From Educational Adequacy to Representational Adequacy: A New Template for Legal Attacks on Partisan Gerrymanders

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For decades, legal attacks on partisan gerrymanders have foundered on a manageability dilemma: doctrinal standards the Supreme Court has regarded as judicially discoverable have been rejected as unmanageable, whereas the more manageable standards on offer have been dismissed as insufficiently tethered to the Constitution—that is, as undiscoverable. This Article contends that a solution to the dilemma may be found in a seemingly unlikely place: the body of state constitutional law concerned with the adequacy of state systems of public education. The justiciability barriers to partisan gerrymandering claims have near analogues in educational adequacy cases, yet only a minority of the state courts have deemed educational adequacy claims nonjusticiable. Other courts have dealt with putatively standardless education claims by holding that the legislature must adopt educational standards, together with a system of testing, school finance, and accountability reasonably designed to realize those standards. If the legislature drags its feet, courts have issued provisional remedies, which the legislature is free to update or replace. I explain how the same strategy could be adapted for a new generation of “representational adequacy” claims under broadly
worded provisions found in many state constitutions. I also suggest that by anchoring claims to the generally worded provisions about representation found in state constitutions (or possibly Article I of the U.S. Constitution), litigants could mitigate the downside risk of success under the Equal Protection Clause—namely, the inducement of responsiveness-dampening bipartisan gerrymanders. The Online Appendix provides a state-by-state breakdown of constitutional provisions and relevant precedents, highlighting twenty-two states that appear ripe for representational adequacy litigation.
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INTRODUCTION

The moment for legal attacks on partisan gerrymanders may finally have arrived. In the 2004 case of Vieth v. Jubelirer, all nine Justices agreed that sufficiently extreme partisan gerrymanders would violate the Equal Protection Clause, but the Court split 4-1-4 on whether these claims are justiciable, with Justice Anthony Kennedy straddling the fence.¹ As this Article goes to press, advocates and observers are eagerly awaiting the Supreme Court’s decision in Gill v. Whitford, an appeal of the first trial court decision since the 1980s to invalidate a state legislative map as an unconstitutional partisan gerrymander.² The lower court’s decision in Whitford was soon followed by favorable preliminary rulings in other cases in Maryland and North Carolina.³

Echoing the diversity of thought among legal academics, parties, and amici in these cases have advanced a broad range of ideas about whether and how courts should police partisan gerrymanders. But common to all proposals on offer is a shared assumption about the judicial role: if a constitutionally discernable and judicially manageable standard for policing excessive partisanship exists, it is the courts’ responsibility to discover and apply it. This Article suggests that courts might instead recognize an implied legislative duty to enact a reasonable redistricting framework, including standards for the “representational adequacy” of legislative maps. Legislatures, not courts, would craft the legally operative standards.

This approach would allow courts to find a constitutional violation (abdication of the legislative duty) without committing to a particular measure of partisan fairness, and without drawing a contestable line between adequate and inadequate fairness. It would also allow courts to delay any decision about remedies. If the legislature in question did not respond by enacting a reasonable framework for redistricting, the court eventually could establish its own judicially

manageable standards, but the judge-made standards would be expressly provisional and subject to legislative revision. By casting judge-made standards as a temporary response to the legislature’s failure to act, the court would be able to make the standard constraining—which many judges seem to think necessary for manageability—without holding, implausibly, that the Constitution entails that particular standard. Importantly, too, the approach I suggest would allow courts to police partisan gerrymanders without inducing the creation of bipartisan gerrymanders, a likely but unwelcome byproduct of successful equal protection attacks on partisan maps.

The legislative-duty approach might seem unprecedented, but it closely parallels what many state courts have done in cases under the broadly worded education clauses found in nearly all state constitutions. That education rights jurisprudence may hold lessons for judicial management of partisan gerrymandering litigation is suggested by some striking but previously unremarked parallels between these domains: The relevant constitutional text is sparse. There is no social scientific or political consensus about how to measure the quality of the system (schools or legislative districts), let alone about where to draw the line between minimally adequate and constitutionally unacceptable quality. Constitutional injuries may arise from the disaggregated, uncoordinated decisions of numerous independent actors. Plaintiffs’ claims, if vindicated, would seem to leave trial courts with enormous remedial discretion. And the claims are acutely politically sensitive.

Yet, whereas federal courts have long resisted partisan gerrymandering claims, most state courts have rejected the corresponding nonjusticiability arguments in educational adequacy cases.4 Instead, state courts have developed coping mechanisms that mitigate the justiciability problems, including the articulation of legislative duties apparently designed to bring into being more judicially manageable standards and the issuance of provisional injunctive remedies, which the legislature may supplant.

I shall argue that similar strategies could be fruitfully deployed in gerrymandering-of-the-statehouse claims brought under the “free

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4. See infra Part II.B.
and open elections” or similar provisions found in many state constitutions. Analogous gerrymandering-of-Congress claims might eventually be brought under Article I of the U.S. Constitution, though litigants would be wise to establish state law precedents first.

Whatever the Supreme Court decides in Whitford, there will almost certainly be an important role for state courts to play in redistricting litigation going forward. If the Court holds partisan gerrymandering claims nonjusticiable, or announces a standard that will rarely, if ever, be met, then most of the action will shift to state courts. Alternatively, if the Court constitutionalizes a rigorous partisan symmetry requirement, state courts will probably be needed as a backstop against responsiveness-dampening bipartisan gerrymanders. Either way, the arguments and analogies developed in this Article open a new line of attack for litigators concerned with the overall health of democratic systems.

I proceed as follows. Part I briefly describes the doctrinal and pragmatic problems with partisan gerrymandering claims as presently litigated. Part II develops the analogy to educational adequacy, and explains how state courts have managed adequacy litigation. Part III sketches an adequacy-informed template for gerrymandering litigation and responds to objections. The table in the Online Appendix provides a state-by-state summary of the constitutional provisions and education precedents germane to representational adequacy litigation.5 I highlight twenty-two states where text and precedent suggest a particularly favorable environment for plaintiffs.

I. THREE DIFFICULTIES WITH PARTISAN GERRYMANDERING CLAIMS

In determining that equal protection entails the rule of one person, one vote, the Supreme Court in Reynolds v. Sims famously explained that malapportioned legislative districts deprive citizens in the overpopulated districts of “equally effective voice,” improperly empowering a minority of the voters to elect a majority of the

representatives. Soon afterwards, the Court also acknowledged that even equally populated districts could work a similar constitutional harm, insofar as the design of the districts in combination with voter preferences operates to “minimize or cancel out” the electoral voice of a politically distinct segment of the community. These ideas have anchored partisan gerrymandering litigation ever since.

But equal protection challenges to partisan gerrymanders have not lived up to plaintiffs’ hopes. In the 1986 case of Davis v. Bandemer, the Supreme Court glossed “minimize or cancel out” so as to all but guarantee that partisan gerrymandering claims would never succeed. When the Justices returned to the matter two decades later, in Vieth v. Jubelirer, they agreed that Bandemer was useless but split on what to do about it. A four-Justice plurality, led by Justice Antonin Scalia, argued that partisan gerrymandering claims were nonjusticiable for want of a judicially discoverable and manageable standard. Justice Kennedy concurred but only provisionally; he allowed that partisan gerrymandering claims might become justiciable, if only litigants could develop a legal standard that substantially constrained judicial discretion (“manageable”) while being closely tethered to the Constitution (“discoverable”). The dissenting Justices issued three opinions, each propounding a different standard.

In the most recent go-round, League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) v. Perry, Justice Kennedy expressed his continuing

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8. See 478 U.S. 109, 129-36 (1986) (plurality opinion) (suggesting that a partisan gerrymander would be unconstitutional only if it left the disadvantaged party without any means of influence or a fair opportunity for electoral success over many election cycles); see also Vieth v. Jubelirer, 541 U.S. 267, 279-81 (2004) (plurality opinion) (recounting the eighteen-year history of litigation under Bandemer and observing that no partisan gerrymandering claim had succeeded in this period).
9. See 541 U.S. at 279-83 (plurality opinion) (discussing and rejecting the Bandemer plurality’s standard); id. at 308 (Kennedy, J., concurring in the judgment) (agreeing with the plurality’s analysis of Bandemer); id. at 318-19 (Stevens, J., dissenting) (bracketing question of whether the Bandemer plurality stated the proper standard to apply to statewide gerrymander claim, while suggesting a district-specific approach); id. at 345 (Souter, J., dissenting) (proposing a “fresh start” to crafting legal standards for partisan gerrymandering claims); id. at 356-65 (Breyer, J., dissenting) (proposing yet another standard).
10. See id. at 281 (plurality opinion).
11. See id. at 306-17 (Kennedy, J., concurring in the judgment).
12. See supra note 9.
dissatisfaction with the standards on offer, including a prophylactic rule against mid-decade redistricting.\textsuperscript{13} But Justice Kennedy and others hinted that they might consider claims founded on some metric of “partisan symmetry,” a political science term for balance in the translation of vote shares into seats.\textsuperscript{14} (To illustrate, a map of legislative districts is asymmetric with a pro-Democratic bias if a Democratic vote share of 55 percent would probably garner 65 percent of the seats but a Republican vote share of 55 percent would probably leave the Republicans with only 60 percent of the seats.\textsuperscript{15})

