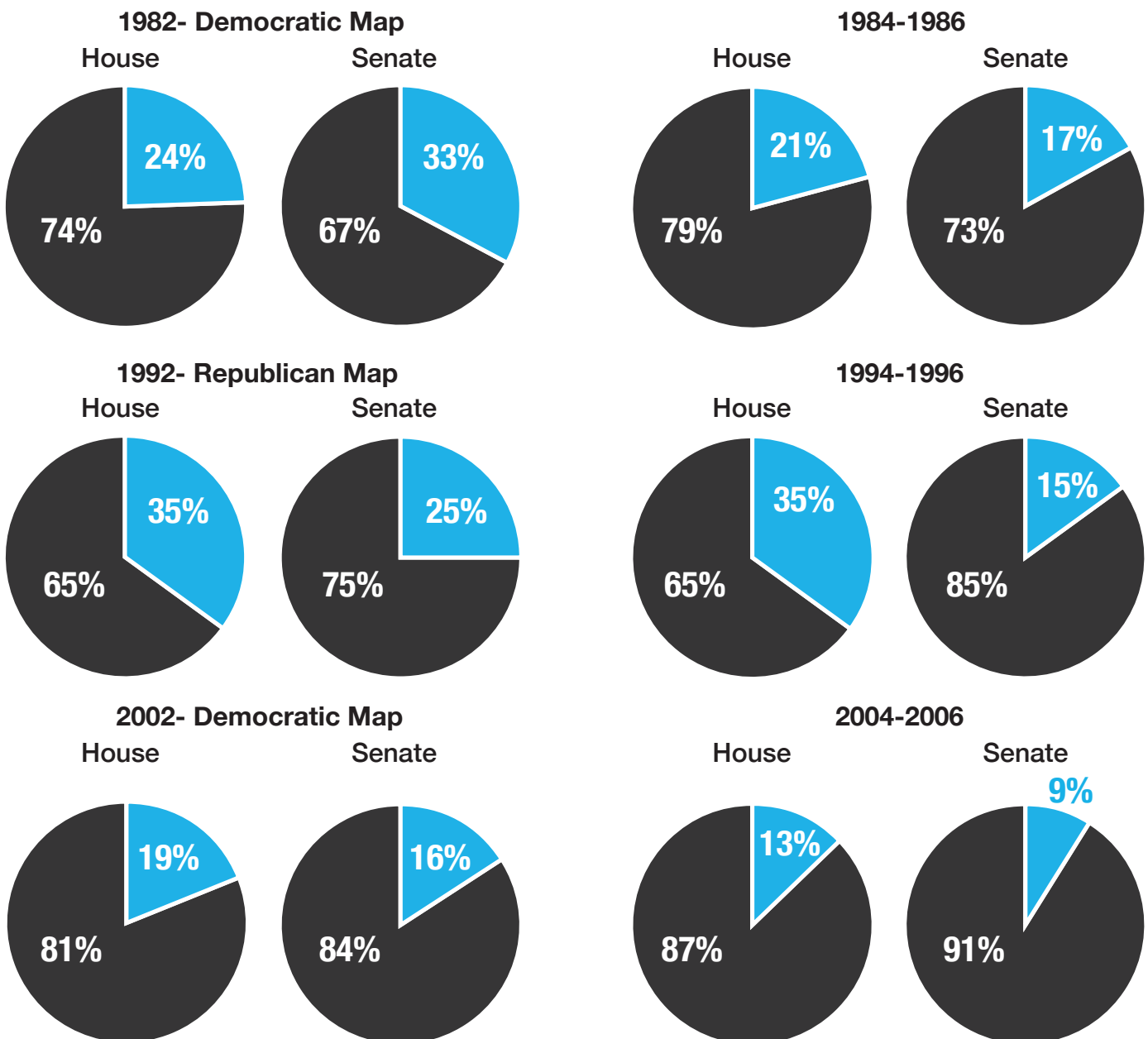
**Table 7 - Contested primary elections: Two or more candidates in a partisan primary**

House = 236 partisan primaries (118 seats X 2 parties)

Senate = 118 partisan primaries (59 seats X 2 parties)

