

# WHAT IS PRISON GERRYMANDERING?

**Prison-based gerrymandering makes a mockery of the principle of “one person, one vote,” which requires that election districts be composed of roughly the same number of constituents so that every person receives the same level of representation.**



Prison Gerrymandering is the practice of states/local governments counting incarcerated individuals as residents of the areas where they are imprisoned instead of their homes when election district lines are drawn.



The practice inflates the population count - and thus, the political influence - of the districts where prisons and jails are located. As a result, the voting power of everyone living outside of those districts is weakened.



Incarcerated people who are eligible to vote (those serving time for misdemeanor offenses) are not legally allowed to vote in the district where they are incarcerated. They must vote in their home districts.



Since the average length of incarceration is between two and three years, when incarcerated people return home, the population of their home district increases, diluting the power of each individual vote and giving communities most impacted by incarceration less representation in state and local government; everyone who lived near the incarcerated person is actually being harmed by prison gerrymandering, whether they live in the cities, in the suburbs, or in rural areas.

## CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS



As Americans and Pennsylvanians, we have the constitutional right to equal representation by ensuring fair and accurate representation for all communities across the state, including the many rural communities that do not have prisons

## FAIR COUNT

Temporarily incarcerated Pennsylvanians should be counted as residents of their home districts, not as citizens of the locality where they're imprisoned.

Counting incarcerated Pennsylvanians in their home areas does not take funding away from communities since this has no impact on formulas that determine federal/state funding.



Prison gerrymandering unfairly inflates the population and political power of districts in which prisons are located at the expense of areas that do not have prisons.



State prisons are mostly placed in rural areas. Counting incarcerated people in the district where state prisons are located inflates the rural district's voting power and deflates the voting power of incarcerated people's home districts. The prisoner miscount creates a multitude of problems for people who use census data for planning and research purposes. Counting large populations of prisoners as local residents leads to misleading conclusions about the size and growth of communities.