Taking up Justice Kennedy’s invitation, academics have developed new, simpler measures of partisan bias that do not depend on counterfactual predictions about the share of seats that each party would win under various vote-swing scenarios. Examples include Eric McGhee and Nick Stephanopoulos’s “efficiency gap” (based on tabulations of the number of wasted votes cast for each party’s candidates);\textsuperscript{16} Robin Best and Michael McDonald’s mean-median difference (the gap between each party’s median share of a legislative district and its mean share);\textsuperscript{17} and further alternatives suggested by Samuel Wang,\textsuperscript{18} and Thomas Belin and his colleagues.\textsuperscript{19} As of this writing, the efficiency gap is enjoying its day in court. It underwrites \textit{Whitford v. Gill}, the first federal court decision since the 1980s to have found an unconstitutional partisan gerrymander,\textsuperscript{20} as well as the recently filed challenge to North Carolina’s congressional districts.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{13} 548 U.S. 399, 417-19 (2006) (plurality opinion).
\textsuperscript{15} See id. at 843.
\textsuperscript{16} See id. at 834.
\textsuperscript{19} See Thomas R. Belin et al., \textit{Using a Density-Variation/Compactness Measure to Evaluate Redistricting Plans for Partisan Bias and Electoral Responsiveness}, STAT., POL. & POL’Y, 2011, art. 3.
But as this Part will explain, there remain ample reasons for concern. First, the justiciability worries that Justice Kennedy has voiced are not about to disappear. Over the years many different Justices, both liberals and conservatives, have suggested that the political sensitivities of redistricting cases necessitate unusually crisp, constraining doctrinal standards. And yet there is no precedent for the Court simply to declare that one particular social scientific measure of partisan bias constitutes the constitutional standard, which would seem necessary if the legal standard is to be constraining. Second, if partisan-bias claims become justiciable under the Equal Protection Clause, the likely result is a rash of bipartisan gerrymanders, an outcome already blessed by the Supreme Court but which would probably have bad consequences for Congress. Third, as Adam Cox has argued, claims about the partisan fairness of congressional districts (as opposed to state legislative districts) present exceptional difficulties owing to the disaggregated nature of congressional redistricting. Thus, even if the Supreme Court upholds the invalidation of Wisconsin’s state legislative districts in Whitford, congressional gerrymanders may remain inviolable.

A. “Judicially Discoverable and Manageable” Standards

Since Vieth, partisan gerrymandering claims have foundered because the “judicially manageable” standards on offer have not been regarded (by Justice Kennedy) as “judicially discoverable,” and because the discoverable standards have been deemed unmanageable.  

22. See, for example, Judge William Griesbach’s forceful dissent in Whitford, 218 F. Supp. 3d at 942.
25. It is of course a basic axiom of constitutional law that courts can only adjudicate claims that rest upon “judicially discoverable and manageable [legal] standards.” See Baker,
Certainly there is a discoverable standard for when a partisan gerrymander runs afoul of the Equal Protection Clause. It is this: the gerrymander “goes too far.” All nine Justices in Vieth agreed that a sufficiently extreme partisan gerrymander would be unconstitutional.26 But such a know-it-when-I-see-it standard would be paradigmatically unmanageable.27

Manageability in this domain has a very particular reference point: the mechanical jurisprudence of one person, one vote, under which any departure from exactly equally populated congressional districts is presumptively unconstitutional,28 as are departures of more than 10 percent in state and local government districts.29 Because the partisan stakes in redistricting litigation are so high, courts must be bound (it is said) by exceptionally determinate legal standards, so as to avoid both the fact and appearance of judicial favoritism toward one political party or the other.30

In LULAC v. Perry, the Supreme Court’s most recent partisan gerrymandering case, the plaintiffs suggested a prophylactic rule against mid-decade redistricting whose “sole motive” was partisan advantage.31 Justice Kennedy rejected this standard because it did not require plaintiffs to “show a burden, as measured by a reliable standard, on [their] representational rights.”32

Yet in order to show a burden on representational rights as measured by a reliable standard, plaintiffs must pick one of the several plausible quantitative definitions of partisan bias. Then they must choose a data source and statistical model. And finally—if the

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27. See Vieth, 541 U.S. at 291 (plurality opinion) (rejecting “a totality-of-the-circumstances analysis, where all conceivable factors, none of which is dispositive, are weighed with an eye to ascertaining whether the particular gerrymander has gone too far”).
29. See Brown v. Thomson, 462 U.S. 835, 842 (1983) (“Our decisions have established, as a general matter, that an apportionment plan with a maximum population deviation under 10% falls within this category of minor deviations.”).
32. Id. at 418.
standard is to tightly fetter judicial discretion—they must ask judges to constitutionalize this particular approach to measuring “burdens on representational rights,” and a particular numerical threshold beyond which gerrymanders “go too far.” Proceeding along these lines, Stephanopoulos and McGhee proposed that courts adopt their efficiency gap measure and “set[ ] the bar [for presumptive unconstitutio]ality at two seats for congressional plans and 8 percent for state house plans, with the further proviso that sensitivity testing show that the efficiency gaps are unlikely to hit zero over the plans’ [anticipated ten-year] lifetimes.”33 Simon Jackman, the plaintiffs’ expert in Whitford v. Gill, subsequently analyzed 206 maps of state legislative districts dating to the early 1970s, and found that 95 percent of the maps with an initial efficiency gap of 7 percent or more favored the same party throughout the life of the map.34 The Whitford plaintiffs argued on this basis that 7 percent should be the threshold for presumptive unconstitutionality.35

These suggestions represent perfectly reasonable ways for a legislature to codify limits on partisan gerrymandering, but what in the Equal Protection Clause or any other constitutional provision tells courts to use McGhee’s wasted-votes measure of partisan bias, as opposed to, for example, Gelman and King’s measure of partisan bias,36 or Best and McDonald’s or Wang’s mean-median difference,37 or Chen’s approach based on the distribution of maps generated by a compact-districting computer algorithm,38 or Wang’s definition of

35. See Whitford, 218 F. Supp. at 860-61, 909 n.311 (explaining this argument but declaring to “reach the propriety of the 7% number” because the observed efficiency gaps in the Wisconsin map were well in excess of 7 percent).
36. For defenses of this measure, see Anthony J. McGann et al., Gerrymandering in America: The House of Representatives, the Supreme Court, and the Future of Popular Sovereignty 58-70 (2016); and Bernard Grofman & Gary King, The Future of Partisan Symmetry as a Judicial Test for Partisan Gerrymandering After LULAC v. Perry, 6 Election L.J. 2 (2007).
37. See McDonald & Best, supra note 17; Wang, supra note 18.
an anomalous map based on the current distribution of partisans across congressional districts in the nation as a whole? These are all more or less plausible ways of concretizing the idea of partisan bias. Though technically minded academics disagree about which measure is best, generalist judges are not well-equipped to arbitrate this debate.

It is telling that in other areas of election law, courts have pointedly avoided creating legal standards that would privilege a particular statistical technique or quantitative metric of political fairness. Where courts have created bright-line cutoffs, they have done so using raw data collected by the government and determined by the government to be relevant to the problem at hand. Thus, in malapportionment cases, the courts implemented the rule of “one person, one vote” using population totals from the Census Bureau, rather than transformations of that or other data produced by expert witnesses. Judges were quick to dismiss litigants’ efforts to draw them into political science debates about how best to quantify the concept of “voting power.” In cases brought by independent


40. Compare Stephanopoulos & McGhee, supra note 14, at 855-62 (arguing that their “efficiency gap” measure is superior to Gelman & King’s measure of partisan bias based on counterfactual outcomes), with McGann et al., supra note 36, at 58-70 (defending Gelman & King’s measure, and arguing that Stephanopoulos & McGhee’s efficiency gap rests on arbitrary assumptions about vote-to-seat swing ratio and about the number of wasted votes that should be cast for each party’s candidates when the aggregate vote share of each party deviates from 50 percent); compare also Chen & Cottrell, supra note 38, at 330-34 (arguing that computer simulation approaches represent an improvement over previous methods that detect partisan gerrymanders by their effects), with Micah Altman & Michael McDonald, The Promise and Perils of Computers in Redistricting, 5 Duke J. Const. L. & Pub. Pol’y 69, 95-96 (2010) (criticizing simulation-based methods on the ground that no proof establishes that the distribution of maps generated by any existing computer algorithm approximates a random sample from the universe of all potential maps that satisfy the designated criteria), Wendy K. Tam Cho & Yan Y. Liu, Toward a Talismanic Redistricting Tool: A Computational Method for Identifying Extreme Redistricting Plans, 15 Election L.J. 351 (2016) (presenting a new redistricting algorithm with stronger theoretical foundations), and Benjamin Fifield et al., A New Automated Redistricting Simulator Using Markov Chain Monte Carlo (Mar. 15, 2017) (unpublished manuscript), http://imai.princeton.edu/research/files/redist.pdf (same).


candidates and third parties seeking access to the ballot, the courts created rough quantitative guidelines based on the percentage of eligible voters whose signatures the candidate or party is required to gather for ballot access. The doctrinal standard is again grounded in data (signature counts) that the government chose and deemed relevant for rationing ballot access, not on an inventive political scientist’s measure of how easy or hard it actually is, all things considered, for third-party and independent candidates to qualify for the ballot.

To be sure, courts in some areas of election law do rely on statistical estimates of phenomena that the government does not measure itself. The leading example is racial vote dilution law under section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, where plaintiffs are required to prove that political preferences in the defendant jurisdiction are racially polarized. Yet here the Supreme Court has carefully avoided any suggestion that there is one right way to estimate racial polarization as a matter of law, and lower courts have consistently rejected arguments for bright-line cutoffs for “legally significant” polarization. The Supreme Court may yet decide to treat partisan gerrymandering claims in the same way, inviting litigants to present competing measures of partisan bias and giving district judges discretion to decide whether the bias goes too far on the facts of a particular case. But that would mean relaxing or abandoning the manageability premise of Vieth, LULAC, and the malapportionment cases.

