

# Mapping Our Way To Better Messaging



**FAIR REPRESENTATION  
IN REDISTRICTING**

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# Redistricting: Unfamiliar Word; Some Are Aware Of The Idea, But No One Understands It

## **LACK OF AWARENESS / IMPACT:**

No one could spontaneously recall the word redistricting. However, once the definition was presented, some participants were aware of the idea (almost everyone was not).

No one understood the impact on their community until it was explained to them, and even then they struggled.

## **COMPLEX DATA:**

Redistricting feels like a complex process that cannot be understood.

Even highly engaged community leaders are not sure exactly how it works or why it's important.

# Redistricting: When There Are Associations, They Are Negative

## ASSOCIATED WITH GERRYMANDERING:

People with **some awareness** of the process had immediate **negative associations** (gerrymandering, political manipulation, rigging the game).

People who had **no awareness** had **neutral associations** (it's like renewing a driver's license, annual HOA meeting).

## HIDDEN PROCESS:

The process happens behind the scenes - for people who are aware of gerrymandering, this means something sinister is going on.

For the rest, it's hidden because it's irrelevant to their lives.

# Need A New Name

The “Re” is problematic because it cues for manipulation (“Why are we redoing it, shouldn’t we let the districts be the districts?”).

The “Re” also suggests bureaucracy - a process or action that gets done over and over again (like renewing your license).

So even using the term “districting” would be an improvement.

**What names would suggest a positive process that empowers communities?**

- Community Districting
- Mapping Our Future
- Drawing Fair Districts

# More Awareness Of / Emotional Connection To Gerrymandering

## HIGHER AWARENESS:

- ➡ The issue of Gerrymandering is easy to summarize in a metaphor (ie. rigging the game) - people remember it
- ➡ The issue of Gerrymandering feels real and relevant-rigging the game has obvious negative impact on people's lives
- ➡ The issue of Gerrymandering has a clear connection to inequality, which is a passionate subject for those who are active in communities or politics

## EMOTIONAL REACTIONS:

- ➡ Unlike the process of redistricting, the feelings were not neutral or indifferent. There was a strong emotional reaction to this issue across all segments.
- ➡ Anger at the unfairness and inequity
- ➡ Sadness at the thought of people being excluded
- ➡ Cynicism about the system benefitting the powerful
- ➡ Motivation to do something about it



# Messaging

# Connect Redistricting To Equity To Spur Engagement

People are not passionate about redistricting, but they are passionate about **equity and justice**.

Connecting gerrymandering to inequity, and redistricting to equity amps up potential for engagement.



\* Researcher image



**Jim Crow Laws** - "Represents inequality and what I'm viewing about gerrymandering. I'm watching it." (AA)

*"If we recognize a neighborhood is really struggling, and we give them a leg up, we can all metaphorically look over the fence and enjoy the baseball game together. Helping them is going to help us too." (AAPI)*

*"It seems kind of unfair. It's excluding people who live past a certain street, past a certain area, from voting on an issue that could service their area because they know those people wouldn't vote for a candidate or party." (L)*

# Name Race

**Naming race amplified the message of equity** even further for our sample of progressive or progressive-leaning voters.

Phrases such as the ones below activated emotions that raised potential for action.

- No matter what we look like or where we live
- No matter our background or zip code
- Whatever our color or faith, background or zip code

Why? Because they establish shared values and highlight the intent and impact of achieving equity.



*"I want to live in a diverse community. People of all races, not just the Caucasian race. African-American like me, Asians, Native Americans, Hispanics, just everybody. It would make me more comfortable and make me appreciate my community more if I saw people like me." (AA)*



*"A mix of different races/nationalities, sexes, hands all piled into one single pile. I'd like to live in a diverse community. They're all invested in the community, willing to contribute to the greatness of the community." (AA)*



# Offer An Opportunity For Lasting Impact

People are not motivated to change a process or diminish its harms, especially if it is hidden and hard to understand.

However, when we frame the issue as the **opportunity to create something good** or **leave a lasting impact** on their community, participants want to take action.

They see the end goal, and are less worried about understanding redistricting perfectly. They are focused on what they really want: everyone thriving in their community.



*"Be the best you. Whatever you are excelling in. Not just doing this and that to become content and stagnant. But thrive. Move up, keep moving forward. This is how it should be." (AA)*



*"Residents of a certain community sharing - this is what we need, what we're looking for. Around them officials are advocating and help make some positive changes. They're heard, people understand what they want and are going to help support the needs of the community." (L)*

# Call Out The Villain For Trying To Divide Us

## HOW THEY FEEL WHEN CONFRONTED WITH GERRYMANDERING



**Disgust** - "The feeling I have after learning about the whole gerrymandering thing. Morally grossed out." (AA)



**Stepping on Toes** - "It is wrong and unfair that the money is being taken away. David feels humiliated, deflated, and stepped on. He feels unjustly punished. He is also angry and upset." (AA)



**Jennifer Lopez** - "She sees an injustice taking place and feels deep sorrow for the victim, feels angry that it even happened, or was even allowed to occur. She wants to be an advocate and be a part of the solution." (L)

## WORDS THAT HAVE AN IMPACT ON THEM

### STATEMENT

Politicians try to **divide** us, **drawing** districts to **silence our voices** based on what we look like, where we come from or how much money we have.