 **Contested Primary**

 **Uncontested Primary**



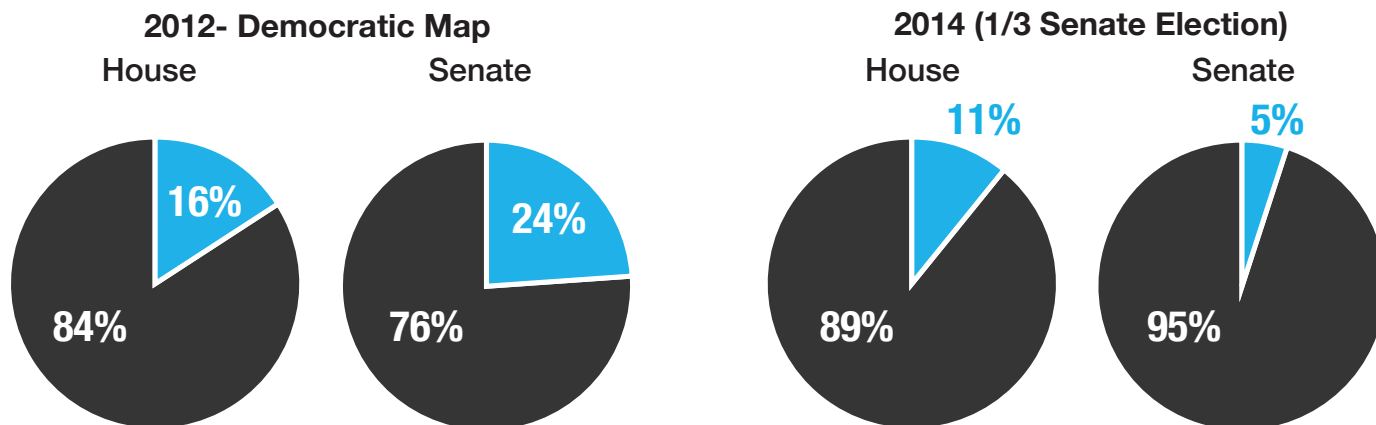


Table 8 examines the number of competitive elections—those in which the winner gets less than 55 percent in a two-way race, or wins by less than 10 percent in a multi-candidate election. The number of competitive primaries is very small, and significantly less than the number of competitive elections in the general election (see Table 3). In only one set of primary elections in the House (1992) did the number of competitive primaries reach 10 percent. In the second election under each new map, the percentage of competitive elections declined. As with the measure of contested election, the data on competition in primary elections clearly shows that primary voters have even fewer choices than voters in general elections.

**Table 8 - Competitive primary elections – Winner received more than 55 percent of the vote in a two way race or won by less than 10 percent in multicandidate race**

House = 236 partisan primaries (118 seats X 2 parties)  
 Senate = 118 partisan primaries (59 seats X 2 parties)

Year	House	Senate
1982	17 (7%)	5 (8%)
1984-1986	12 (5%)	6 (5%)
1992	23 (10%)	5 (4%)
1994-1996	12 (5%)	2 (2%)
2002	16 (7%)	3 (3%)
2004-2006	2 (<1%)	0 (0%)
2012	16 (7%)	3 (3%)
2014	6 (3%)	0 (0%)*

\* 1/3 of Senate

Another potential dynamic might undermine our aggregate picture of low competition in primaries: Is it possible that the competition that does occur in primary elections is occurring primarily in districts that are dominated by one party? For example, there might be competitive Democratic primaries in districts where the Democrats are dominant in the general election, and competitive Republican primaries in districts where the Republicans are dominant in the general election.

Table 9 presents the data for the level of primary competition that occurred in legislative districts where one party dominated the election. Under the 1981 and 1991 maps, four out of eight times, the number of same-party uncontested primaries in districts dominated by one party exceeded 50 percent. Under the 2001 and 2011 maps, the number of uncontested same-party primaries exceed 60 percent in all of the 10 sets of elections in districts dominated by one party—with an average of 70 percent of the primaries being uncontested. Among those primary elections that were contested, the level of competition was very low. Under the 1981 and 1991 maps, the average number of same-party competitive primaries in districts dominated by one party was 14 percent for the House and 2 percent for the Senate. For the 2001 and 2011 maps the average was 11 percent in the House and 4 percent in the Senate.

The level of primary activity in districts dominated by one party is very low and has decreased significantly under the last two partisan maps. This clearly indicates that voters in districts dominated by one political party in the general election were rarely presented with meaningful choices in the primaries.