43. For discussion of these cases, see Christopher S. Elmendorf, Structuring Judicial Review of Electoral Mechanics: Explanations and Opportunities, 156 U. Pa. L. Rev. 313, 345-53 (2007).
44. See id.
45. See Elmendorf et al., supra note 23, at 589.
46. See Thornburg v. Gingles, 478 U.S. 30, 56 (1986) (“A showing that a significant number of minority group members usually vote for the same candidates is one way of proving the political cohesiveness necessary to a vote dilution claim.” (emphasis added)).
47. See Elmendorf et al., supra note 23, at 609-19 (discussing judicial practices in a random sample of cases).
B. Bipartisan Lockups

Imagine that a post-Scalia Supreme Court declares that partisan gerrymandering claims are justiciable, and tells lower courts to police severe gerrymanders using generally accepted statistical techniques and measures of partisan bias. No particular metric, statistical technique, or threshold of unconstitutional extremity is made decisive.

This declaration from the Supreme Court would substantially alter the strategic calculus of the state legislators who carry out most state and congressional redistricting, and of the members of Congress who seek to influence them. Redistricters generally face a trade-off between securing partisan advantage and protecting the seats of incumbents. Partisan advantage is maximized by distributing reliable partisan voters efficiently, so that they comprise just a bit more than 50 percent of the voters in as many districts as possible. But lawmakers who represent such districts are somewhat vulnerable to general election challengers. Most incumbents would prefer a “safe,” politically lopsided district.

If, following Whitford, partisan gerrymandering claims remain nonjusticiable, redistricters will be able to pursue either partisan advantage or incumbency protection with little risk of judicial invalidation, so long as the line-drawers comply with the equal-population mandate and the Voting Rights Act. Bipartisan gerrymanders are insulated against constitutional attack by Gaffney v. Cummings, in which the Supreme Court held that equal protection scrutiny should be at its “lowest ebb” when a map allocates seats in proportion to each party’s share of the electorate, and by LULAC v. Perry, in which the Court stated that redistricting maps designed to keep prior districts intact “accord with concern for the voters.”

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50. See id. at 449-52.
52. 412 U.S. 735, 754 (1973).
But if partisan gerrymanders become subject to judicial invalidation while incumbency protection plans remain bulletproof, the risk-reward calculus for legislators drawing electoral districts will tilt toward the latter. The likely result is an increase in the proportion of legislative maps drawn primarily to protect incumbents.

This will reduce legislative responsiveness. Bigger partisan waves will be necessary to flip party control of Congress and statehouses. It may also dampen the incentive of party elites to develop a party brand that appeals to the median voter. If there are very few competitive seats, a party’s loss of support from voters in the ideological middle will barely dent its legislative representation. If there are lots of competitive seats, the same loss of support could reduce the party’s caucus to an ineffectual rump. The ratio of competitive to noncompetitive districts may therefore have some bearing on partisan polarization, although other factors are clearly at work too.

C. Congress and the Problem of Disaggregated Redistricting

State legislatures are generally districted by a single entity, typically the legislature itself, pursuant to a single set of criteria

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54. See Kang, supra note 49, at 459 (describing political dynamics in noncompetitive districts).
55. See id.
56. Nolan M. McCarty, The Limits of Electoral and Legislative Reform in Addressing Polarization, 99 Calif. L. Rev. 359, 366-68 (2011) (arguing that parallel polarization of the House (districted) and Senate (not districted), along with other pieces of evidence, suggest that partisan gerrymanders are not to blame for congressional polarization). I disagree with McCarty on one important point, however. He points to the literature showing that polarization has been associated with a divergence between the voting behavior of a Democrat and a Republican representing the same district and then asserts that gerrymandering has no effect on this—implying that it can have no effect on this. Id. at 368 & n.25. However, if gerrymandering affects the proportion of competitive districts, it is likely to affect how Democrats and Republican representatives vote, conditional on representing the same district (whether competitive or not). The reason is that donors, activists, and other party elites would like the party to be able to win control of the legislature, and they are likely to exert pressure on the voting behavior of all of the party’s representatives, to the extent that voting behavior affects the party brand (and their voting behavior almost certainly will affect the brand, as it affects what legislation the party can enact or block). If the party needs to win a lot of politically moderate districts to obtain a majority of the seats, party elites will probably pressure legislators in most districts (not just the moderate ones) to take more moderate positions.
specified in state law. By contrast, Congress is districted by fifty different states, pursuant to fifty different sets of state law criteria.

The disaggregated redistricting of Congress leads to a host of difficulties for judicial policing of partisan gerrymanders, which Adam Cox has perceptively explored. Cox points out that the harms of partisan gerrymanders—such as partisan bias or minority rule—can only be detected at the level of the legislative body as a whole. To police the gerrymandering of Congress, courts must either “develop tests to measure directly the harm of congressional gerrymanders at the legislature-wide level” or tackle the problem indirectly with “constitutional rules that reduce the risk that state redistricting efforts will combine to produce a Congress-wide injury.”

Cox concludes that “[t]he first option is wholly impractical,” as a court would have to consider all fifty congressional district maps at once. The operative set of congressional district maps is always in flux: states draw maps at different times, and legal challenges under state law, the Voting Rights Act, and the U.S. Constitution proceed separately in each state. A court trying to evaluate the partisan fairness of the map of congressional districts would be faced with a constantly moving target.

Perhaps graver yet are problems that would arise at the remedy stage. If a court determined that the aggregate map of congressional districts plan is biased toward Democrats, for example, the court could remedy the violation by modifying the map of districts in any number of states. Cox points out that the choice of which state’s maps to undo would be “essentially arbitrary.”

58. See Levitt, Who Draws, supra note 57.
59. See generally Cox, supra note 24.
60. See id. at 418-27.
61. Id. at 441.
62. Id.
63. Id. at 443.
64. Id. at 443-44.
65. Id. at 444.
In one-person, one-vote and VRA cases, the Supreme Court has guided remedial discretion by telling judges to follow state law and the policy choices reflected in extant maps to the maximum feasible extent. But for the congressional map as a whole, no overarching criteria or policy choice exists. A judicial decision to remedy a partisan gerrymander by, for example, remapping Texas’s congressional districts while leaving Alabama’s untouched, would privilege Alabama’s redistricting choices over Texas’s for no constitutionally discernable reason.

The alternative, as Cox recognizes, is some kind of indirect, risk-based strategy for policing congressional gerrymanders, such as the “no mid-decade redistricting for partisan reasons” rule proposed by the plaintiffs in LULAC. But as we have seen, Justice Kennedy rejected that test because it did not entail any showing of “burden[s] on representational rights.” This implies that an acceptable legal standard must account for the translation of votes into representation, and thus pushes toward an inquiry into the full set of districts for the legislative chamber as a whole, with all of the attendant difficulties in cases about the House of Representatives.

II. THE EDUCATION ANALOGY

The justiciability and remedial problems presented by partisan gerrymandering claims, though hard, are hardly unprecedented. This Part shows that they have near analogues in state court cases concerning the constitutional adequacy of systems of public education. But whereas federal courts have treated these problems as reason to avoid partisan gerrymandering claims, most state courts have deemed educational adequacy claims justiciable. It is therefore

67. By contrast, Upham v. Seaman’s principle of deference to policy judgments reflected in state law and the extent map follows naturally from basic propositions about federalism. See Upham, 456 U.S. at 43.
68. Cox, supra note 24, at 444-51.
70. Id. at 446.
worth asking whether the state court experience with education rights litigation has been disastrous, as those who argue for the nonjusticiability of partisan gerrymandering claims might expect. If the state courts have done some good, it is also worth asking whether the strategies they developed for managing the justiciability and remedial problems in educational adequacy cases might be adapted for a new generation of “representational adequacy” claims about the composition of legislative bodies.

I shall use the shorthand “representational adequacy claim” to denote any challenge to legislative districts in which (1) the plaintiffs claim that the quality of representation (or their opportunity to secure quality representation) falls short of constitutional standards, and (2) the plaintiffs’ theory of representational inadequacy requires an assessment of the system of legislative districts as a whole. Examples include partisan gerrymandering claims premised on the notion that citizens who support each major party should have an equal opportunity to rack up seats in the legislature,72 or founded on the proposition that the party that wins a majority of the votes should garner a majority of the seats;73 ideological misalignment claims premised on the idea that the median voter in the median legislative district (with districts ranked by median-voter ideology) should be ideologically very close to the median voter in the polity as a whole;74 and lack-of-competition claims premised on the notion that the system of legislative districts should include enough competitive seats for the legislature to be appropriately responsive to swings in public opinion.75

72. This is the premise of the various symmetry standards proposed by Grofman and King, Stephanopoulous and McGhee, Best and McDonald, Wang, and others. See sources cited supra notes 14, 17-19, 36.
Section A draws out the justiciability and remedial commonalties between educational adequacy claims and (potential) representational adequacy claims. Section B describes the strategies state courts have used to manage educational adequacy litigation.

A. Of Political Thickets and Stygian Swamps: Barriers to Judicial Review

The arguments for courts to stay out of educational adequacy and representational adequacy disputes are very similar. The relevant constitutional text is sparse. There is no generally accepted measure of the quality of the system (education or representation), let alone a shared norm about where to draw the line between minimally adequate and constitutionally unacceptable quality. Constitutional injuries may arise from the disaggregated, uncoordinated decisions of numerous independent actors. The claims if vindicated would leave trial courts with enormous remedial discretion. And the claims are acutely politically sensitive.

1. Sparse Constitutional Text

a. Education—State Constitutions

Forty-nine of the fifty state constitutions expressly provide for a system of public schools. The education clauses typically state that the legislature “shall” establish a system of public schools, implying a mandatory duty. But the texts offer scant guidance for courts

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77. See, e.g., Ky. Const. § 183 (“The General Assembly shall, by appropriate legislation, provide for an efficient system of common schools throughout the State.”); N.C. Const. art. IX, § 3 (“The General Assembly shall provide that every child of appropriate age and of sufficient mental and physical ability shall attend the public schools, unless educated by other means.”); Okla. Const. art. XIII, § 4 (“The Legislature shall provide for the compulsory attendance at some public or other school, unless other means of education are provided, of all the children in the State who are sound in mind and body.”); Pa. Const. art. III, § 14 (“The General Assembly shall provide for the maintenance and support of a thorough and efficient system of public education to serve the needs of the Commonwealth.”).
asked to determine whether the school system is qualitatively adequate.

