



End the political games on gerrymandering.

Our center has long criticized both major parties for the political games they play in practicing gerrymandering, the politically motivated redrawing of legislative district lines.

The concept got its name from a 19th century Governor, named Eldridge Gerry, who signed off on the redrawing his district lines in an irrational way in order to maximize his reelection efforts of his party.

Rather than drawing the lines based upon geographic borders or lines separating different towns, politicians have been drawing the lines to maximize the number of Democratic voters for Democratic incumbents and Republican voters where the Republican is the incumbent. This has led to many of these districts looking like an octopus, rather than a rectangle.

Many reformers have tried to change this politically charged system for quite some time. Suffolk County did so in 2007. New York State did so in 2014. But the benevolent intent of both these measures was thwarted by political intervention by the parties in power.

The Suffolk County proposal created an independent district drawing commission consisting of good government groups and retired judges. Yet the party in power and Suffolk County moved forward with its own politically drawn lines based on their claim that the judges were not appointed in time.

The matter went to court and the bill to effectuate the bogus plan was vetoed by the county executive. A bipartisan panel is presently drawing a new set of lines. Let's hope this process works out the way it should.

On the state level, the congressional lines drawn were overturned by the state's highest court, requiring a pushing back of the primary. Hopefully they will go back to the nonpartisan commission to draw non-political lines.

The ultimate answer is to change the process by which the independent lines must be approved by the state legislature. Instead, independent lines should automatically take effect unless the legislature, through a supermajority, *rejects* the independent commission's findings.