

Re-Districting Update

Michael Sean Winters | Mar. 8, 2011 Distinctly Catholic

One of the things state legislatures must do this spring is draw new congressional districts. According to [a report at Politico this morning](#) [1], Tea Party activists have engaged the fight in several states although not always in the same way. In New Jersey, they appear to oppose gerrymandering that has created an essentially safe district for long-time Congressman Frank Pallone, while in Louisiana, the Tea Partyers are engaged in some gerrymandering of their own on behalf of their favorite Rep. Jeff Landry. In the event, to the extent the Tea Partyers oppose gerrymandering, that is a good thing: In more balanced, evenly divided districts, their influence diminishes. Their power resides in their ability to win a GOP primary, putting forward a more extreme candidate in an essentially safe GOP district. As we saw in the Senate races in Delaware, Colorado, Alaska and Nevada last November, where there is no gerrymandering, the kind of Tea Party candidate that can win a GOP primary can't win a general election in November.

Just as interesting, the Cook Political Report recently noted that in Texas, which is gaining a whopping four new congressional seats, even though the Republicans control the entire process, so much of the new population growth was in the Latino population, at least two and perhaps even three of the new seats will end up in Democratic hands.

The Tea Party may be influential, but they can't beat demographics. And, so long as anti-immigrant fervor is part of their orthodoxy, and they successfully force it on to the GOP as a whole, they are pushing the fastest growing demographic in the country into the waiting arms of the Democratic Party.

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[1] <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0311/50818.html>