Scholars have roughly grouped the education clauses into four categories. The least demanding provisions state only that the legislature “shall establish” a system of public schools, or free public schools. Education clauses in the second category describe the school system in very loose qualitative terms, typically calling for a system of “efficient,” “thorough,” or “thorough and efficient” schools. In the third group are education clauses with an evocative preamble and, arguably, a somewhat stronger mandate. An exemplar is Article IX of the California Constitution, which reads: “A general diffusion of knowledge and intelligence being essential to the preservation of the rights and liberties of the people, the Legislature shall encourage by all suitable means the promotion of intellectual, scientific, moral, and agricultural improvement.”

The most demanding provisions describe education as a “fundamental,” “paramount,” or “primary” duty of the state. They do not, however, feature any more specific articulation of a constitutional standard of quality.

In view of the ubiquitous lack of detail concerning educational adequacy, or even the appearance of the word “adequacy” in the constitutional text, it is perhaps unsurprising that empirical studies have found no correlation between the type of education clause and judicial rulings on justiciability and other matters.

79. See Grubb, supra note 78, at 67.
80. See id. at 67-68.
81. See id. at 68-69.
82. CAL. CONST. art. IX, § 1.
83. See Grubb, supra note 78, at 69-70.
84. As Clay Gillette has observed, the qualitative adjectives found in extant education clauses are “inherently nebulous.” Clayton P. Gillette, Reconstructing Local Control of School Finance: A Cautionary Note, 25 CAP. U. L. REV. 37, 37 (1996).
b. Representation—Federal Constitution

Representational adequacy claims under the U.S. Constitution have, to date, mostly consisted of equal protection claims brought by political parties, although lately plaintiffs have also invoked the First Amendment at the invitation of Justice Kennedy.86 Needless to say, the text of the First Amendment and the text of the Equal Protection Clause are equally silent on standards of fair and effective representation.

The most plausible alternative—assuming the Supreme Court is not about to jettison the long line of cases holding the Guarantee Clause nonjusticiable—is to found representational adequacy claims under the U.S. Constitution on Article I.87 Section 2 of Article I provides that “[t]he House of Representatives shall be ... chosen ... by the People of the several States.”88 Yet Article I also provides that the “Electors” for congressional elections are those qualified to vote for “the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature,”89 and that state legislatures shall prescribe by law the time, place, and manner of congressional elections, which regulations Congress “may at any
time by Law make or alter.”

Reading these provisions together, one might infer that voter qualifications and time, place, and manner regulations must be such as to enable the People to make a substantively meaningful choice about the composition of Congress. To put this point a bit differently, the language “chosen ... by the People” in Section 2 may establish by implication substantive standards of representativeness and responsiveness for the House of Representatives, the wing of the federal government that the Framers expected to be most closely tethered to public opinion. It may also imply a corresponding responsibility on the part of Congress and the state legislatures to exercise their delegated powers in furtherance of those standards.

The education analogy is instructive. Courts have found states with formally free public schools but many dysfunctional school districts liable for failing to maintain a “system of public schools” within the meaning of the state’s constitution. The very idea of a “system of public schools” (or a “thorough and efficient” system) arguably implies some minimal level of quality. So too, the very idea of a legislative body “chosen ... by the People” implies some minimal level of responsiveness to shifts in public opinion, and some minimal correspondence between the ideology/party of the median legislator and that of the median voter or citizen.

c. Representation—State Constitutions

The vast majority of state constitutions include both general provisions about the right to vote and fair elections, and specific criteria for districting. (See the Online Appendix for a state-by-state

90. Id. § 4.
91. The argument that Article I impliedly limits congressional gerrymander is fleshed out in McGANN ET AL., supra note 36, at 205-10.
summary. The general provisions are exemplified by clauses that guarantee “free” or “free and equal” elections, or elections with “purity” and “integrity.” A small number of state constitutions also provide explicitly for “equal representation” or an “equal right to elect” state officials. As in the education domain, these general provisions are often coupled to a legislative delegation, set forth in mandatory terms. For example: “The General Assembly by law shall ... insure ... the integrity of the election process.” This implies a legislative duty.

But in contrast to the education domain, where criteria for school quality are generally missing, nearly every state constitution lists

95. Elmendorf, supra note 5.

96. Gardner, supra note 93, at 648. Josh Douglas reports that twenty-six state constitutions have terms requiring “free,” “free and open,” or “free and equal” elections, and that nearly all state constitutions confer an affirmative right to vote. Douglas, supra note 93, at 103, app. James Gardner suggests that the clauses granting the right to vote could provide the hook for partisan gerrymandering claims. See Gardner, supra note 93, at 647-52. Here I am skeptical. As Douglas shows in the appendix to his article, most of these provisions are cast in terms of voter qualifications. See Douglas, supra note 93, app. But a provision defining who is qualified to vote need not imply anything about the system of districts for aggregating votes into representation.

97. See, e.g., Mass. Const. pt. 1, art. IX (“[T]he inhabitants of this commonwealth ... have an equal right to elect, and to be elected, for public employments.”); N.H. Const. pt. 1, art. XI (“[E]very inhabitant of the state of 18 years of age and upwards shall have an equal right to vote in any election.”); S.C. Const. art. I, § 5 (“[E]very inhabitant of this State possessing the qualifications provided for in this Constitution shall have an equal right to elect officers and be elected to fill public office.”); W. Va. Const. art. II, § 4 (“Every citizen shall be entitled to equal representation in the government, and, in all apportionments of representation, equality of numbers of those entitled thereto, shall as far as practicable, be preserved.”).

98. Ill. Const. art. III, § 4; accord Ariz. Const. art. VII, § 12 (“There shall be enacted registration and other laws to secure the purity of elections and guard against abuses of the elective franchise.”); Colo. Const. art. VII, § 11 (“The general assembly shall pass laws to secure the purity of elections, and guard against abuses of the elective franchise.”); Del. Const. art. V, § 1 (“[T]he General Assembly may by law prescribe the means, methods and instruments of voting so as best to secure secrecy and the independence of the voter, preserve the freedom and purity of elections and prevent fraud, corruption and intimidation thereat.”); Md. Const. art. I, § 7 (“The General Assembly shall pass Laws necessary for the preservation of the purity of Elections.”); Mich. Const. art. II, § 4 (“The legislature shall enact laws to preserve the purity of elections.”); Mont. Const. art. IV, § 3 (“The legislature ... shall insure the purity of elections and guard against abuses of the electoral process.”); N.M. Const. art. VII, § 1 (“The legislature shall enact such laws as will secure the secrecy of the ballot and the purity of elections and guard against the abuse of elective franchise.”); Wyo. Const. art. VI, § 13 (“The legislature shall pass laws to secure the purity of elections, and guard against abuses of the elective franchise.”).
some substantive criteria specifically for legislative districts.\textsuperscript{99} (Perhaps this is why plaintiffs have almost entirely overlooked the possibility of challenging gerrymanders under the generally worded electoral provisions.\textsuperscript{100}) Taking the lay of the land circa 2010, Justin Levitt reported that forty-five of the fifty state constitutions require population equality among state legislative districts, twenty-eight call for districts to track political subdivision boundaries, and seven codify “community of interest” districting criteria.\textsuperscript{101} Levitt noted that five state constitutions also include a prohibition on “undue favoritism” toward political factions, or require competitive districts.\textsuperscript{102} (By my count there are now seven such states.\textsuperscript{103})

The existence of explicit constitutional criteria for legislative districts may support representational adequacy claims in some states, and hinder the claims in others. The criteria are obviously helpful insofar as they target the very thing the plaintiff wants to attack. For example, partisan gerrymandering claims should be available in Hawaii, whose constitution states, “No district shall be so drawn as to unduly favor a person or political faction.”\textsuperscript{104} Similarly, insufficient competition claims should be justiciable in Arizona, whose constitution provides, “[C]ompetitive districts should be favored

\textsuperscript{99.} See Levitt, supra note 94.

\textsuperscript{100.} In Part III.E.4, I survey state court redistricting decisions following the 1990, 2000, and 2010 rounds of redistricting. Only two decisions mention the generally worded electoral provisions of the state’s constitution, and the plaintiffs in one of those cases never explained to the court what that provision requires (in the redistricting context) beyond compliance with the population equality, compactness, and contiguity criteria also specified in the constitutional text. \textit{See} Johnson v. State, 366 S.W.3d 11, 33 (Mo. 2012) (stating that because the plaintiffs’ “free-and-open elections” argument was predicated on the state’s alleged failure to comply with specified redistricting criteria under another provision of the state constitution, the failure of the latter argument necessarily implied the failure of the former). As Part III.E.4 also explains, three other redistricting claims invoked generic “government in the public interest”-type provisions of a state constitution, which the courts deemed nonjusticiable or unenforceable by private litigants.

\textsuperscript{101.} See Levitt, supra note 94; see also James A. Gardner, \textit{Foreword: Representation Without Party: Lessons from State Constitutional Attempts to Control Gerrymandering,} 37 \textit{Rutgers L.J.} 881, 894-95 (2006) (“By far the most common, and oldest, anti-gerrymandering provisions are those requiring election districts to be ‘contiguous,’ a provision appearing today in thirty-seven state constitutions, and ‘compact,’ a requirement imposed by twenty-four constitutions.” (footnote omitted)).

\textsuperscript{102.} See Levitt, supra note 94.

\textsuperscript{103.} See Elmendorf, supra note 5.

\textsuperscript{104.} \textit{Haw. Const.} art. IV, § 6(2).
where to do so would create no significant detriment to the other goals.”