"The silencing of voices as well as governing for the rich... it makes me angry. It's the most unfair. We have to get involved by our power of voting to change this." (L)

"We won't let them divide us... a group of people to be unified." (AA)

"It sounds really negative and biased. I feel resentment and anger." (AA)

### STATEMENT

A handful of politicians are **drawing** district **lines** to **divide** us, so they can choose which voters to heed and which to ignore.

"These politicians are drawing lines to ignore the needs of poor people and people of color. They'd rather heed the people on their side, like white people. "Divide us" and "ignore" gave me negative emotions." (AA)

'Cutting verbs', like **carve up** or slash triggered an anger that activates. They are particularly angry when this is part of a strategy to **silence certain voices**.

"Sheds negative light on what the politicians are doing... carving up neighborhoods." (AA)

### STATEMENT

Certain politicians are trying to **carve up** our neighborhoods for their own benefit.

# Focus on RESOURCE equity rather than vote equity

People were most activated about equity when it came to RESOURCES not voting. For them, the story was about the powerful rigging the game so they could continue to wield power while denying others' needs.

When they talk about **wanting a voice**, they are talking about voicing their views directly to people in power and having them truly listen and ensure **everyone's needs are met.**

*"I think that each community - no matter whether it's a poor community or a rich community - each community should have fair resources." (W)*

*"There are other communities in the inner-city that don't have resources. They might not have afterschool programs that keep people off the street. So if there's money for a program, it would be important to offer it to an area that really needs it." (LT)*

*"We do have those politicians who work for themselves or people they have things in common with. They're not working for everyone, they're not doing the things they said they were gonna do. If you continue to let something go on that's not right for your community then that's stopping the community from growing." (AA)*

*"The allocation of community resources is a very important point. For people who live in underserved areas, local parks and local food banks are very important issues. Our tax money is going to be allocated based on something that is based on census data." (AAPI)*

# Partisan Messaging Backlashes

- ➡ Partisan messaging, **even among explicitly partisan respondents**, backlashed.
- ➡ Why? Because it contradicted the principle of equity / inclusion.
- ➡ When it comes to democracy and equity, it needs to be fair for EVERYONE.

## STATEMENT

By participating in the process of drawing our political maps, we ensure Democrats have a fair shot in the next election and have leaders in office who govern in our interests.

## STATEMENT

By participating in the process of drawing our political maps, we can stop Republicans from gerrymandering for the next decade and ensure we have fair maps for all.

# 1. INEQUITY / SCHEMES → EQUITY / TRANSPARENCY

We want everyone to have equal voice and access to resources



But some politicians use backroom schemes to silence / strip away resources from specific communities



Our communities are coming together to ensure fair representation and access to resources, so we all have a say and can thrive

## EXAMPLE

**No matter what we look like or where we live**, when it comes to our communities, most of us want similar things - a place we feel safe and welcome, our families can thrive, and we can have a good life.

But **some politicians are carving up our districts to silence and strip away resources** from specific communities, so they can govern only for the already rich.

When we come together, we can demand a **transparent** process where every community has an **equal voice and the resources we need to thrive**.

## METAPHORS

Unrigging the Game

Drawing Back the Curtain

Equal Share of the Pie

No One Left Behind

## 2. DISEMPOWERED → EMPOWERED

Our communities should be heard and have equal resources



But some politicians try to keep us from asking for and getting what we need



We can be a voice for people in our community who are not heard and ensure everyone has equal access to resources

### EXAMPLE

No one knows our communities better than the **people who live in them.**

But some politicians are **manipulating** districts to **silence our voices** and **strip away** resources from specific communities, so they can govern for the already rich.

We won't let them **divide us** - we **stand together** with the **power of our voice**. When we draw the map, **we choose** how hospitals, schools and resources are funded and **chart a new course** for our communities.

### METAPHORS

One Actor in a Larger Movement that Keeps Going

One Voice in a Forceful Choir, Refusing to Be Silenced

Holding Hands and Refusing to be Divided

Charting a New Course

Powerful, Choosing What Happens

# 3. DIVISION → UNITY

We want a diverse, thriving community



But some politicians try to divide us for their own gain



We stand together for a world where communities remain whole and have equal voice

## EXAMPLE

**Whatever our color or faith, background or zip code**, we believe that for democracy to work for all of us, it must **include** us all.

But politicians try to **divide** us, drawing political districts to **silence our voices** based on what we look like, where we come from or how much money we have.

Together, we can draw fair districts to ensure that communities **remain whole** and every voter has an **equal say and resources** in our democracy.

## METAPHORS

Diverse Group of People Holding Hands

Group Hug

Diverse Kids Playing Together

Cluster of Islands

# 4. EXCLUSION → INCLUSION

We want our communities to feel like a healthy, happy family



But some politicians are trying to exclude specific groups



We will welcome and bring everyone into the fold, making them feel loved and respected, and ensuring they have equal say and access to resources

## EXAMPLE

Whether we're Black, white or brown, we all want to live in a community where **everyone** feels valued and cared for, and has **equal access** to resources.

But some politicians are drawing districts to **exclude** specific groups **based on our color, faith, background or zip code**.

Join with your neighbors to say - every family in our community deserves **the resources they need**. Together, we can build a community to be proud of.

## METAPHORS

High School Cafeteria Cliques

Picking the High Schooler Who Always Gets Picked Last

Welcoming a Stranger in from the Cold

Hosting a Dinner Where Everyone is Welcome



**THANK YOU!**

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