**Table 9 – Primary Competition in District Dominated by One Party (General election winner had no opponent or captured more than 55% of the vote)**

1982 House	1982 Senate
60 Democratic dominated districts	28 Democratic dominated districts
42 (70%) no Democratic primary	14 (50%) no Democratic primary
17 (28%) non-competitive Democratic primaries	14 (50%) non-competitive Democratic
1 (2%) competitive Democrat primaries	0 (0%) competitive Democratic primaries
40 Republican dominated districts	23 Republican dominated districts
16 (40%) no Republican primary	13 (57%) no Republican primary
15 (37%) non-competitive Republican primaries	9 (39%) non-competitive Republican
9 (23%) competitive Republican primaries	1 (4%) competitive Republican primaries

1992 House	1992 Senate
54 Democratic dominated districts	25 Democratic dominated districts
24 (46%) no Democratic primary	12 (48%) no Democratic primary
21 (39%) non-competitive Democratic primaries	11 (44%) non-competitive Democratic primaries
9 (17%) competitive Democrat primaries	2 (8%) competitive Democratic primaries
42 Republican dominated Districts	25 Republican dominated Districts
12 (29%) no Republican primary	19 (76%) no Republican primary
24 (57%) non-competitive Republican primaries	6 (24%) non-competitive Republican primaries
6 (14%) competitive Republican primaries	0 (0%) competitive Republican primaries

2002 House	2002 Senate
56 Democratic dominated districts	30 Democratic dominated districts
38 (67%) no Democratic primaries	21 (70%) no Democratic primary
11 (20%) non-competitive Democratic primaries	9 (30%) non-competitive Democratic primaries
7 (13%) competitive Democrat primaries	0 (0%) competitive Democratic primaries
52 Republican dominated districts	25 Republican dominated districts
33 (63%) no Republican primary	18 (72%) no Republican primary
16 (21%) non-competitive Republican primaries	4 (16%) non-competitive Republican primaries
3 (10%) competitive Republican primaries	3 (12%) competitive Republican primaries

2012 House	2012 Senate
71 Democratic dominated districts	34 Democratic dominated districts
50 (70%) no Democratic Primary	23 (67%) no Democratic Primary
17 (24%) non-competitive Democratic primaries	10 (30%) non-competitive Democratic primaries
4 (6%) competitive Democrat primaries	1 (3%) competitive Democratic primaries
41 Republican dominated districts	18 Republican dominated districts
29 (70%) no Republican Primary	11 (61%) no Republican Primary
4 (10%) non-competitive Republican primaries	7 (39%) non-competitive Republican primaries
8 (20%) competitive Republican primaries	0 (0%) competitive Republican primaries



2014 House	2014 Senate
61 Democratic dominated districts	10 Democratic dominated districts
53 (87%) no Democratic Primary	9 (90%) no Democratic Primary
5 (8%) non-competitive Democratic primaries	1 (10%) non-competitive Democratic primaries
3 (5%) competitive Democratic primaries	0 (0%) competitive Democratic primaries
47 Republican dominated districts	7 Republican dominated districts
35 (74%) no Republican primary	6 (86%) no Republican primary
10 (21%) non-competitive Republican primaries	1 (14%) non-competitive Republican primaries
2 (5%) competitive Republican primaries	0 (0%) competitive Republican primaries

By any measure, the level of competition and competitiveness in legislative elections under the last four partisan maps is extremely low and getting worse. These findings call into question the effectiveness of legislative elections in providing a meaningful incentive for citizen engagement. They also undermine the conventional wisdom that the members of the Illinois General Assembly are elected by the consent of Illinois residents.

## Partisan Redistricting and Representation

In Redistricting in Illinois, the analysis we conducted on partisan-drawn legislative maps clearly showed that redistricting in Illinois has created a strong partisan advantage for the party controlling the process, while significantly contributing to a decrease in the number of contested elections and the quality of competition in elections that are contested. This expanded analysis clearly reinforces those findings. Looking at electoral advantage over the life of the legislative maps shows the tremendous staying power of the electoral edge that a political party gains from drawing a partisan map. An extended and more in-depth examination of competition in legislative elections under these maps reveals even fewer contested elections or competitive elections in the out-years after the adoption of a map. It also shows significantly fewer contested election and competitive elections occur in primaries than in general elections.

Perhaps more disturbing, the trend lines show these effects are getting worse.

All of this new data reinforces our earlier findings. In the conclusion to Partisan Redistricting in Illinois we wrote: “Representation should be at the heart of redistricting. It is the system through which we ensure that the voices of citizens can be fairly and effectively heard in government. Placing partisan electoral gains above the relationship between the elected and the electorate when drawing legislative maps weakens democratic processes and undermines public confidence and participation in government.” This new report further highlights the danger that partisan redistricting poses to the health of representative democracy in Illinois.



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