Yet if the constitution only lists criteria like compactness, contiguity, and respect for subdivision boundaries or communities of interest, a court might infer that these criteria are exclusive, or, even if nonexclusive, that the constitution’s theory of representation is concerned solely with the integrity of what Nick Stephanopoulos calls “territorial communities.” If so, general constitutional provisions about “free and open” elections, “equal representation,” or elections with “integrity” would not support representational adequacy claims premised on a lack of competitive districts, partisan bias, or nonalignment of the median district with the polity-wide median voter.

105. ARIZ. CONST. art. IV, pt. 2, § 1, cl. 14(F).
106. See, e.g., Wilson v. Kasich, 981 N.E.2d 814, 819-20 (Ohio 2012) (refusing to infer a general command of partisan neutrality from textual requirements of compactness, contiguity, and equality of population).
107. See Nicholas O. Stephanopoulos, Redistricting and the Territorial Community, 160 U. Pa. L. Rev. 1379 (2012). James Gardner has persuasively argued that long-standing state constitutional requirements of contiguity and compactness reflect this theory of representation. See Gardner, supra note 93. He notes that a couple of state courts have construed such redistricting criteria as exclusive, id. at 969 n.319, but also observes that more general provisions of the state constitution concerning elections might be read to embody a different theory of representation, particularly given the state constitutional legacy of the Progressive and Populist movements, see id. at 969-70.
108. Such general electoral provisions would be held not to apply to redistricting. It might be said, for example, that the “purity” and “integrity” of elections is solely a function of whether all eligible voters (and no others) may vote, free of coercion, and have their votes counted. In a few constitutions, the immediate textual context of the provisions about “pure” elections, or elections with “integrity,” suggests that these provisions are mainly concerned with fraud in the casting and counting of ballots. See, e.g., NEV. CONST. art. II, § 6 (“Provision shall be made by law for the registration of the names of the Electors within the counties of which they may be residents and for the ascertainment by proper proofs of the persons who shall be entitled to vote in all elections, and upon all questions submitted to the voters of the state unless disqualified by law for mental incompetence or the conviction of a felony. The Legislature may by law establish reasonable requirements to assure the integrity of the vote.”); S.D. CONST. art. VII, § 2 (“Every United States citizen eighteen years of age or older who has met all residency and registration requirements shall be entitled to vote in all elections and upon all questions submitted to the voters of the state unless disqualified by law for mental incompetence or the conviction of a felony. The Legislature may by law establish reasonable requirements to insure the integrity of the vote.”); TENN. CONST. art. IV, § 1 (“The General Assembly shall have power to enact laws requiring voters to vote in the election precincts in which they may reside, and laws to secure the freedom of elections and the purity of the ballot box.”); TEX. CONST. art. VI, § 4 (“[T]he Legislature shall provide for the numbering of tickets and make such other regulations as may be necessary to detect and punish fraud and preserve the purity of the ballot box.”).
But it need not follow from the existence of constitutionally codified “traditional districting criteria” that more general electoral provisions cannot support representational adequacy claims about fairness and competition at the level of the legislature as a whole. No state constitution states that the listed districting criteria are exclusive. ¹⁰⁹ Perhaps the listed criteria are simply those the constitution’s framers were able to foresee and agree upon as important, and that the legislative duty to guarantee electoral integrity, equal representation, or “free and equal” elections obligates the legislature to spell out and act upon additional redistricting criteria as societal knowledge, norms, and redistricting technology evolve.¹¹⁰

2. No Generally Accepted, Unidimensional Metric of Quality

If there were a political or social scientific consensus about how to measure the quality of schools or representation, the constitutional text’s lack of specificity might not represent a large barrier to the justiciability of adequacy claims. Judges could simply declare a “judicially manageable” standard using the accepted measure of quality, and the underlying consensus would insulate judges against the charge of reading their personal political views into the constitution.

But there is no such consensus in either domain, and the barriers to consensus run deep. In both domains, “quality” has multiple dimensions, and reasonable people will disagree about the relative importance of progress on this or that dimension. Trade-offs are omnipresent. Measurement problems are vexing too. Some dimensions of quality are easier to observe than others, but even as to easier-to-measure dimensions, experts are continually debating, reworking, and refining the available metrics.

¹⁰⁹. My research assistants looked up the relevant language in each state constitution and found no language indicating that the listed criteria are exclusive.

¹¹⁰. Cf. Gardner, supra note 101, at 969-70 (suggesting that general electoral fairness provisions, read against the Progressive and Populist history of many state constitutions, might reasonably be understood to limit partisanship in districting).
a. School Quality

State courts have justified their involvement in school-quality cases with reference to the “fundamental” importance of education for children’s future participation in the political, economic, and social life of the community.111 Given this foundation, one might expect courts to evaluate the quality of public schools in terms of their impact on students’ future rates of voting, employment, incarceration, and the like. A school system would be deemed inadequate if the state had failed to adopt policies or programs that would demonstrably improve students’ adult outcomes at reasonable cost. Yet there is very little credible evidence concerning the effects of alternative educational policies or programs on such long-run outcomes.112 And even if credible evidence did exist, on what basis is a court to second-guess the legislature’s judgment about which adult outcomes to prioritize?

One response is to define the constitutional minimum standard of adequacy solely in terms of basic literacy and numeracy skills, which are useful in all of life’s domains and which may be measured with standardized tests.113 But as the contentious politics of educational testing well illustrate,114 there is no consensus about how

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112. See generally Elmendorf & Shanske, supra note 71 (reviewing literature and explaining its shortcomings in terms of state control over the production of knowledge about the effects of educational interventions on long-run outcomes).

113. In the early- to mid-2000s, some commentators hoped that the federal No Child Left Behind Act, which established testing and reporting requirements, would come to anchor state constitutional education rights litigation. See, e.g., Martin R. West & Paul E. Peterson, The Adequacy Lawsuit: A Critical Appraisal, in School Money Trials: The Legal Pursuit of Educational Adequacy 1, 2, 16-17 (Martin R. West & Paul E. Peterson eds., 2007).

114. On the politics of testing, see generally Lorraine M. McDonnell, Politics, Persuasion, and Educational Testing (2004); and Ashley Jochim & Patrick McGuinn, The Politics
to measure such skills, or about prioritizing them over other instructional objectives, such as the inculcation of “grit” and socio-emotional competencies. Nor does the normative foundation of the education right support such a lexical prioritization: an adult who is poor and marginally literate, yet also free and a regular voter, participates more fully in the political, economic, and social life of the community than an adult who, while better at reading and math, never votes and ends up spending a good share of his years in prison (perhaps a consequence of his failure to develop fellow feeling and conflict resolution skills as a youngster).

**b. Representational Quality**

As with schools, so too with representation—there are lots of different, reasonable criteria that one might use to evaluate the overall quality of a system of legislative districts. These include ideological alignment between the median legislative district and the median voter in the polity as a whole, partisan bias in “wasted

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118. See sources cited supra note 74.
votes” or in the translation of votes into legislative representation;\textsuperscript{119} representation for territorial communities of interest;\textsuperscript{120} descriptive representation for historically marginalized groups;\textsuperscript{121} and congruence between legislative district boundaries and media-market boundaries, in the interest of informed voting.\textsuperscript{122}

As in the education domain, there are ongoing social scientific debates about how to measure many of these goods. For example, should community-of-interest criteria be implemented using subjective expressions of identity voiced at public meetings, or objective measures of commonality gleaned from census data?\textsuperscript{123} Should partisan bias be measured using the observed or expected number of wasted votes, a summary measure of asymmetry in the estimated votes-to-seats curve, or simple gaps between the mean number of partisans in a district and the median?\textsuperscript{124}

Perhaps more daunting than the measurement problems are the trade-offs. Progress on one normative dimension may require sacrifices on another. For example, the concentration of Democrats and liberals in urban centers means that achieving a reasonable number of competitive districts, or ideological congruence between the median district and the median voter, may require drawing “pie slice” districts that combine city-center liberals with suburban and ex-urban conservatives, in violation of community-of-interest criteria.\textsuperscript{125}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{119} See supra notes 16-19 and accompanying text.
\item \textsuperscript{120} For an elaboration and defense of the territorial community norm for districting, see Stephanopoulos, supra note 107.
\item \textsuperscript{122} See Elmendorf & Schleicher, supra note 74, at 1861-71 (reviewing evidence concerning media-market/district congruence and informed voting). This may become less important in the social-media era.
\item \textsuperscript{123} For the objective approach, see Nicholas O. Stephanopoulos, Spatial Diversity, 125 Harv. L. Rev. 1903 (2012). For the subjective, see Karin Mac Donald & Bruce E. Cain, Community of Interest Methodology and Public Testimony, 3 U.C. Irvine L. Rev. 609 (2013).
\item \textsuperscript{124} For arguments in favor of each of these approaches, see sources cited supra notes 36-40.
\item \textsuperscript{125} See Chen & Rodden, supra note 38, at 241-47.
\end{itemize}
3. Disaggregated Decision-Making and Remedial Discretion

As Part I.C explained, any challenge to the overall quality of the system of congressional districts would be greatly complicated by the disaggregated, state-by-state nature of congressional redistricting. Disaggregated districting makes it difficult for courts to pin down the then-operative map of congressional districts, and leaves courts with tremendous remedial discretion.

These difficulties have near analogues in the education domain. Just as the overall quality of congressional representation is the joint product of federal statutes addressing the time, place, and manner of congressional elections and the decisions of fifty different states about the same matters, the overall quality of a state’s system of public schools is the joint product of state-level decisions and those of scores of cities, counties, and local school boards. Pointing to these complexities, defendants have often tried to escape liability in education-quality cases by arguing that their decisions were not the proximate cause of poor schools or bad educational outcomes.126

The multilayered and substantially disaggregated nature of public school governance also means that the overall quality of a state’s school system, like the overall quality of the system of congressional districts, is something of a moving target.

Because the overall quality of the school system is a joint product of state and local decisions, courts in education cases have enormous remedial discretion. They can target state legislative decisions, state administrative decisions, or local school board decisions. Interest groups will show up in court with predictably and radically different demands. Should the court order the state to spend a lot more on “failing” schools, as teachers’ unions and local school boards will demand?127 Should the court undertake to reform teacher compensation

126. Cf. Columbia Falls Elementary Sch. Dist. v. State, No. BDV-2002-528, 2008 Mont. Dist. LEXIS 483, at *72 (Dec. 15, 2008) (“As a result of viewing all of the pie charts, bar graphs and other exhibits presented by the parties, often hashing over the very same numbers with very different results, the Court is unclear whether the problems currently experienced by the Plaintiff districts are a result of a constitutionally inadequate funding system or by choices made by the school districts. The answer to this question is most likely obscured by ... competing interests.”). For more on causation defenses in education rights litigation, see Elmendorf & Shanske, supra note 71 (manuscript at 17 & n.58) (citing Derek W. Black, Civil Rights, Charter Schools, and Lessons to be Learned, 64 FLA. L. REV. 1723, 1731-57 (2012)).

and tenure rules, as conservative plaintiffs and intervenors nowa-
days request?\textsuperscript{128} Should the court tell the state to reallocate funds
from special education to better serve disadvantaged children with
greater cognitive capacity, as a Connecticut trial judge recently de-
cided?\textsuperscript{129} Should the court order the state to adopt new, more flexible
rules for state control of local school boards, as an Alaska trial judge
did?\textsuperscript{130} Should the court appoint a special master who will tell the
state how much to spend, and the school boards how to spend it, as
New Jersey’s courts have done?\textsuperscript{131} The possibilities are endless.

\section*{4. Politics and Judicial Authority}

Justice Felix Frankfurter famously proclaimed that malappor-
tionment cases are essentially “party contests” whose adjudication
would sap public confidence in the courts’ impartiality, and hence
the courts’ authority.\textsuperscript{132} Judges would come to be seen as partisans
in robes rather than neutral arbiters of individual rights. Frank-
furter’s warning has shaped redistricting litigation ever since, no
doubt informing the rigid equal-population standard for malappor-
tionment claims and leaving many judges extremely reluctant to
entertain partisan gerrymandering claims absent a similarly con-
straining doctrinal standard.

Education cases are not partisan in quite the same way. Control
of the government does not turn on the court’s decision. Rather,
these cases present “political questions” and threats to judicial

additional funding for special needs of students in high poverty districts); Abbeville Cty. Sch.
Dist. v. State, 777 S.E.2d 547, 549 (S.C.) (ordering cost study subject to de novo judicial
review), superseded by 780 S.E.2d 609 (S.C. 2015); State v. Campbell Cty. Sch. Dist., 19 P.3d
518 (Wyo.) (applying strict scrutiny and faulting legislature’s cost study in various respects),
modified on reh’g, 32 P.3d 325 (Wyo. 2001).

129. Conn. Coal. for Justice in Educ. Funding, Inc. v. Rell, No. X07HHDCV145037565S,
2007).
lower court order), clarified, 751 A.2d 1032 (N.J. 2000).
132. Colegrove v. Green, 328 U.S. 549, 553-54 (1946) (plurality opinion); accord Baker v.
authority in an older sense: there is an acute risk of protracted conflict with other branches of government. Remedial orders may be ignored. Legislators who do not want courts telling them how much to spend or where to spend it may retaliate by cutting the judiciary’s budget. Judicial opinions and directives will be scrutinized by the press; critics will question their constitutional foundations. Well-organized groups (catering to the narrow self-interest of middle-class suburban parents who do not want their neighborhood schools disrupted or their tax bills to skyrocket) may push for recall elections, arguing that “activist judges” have overstepped their role.

These are not idle speculations. In Kansas, the legislature responded to school finance rulings by stripping the state supreme court of administrative control over trial courts. A later bill stipulated that if the administrative limitation were held unconstitutional, all public spending on the court system would immediately cease. The Kansas Supreme Court responded by threatening to enjoin all state spending on public schools unless the state appropriated sufficient funds for poor schools by a specified date. Lawmakers then introduced a bill broadening the grounds for impeachment. Washington’s Supreme Court held the legislature as a whole in contempt for failing to fix the public schools. Ratcheting up the pressure, the court fined the legislature $100,000 a day for missing

133. Cf. Giles v. Harris, 189 U.S. 475, 487-88 (1903) (refusing to adjudicate an alleged Fifteenth Amendment violation because of remedial concerns while hinting that such claims might become justiciable if the United States were a party and prepared to enforce the court’s decision).


135. See id.


court-imposed deadlines to enact remedial legislation. In New Jersey, the game of chicken between court and legislature resulted in the court ordering all of the state’s schools closed for an eight-day period. State supreme courts in Ohio and Alabama finally capitulated in the face of legislative intransigence.

This is not to say that judicial involvement in education quality cases has been fruitless. The precarious judicial-legislative dance has often resulted in salutary educational and funding reforms. The best available evidence suggests that judicially induced spending increases have on average yielded both test-score and lifetime-outcome gains for students in the benefited districts. My point is simply that when courts deem an education-quality claim justiciable, they embark on an uncertain, highly scrutinized journey, the ultimate success of which depends on the cooperation of the legislative and executive branches of government—cooperation which may be difficult for the courts to secure.

The prospect of this journey has been too much for some courts to stomach. Reviewing the history of school finance litigation in Arkansas, Kansas, Texas, Alabama, and New Jersey, the Nebraska Supreme Court wrote:


141. In Alabama, the capitulation was complete and de jure. See Ex parte James, 836 So. 2d 813, 815 (Ala. 2002) (per curiam) (holding education-cause claims nonjusticiable because of remedial/separation of powers concerns, notwithstanding a decision of the same court five years earlier holding these claims reviewable). For a summary of the Alabama litigation, see Alabama, SCHOOLFUNDING.INFO, http://schoolfunding.info/litigation-map/alabama/ [https://perma.cc/WQ6Z-ZF8U]. In Ohio, the supreme court, in its fifth opinion in the same case, held that the trial court had no authority to supervise crafting of a remedy by the legislature. See State ex rel. State v. Lewis (DeRolph V), 789 N.E.2d 195, 202 (Ohio 2003). For a summary of the Ohio litigation, see Ohio, SCHOOLFUNDING.INFO, http://schoolfunding.info/litigation-map/ohio/ [https://perma.cc/5JGN-9ATM].

[A] justiciable issue must be susceptible to immediate resolution and capable of present judicial enforcement. But courts have been unable to immediately resolve school funding disputes.

The landscape is littered with courts that have been bogged down in the legal quicksand of ... challenges to their states' school funding systems.... [W]e refuse to wade into that Stygian swamp.143

And yet, only about a third of the state supreme courts to have faced the question deemed claims under the education clauses nonjusticiable.144 The rest entered the Stygian swamp and developed strategies to navigate through it. Perhaps this willingness to engage reflects the strong representation-reinforcement argument for some judicial involvement in the education sphere.145 It goes without saying that similar arguments counsel for some judicial role in enforcing constitutional values of representational adequacy.

B. Mucking Through the Stygian Swamp: How State Courts Have Managed Education-Rights Litigation

At the dawn of modern era of education rights litigation, legal scholars John Coons, William Clune, and Stephen Sugarman argued that the central challenge was to develop a clear, coherent, and easy-to-apply doctrinal standard.146 Ad-hocery would “evoke nothing but criticism of the court and evasion by the legislatures.”147 This is, of course, the same “manageability” conviction that has thwarted


144. As of 2010, twenty-six state supreme courts had “addressed education finance constitutional challenges at least partly founded on theories of adequacy”; only eight “held that the courts may not engage in merits review.” Bauries, supra note 85, at 741. The Online Appendix provides a current, state-by-state summary of nonjusticiability rulings (including lower court decisions that were not appealed or that the state supreme court elected not to review). Elmendorf, supra note 5.

145. For a sketch of the argument—emphasizing the status of children as nonvoters, the lack of political power of the poor, and the normative foundations of the education right in political as well as economic opportunity—see Elmendorf & Shanske, supra note 71 (manuscript at 21-22).


147. Id.
partisan gerrymandering litigation. Yet the courts that entered the Stygian Swamp of education rights litigation largely did not follow Coons and his colleagues’ directive. Instead they developed coping strategies that allowed them to intervene at opportune moments in politically delicate disputes. These strategies include (1) combining opaque, multifactored liability rulings with “legislative remand” remedies; (2) discovering implied legislative duties to enact a reasonable framework for public education; and (3) issuing provisional injunctive remedies, which the legislature is free to replace.

1. The Rose Template: Kitchen-Sink Liability Rulings and Legislative Remand Remedies

Courts have described the education right as entitling students to a reasonably adequate or roughly equal education, thus placing questions about the quality of the school system front and center. Yet instead of constitutionalizing a metric of school quality, courts, particularly in their early interventions, announced very general qualitative goals and then found the state liable on the basis of an open-ended weighing of everything in the record that tended to make the state’s schools or school system look bad relative to schools elsewhere. The seminal example is the Kentucky Supreme Court’s opinion in *Rose v. Council for Better Education, Inc.*

The *Rose* court established loose performance standards such as “sufficient oral and written communication skills to enable students to function in a complex and rapidly changing civilization.” But the court did not identify particular schools or school districts that were falling short of the standards, or particular state actions that could bring them up to par. Nor did it set forth a standard of review. Instead the court just made an open-ended determination about


149. See id. at 1193-94.

150. Elmendorf & Shanske, *supra* note 71 (manuscript at 8-9) (collecting sources).

151. 790 S.W.2d 186 (Ky. 1989).

152. Id. at 212.
whether the State was doing a good enough job in the domain of education, in light of everything in the record.\textsuperscript{153} Typical factors in \textit{Rose}-style opinions include: disparities among states, districts, schools, or demographic groups in test-score results and graduation rates (so-called “output” measures of education quality); analogous disparities in “inputs,” such as funding, teacher salaries, curricula, facilities, and class sizes; government reports on problems with the school system; and evidence of legislative inattention to the problems, sometimes expressed as the legislature’s failure to commission a study estimating the cost of achieving the state’s educational standards.\textsuperscript{154}

Having found the State liable, the \textit{Rose} court \textit{remanded to the legislature} for a remedy.\textsuperscript{155} This is a way for courts to pressure the legislature and support reformers without actually resolving any of the difficult questions about how best to measure the quality of education being provided to the state’s children, or about which funding or policy reforms would most likely improve the education of disadvantaged children.

\textsuperscript{153} See \textit{id.} at 196-99. As the court explained, “The evidence in this case consists of numerous depositions, volumes of oral evidence heard by the trial court, and a seemingly endless amount of statistical data, reports, etc.... The tidal wave of the appellees’ evidence literally engulfs that of the appellants.” \textit{Id.} at 196-97.

\textsuperscript{154} See, e.g., Op. of the Justices, 624 So. 2d 107, app. at 126-36 (Ala. 1993) (broad list of shortcomings); Montoy v. State, 112 P.3d 923, 939 (Kan. 2005) (per curiam) (“[O]utsputs are necessary elements of a constitutionally adequate education and must be funded by the ultimate financing formula adopted by the legislature.”); McDuffy v. Sec'y of the Exec. Office of Educ., 615 N.E.2d 516, 552-54 (Mass. 1993) (broad list of shortcomings); Abbeville Cty. Sch. Dist. v. State, 767 S.E.2d 157, 162 (S.C. 2014) (“Plaintiff Districts argue, and we agree, that the proper question is whether the education funding apparatus as a whole gives rise to a constitutional violation.”), amended by 777 S.E.2d 547 (S.C. 2015), and superseded by 780 S.E.2d 609 (S.C. 2015); see also James E. Ryan, \textit{Standards, Testing, and School Finance Litigation}, 86 Tex. L. Rev. 1223, 1233 (2008) (“Seventeen state courts of last resort have ruled in favor of school finance plaintiffs since 1989, the advent of the so-called adequacy wave of cases. If one studies these opinions, an interesting pattern emerges: Time and again, courts have focused on disparities in funding, curricular and extracurricular offerings, qualified teachers, school facilities, and instructional materials.” (footnote omitted)).

\textsuperscript{155} \textit{Rose}, 780 S.W.2d at 216. Though concurring and dissenting justices in \textit{Rose} criticized the legislative remand remedy as a judicial abdication of responsibility, \textit{see id.} at 216-18 (Gant, J., concurring), or impermissibly advisory, \textit{see id.} at 223-25 (Leibson, J., dissenting), the legislative remand is the now-standard initial remedy in school finance cases. \textit{See Koski, supra} note 148, at 1241 (“[I]n all nineteen final state supreme court educational finance decisions that favored plaintiffs, the courts issued declaratory relief and ordered the legislature to develop a remedial finance scheme.”).
That so many courts have followed *Rose* perhaps suggests that the demand for "manageable standards"—understood as constraining, determinate rules—is misplaced. Fuzzy standards can be useful tools for handling politically delicate cases, allowing courts to make headway when the political stars align, while saving face—back-tracking without overruling precedent—as may be necessary.\(^{156}\)

2. Legislative Duties: Standards, Testing, and Evidentiary Records

Faced with competing arguments about the quality of the state’s schools and the likely efficacy of various interventions, some courts have subtly proceduralized the education right. In these courts, liability rulings depend less on the absolute quality of the state’s schools than on whether the state legislature exercised its implied duty under the constitution to establish a reasonable framework for implementing the education right.\(^{157}\)

This duty, the courts have said, obligates the legislature to “defin[e] or giv[e] substantive content to ‘basic education,’” within the meaning of the state constitution; to provide for student testing calibrated to the legislature’s gloss on the constitutional standard; and to establish accountability mechanisms.\(^{158}\) Several courts have

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156. See Koski, *supra* note 148, at 1296-98.
157. For a defense of this approach, see Elmendorf & Shanske, *supra* note 71 (manuscript at 21-25).
also required the legislature to commission a study estimating the cost of meeting state educational standards, and to enact and justify a school-funding formula in light of that study. The legislature may not arbitrarily reallocate school funding in response to interest group or local government pressures. In short, the legislature must create a plan to implement the education clauses of the constitution and then put shoulder to the wheel absent some good reason to change course.

One can understand the legislative-duty cases as an ingenious response to the lack of a judicially discoverable and manageable standard of educational quality. Instead of dismissing plaintiffs’ adequacy claims as nonjusticiable, the court tells the legislature to bring into being a reasonable quality standard, and a framework to measure and publicize whether that standard is being met. This

N.E.2d 1134, 1144 (Mass. 2005) (upholding educational system now that “objective, data-driven assessments of student performance and specific performance goals ... inform a standardized education policy and direct the Commonwealth’s public education resources”).

160. See, e.g., Montoy v. State, 102 P.3d 1160, 1164 (Kan. 2005) (per curiam) (“[T]he financing formula was not based upon actual costs to educate children but was instead based on former spending levels and political compromise.”); Columbia Falls Elementary Sch. Dist. No. 6, 109 P.3d at 262 (faulting legislature for not “[l]ink[ing] the [school funding] formula to any factors that might constitute a ‘quality’ education”); DeRolph v. State (DeRolph I), 677 N.E.2d 733, 738 (Ohio 1997) (invalidating school-finance system because, inter alia, the “formula amount” was a “budgetary residual,” rather than an amount determined on the basis of an estimate of “what it actually costs to educate a pupil”); Tenn. Small Sch. Sys. v. McWherter, 91 S.W.3d 232, 234 (Tenn. 2002) (invalidating school-funding formula because it “contains no mechanism for cost determination or annual cost review of teachers’ salaries”); McCleary v. State, 269 P.3d 227, 253-57 (Wash. 2012) (finding school-finance system unconstitutional because legislature had established new performance standards without concurrently updating the funding rules to reflect those standards); State v. Campbell Cty. Sch. Dist., 19 P.3d 518, 526 (Wyo.) (ordering legislature to provide for cost studies updated every five years), modified, 32 P.3d 325 (Wyo. 2001).


162. To be clear, the quasi-procedural, legislative-duty theory of liability reflected in the “framework” decisions is not always clearly distinguished from the more substantive, school-quality theory of liability manifested in Rose-style opinions. Many of the opinions about framework duties also include findings about the state’s failure to educate disadvantaged students effectively. See sources cited supra notes 159-60. It is often unclear whether such findings serve as flourishes, as triggering conditions for the legislative duty to promulgate a reasonable framework, or as independent and potentially ongoing bases for liability insofar as the framework fails to generate better outcomes.

163. See, e.g., Londonderry Sch. Dist. SAU No. 12, 907 A.2d at 993 (invalidating legislative response to prior judicial decision requiring legislature to define educational adequacy because “under the statutory scheme there is no way a citizen or a school district in this State
sets up the court to decide future educational adequacy cases on a more principled basis. The court will be able to apply standards the legislature has promulgated, using data the legislature has required school districts to collect.\textsuperscript{164}

The requirement of a record-justified funding formula also greatly eases judicial review of school finance decisions. Rather than resolving difficult first-order disputes about whether more money, somehow distributed, would materially improve the plaintiffs’ schools, the court can revert to familiar administrative law modalities of review: Did the legislature\textsuperscript{165} consider a reasonable range of funding alternatives, and explain the chosen formula in light of its own educational standards and the evidence in the record?\textsuperscript{166}

To be clear, the quasi-procedural, legislative-duty theory of liability that this Section has described is, in practice, not fully distinct from the schools-are-not-good-enough theory of liability.

can determine the distinct substantive content of a constitutionally adequate education,” thus leaving the system “impervious to meaningful judicial review”).

\textsuperscript{164} Or so one might reasonably hope. Scott Bauries has questioned whether legislated educational standards are sufficiently concrete and realistic to determine outcomes in cases under the education clauses. See Bauries, supra note 85, at 722-24. But see Gannon v. State, 319 P.3d 1186, 1236-37 (Kan. 2014) (per curiam) (“[A]dequacy ... is met when the public education financing system ... is reasonably calculated to have all Kansas public education students meet or exceed the standards ... presently codified in K.S.A.2013 Supp. 72-1127.”); Hoke Cty. Bd. of Educ., 2000 WL 1639686, at *87 (“[T]he [state’s] standard of [educational] performance now in place may not be lowered.”); see also Benjamin Michael Superfine, Deciding Who Decides Questions at the Intersection of School Finance Reform Litigation and Standards-Based Accountability Policies, 23 EDUC. POL’Y 480, 490-500 (2009) (discussing other cases in which courts treated state educational standards as a guidepost in determining constitutional adequacy of the school system).

\textsuperscript{165} Or the legislature’s delegate. Some states, such as Oregon, have charged administrative agencies with the development of school-funding formulas. See Joint Special Comm. on Pub. Educ. Appropriation, Report on Adequacy of Public Education Funding as Required by Article VIII, Section 8, of the Oregon Constitution 3 (2016) (describing formation and goals of Oregon Quality Education Commission).

\textsuperscript{166} See, e.g., Columbia Falls Elementary Sch. Dist. No. 6 v. State, 109 P.3d 257, 262 (Mont. 2005) (faulting legislature for “not link[ing] the [school-funding] formula to any factors that might constitute a ‘quality’ education”). For more on the similarities between judicial review under the education clauses and judicial review under the Federal Administrative Procedure Act, see Elmendorf & Shanske, supra note 71 (manuscript at 23-24); see also Abbott v. Burke (Abbott IV), 693 A.2d 417, 437 (N.J. 1997) (“The State contends that experts were involved in formulating the amounts of [funding] and that the Court should defer to their determinations.... We are unwilling ... to accede to putative expert opinion that does not disclose the reasons or bases for its conclusions.”).
manifested in *Rose*-style opinions. Many of the courts that articulated legislative duties also made findings about the state's

167. Perhaps the purest illustration of the quasi-procedural/legislative-duty theory is the line of decisions from New Hampshire's supreme court, which consistently declined to pass on the constitutional sufficiency of school quality while insisting that the legislature promulgate clear standards and a system of testing that would enable the court and other observers to ascertain whether the standards are being met. *See* Claremont Sch. Dist. v. Governor (*Claremont I*), 635 A.2d 1375, 1376 (N.H. 1993) (holding that the state constitution "imposes a duty on the State to provide a constitutionally adequate education to every educable child ... and to guarantee adequate funding," and remanding for trial); Claremont Sch. Dist. v. Governor (*Claremont II*), 703 A.2d 1353, 1354, 1357-58 (N.H. 1997) (clarifying legislative duty to promulgate standards, and finding a constitutional flaw in the tax system, while declining to reach district court's conclusion that school quality was inadequate under any of the several possible standards); Claremont Sch. Dist. v. Governor (*Claremont III*), 744 A.2d 1107, 1108-09 (N.H. 1999) (addressing revised tax system while again deferring decision on school quality); *Claremont IV*, 794 A.2d 744, 759-60 (N.H. 2002) (finding accountability system constitutionally inadequate while deferring decision on quality); *Londonderry Sch. Dist. SAU No. 12*, 907 A.2d at 993-96 (ordering the legislature to define a constitutional standard of quality and threatening appointment of a special master to make said determination if the legislature continues to fail to do so).
failure to effectively educate disadvantaged students. These findings may represent an independent basis for liability.

3. Provisional Injunctive Remedies

The legislative remand has become the standard remedy for violations of the education clauses. But what happens next if the legislature does nothing or issues a wholly inadequate response? In most states this question has not been squarely met, because the legislature did respond and the court gave substantial deference to

168. See, e.g., Moore v. State, No. 3AN049756, 2007 WL 8310251, at *75-76 (Alaska Super. Ct. June 21, 2007) (providing abstract, seemingly non-record-specific statement of what the education clauses require in terms of legislated standards, testing, and accountability systems—but only after discussing persistent, intergenerational failure of state to educate certain populations of students); Hull v. Albrecht, 950 P.2d 1141, 1144-45 (Ariz. 1997) (finding the legislation unconstitutional because it both created substantial facilities funding disparities between school districts and failed to establish minimum adequacy standards for such funding); Columbia Falls Elementary Sch. Dist. No. 6, 109 P.3d at 262-63 (holding that legislature must define "quality" and tie school funding to legislated definition of quality, and then reciting the district court’s findings about educational problems and stating that current funding levels are insufficient); Seattle Sch. Dist. No. 1 v. State, 585 P.2d 71, 95, 102-03 (Wash. 1978) (holding that the legislature failed "to comply with its constitutional duty [to] defin[e] and giv[e] substantive meaning to [the constitutional term 'basic education']" and sustaining the trial court’s conclusion that school funding was inadequate under any of three possible definitions of that term).

In some states, an initial Rose-style opinion finding the state liable for the poor education provided in certain schools or school districts has been followed by an opinion cast more in terms of legislative duties. Compare DeRolph I, 677 N.E.2d 733, 742-45 (Ohio 1997) (finding the state liable after canvassing deteriorated physical facilities, lack of instructional materials, limited curricular offerings, poor access to technology, and poor test scores in focal school districts), with DeRolph II, 728 N.E.2d 993, 1018-20 (Ohio 2000) (finding the state liable for inadequate articulation of standards, inadequate accountability system, and ongoing failure to link funding to standards), McDuffy v. Sec’y of the Exec. Office of Educ., 615 N.E.2d 516, 552-53 (Mass. 1993) (finding the state liable on the basis of holistic comparison of educational inputs/outputs in plaintiff districts and more affluent “comparison” districts), and Hancock v. Comm’r of Educ., 822 N.E.2d 1134, 1151-56 (Mass. 2005) (acknowledging continuing and “profound” educational failures, but ruling against the plaintiffs because the state had established a comprehensive system of standards, testing, funding, and accountability, was making some progress, and could no longer be said to be “neglecting” its constitutional duty).

169. Under the first interpretation, the state would remain liable so long as student performance and other indicia of “quality” fell below the level that the court deemed constitutionally acceptable. Under the second interpretation, the state could escape liability by establishing performance standards, a reasonable funding system calibrated to those standards, and a reasonable accountability system.

170. See Koski, supra note 148, at 1241.
the legislature’s fix. But where the question has been faced, we see two emergent patterns. First, a number of courts have ramped up pressure on the legislature with deadlines backed by penalty defaults. These courts require legislative action by a specified date and threaten either to hold the legislature in contempt or to shut down all public schools in the state if the deadline is not met. The deadline or deadline-plus-penalty remedy often emerges from a specific conception of the separation of powers. The animating idea is that when there are multiple ways to achieve constitutional compliance, it is for the political branches, not the courts, to choose the path forward.

The other remedial strategy is to appoint a special master or expert panel with broad authority over constitutionally inadequate schools or school districts. The leading example is the Abbott line of cases from New Jersey. Seven years after its initial liability

171. As Koski observes, “[S]tate supreme courts have recognized their institutional limitations and paid significant deference to the legislative and executive branches.” Id. at 1188. Yet research showing that state court rulings in the adequacy cases have led states to increase spending on the schools, and to allocate that spending in ways that substantially benefit disadvantaged students, demonstrates that legislatures generally do respond—productively—to judicial findings of liability. See supra note 142 and accompanying text.

172. This is an unusual constitutional remedy but not without precedent. For other examples, see John Ferejohn & Barry Friedman, Toward a Political Theory of Constitutional Default Rules, 33 FLA. ST. U. L. REV. 825, 845-50 (2006) (illustrating a concept of penalty defaults in constitutional law with the release of prisoners in habeas cases and exclusion of evidence obtained without a warrant).

173. See supra notes 138-40 and accompanying text.

174. See McCleary v. State, 269 P.3d 227, 258-61 (Wash. 2012). For academic papers developing these ideas, see Bauries, supra note 85, at 721-33 (reviewing literature and concluding that “[s]cholars have ... reached a rough consensus that, once the merits [of an adequacy case] are adjudicated, courts should abstain from ordering or compelling any specific, judge-made remedial measures, but should instead engage in dialog with the coordinate branches to encourage reform”); and Larry J. Olsb, Rethinking Judicial Activism and Restraint in State School Finance Litigation, 27 HARV. J.L. & PUB. POL’Y 569, 594-96 (2004) (arguing on separation of powers grounds that courts in educational adequacy cases should issue no remedy beyond a declaration of unconstitutionality).

175. Other examples include Lake View Sch. Dist. No. 25 v. Huckabee, 144 S.W.3d 741 (Ark. 2004) (per curiam) (order appointing special masters); Londonderry Sch. Dist. SAU No. 12 v. State, 907 A.2d 988, 995-96 (N.H. 2006) (stating that if the legislature fails to establish a reasonable precise, measureable definition of adequacy, the court may invalidate the existing funding system and/or appoint a special master “to aid in the determination of the definition of a constitutionally adequate education”); Abbeville Cty. Sch. Dist. v. State, 777 S.E.2d 547 (S.C.) (remedial order prescribing a three-person expert panel to evaluate the state’s proposed remedy, to be reviewed by the court de novo), superseded by 780 S.E.2d 609 (S.C. 2015). There are also a few cases in which courts trying to remedy a constitutional
ruling, and following its rejection of legislative responses, the New
Jersey Supreme Court “found that the continuing constitutional
deprivation had persisted too long and clearly necessitated a
remedy.”176 The court issued an “interim remedy” of “parity fund-
ing,” resourcing the Abbott districts at the average level of an ident-
ified set of rich, suburban districts.177 The court also authorized the
trial judge to appoint a special master and told the State’s Commis-
sioner of Education to submit a plan to the trial court for improving
education in the Abbott districts.178

The trial court then appointed a professor of education to serve as
special master.179 The professor and the State’s Commissioner of
Education developed a detailed school-reform plan, which the court
put into effect.180 Importantly, the New Jersey Supreme Court indi-
cated that the constitution did not require these particular reme-
dies. Parity of funding with suburban districts, the court said, “can
... be understood in the nature of provisional or interim relief.”181
This remedy would be “mooted” if the State demonstrated that fund-
ing at some lesser level would suffice to achieve a “thorough and
efficient education” in the Abbott districts, or if the State identified
“genuine inefficiencies or excesses” in the Abbott districts’ use of
state funds.182

Like the penalty default used in some other states, the provision-
(al injunctive remedy honors the political branches’ primacy in the
domain of education. New Jersey’s constitution requires the Abbott
schools to be decent schools. It is indifferent between various ways
of making them decent. If New Jersey’s legislature or education

178. See id. at 444-45. This remedial directive is succinctly summarized in the court’s next
Abbott opinion. See Abbott V, 710 A.2d at 456.
179. Abbott V, 710 A.2d at 456.
180. See id. at 456-57.
181. Abbott IV, 693 A.2d at 442. To borrow John Ferejohn and Barry Friedman’s terminol-
ogy, this provisional remedy is a model default rule—one which the legislature may alter, but
which the court believes to be well crafted to achieve constitutional compliance. See Ferejohn
& Friedman, supra note 172, at 850-53.
182. Abbott IV, 693 A.2d at 442.
department develops a different reasonable vision for how to make the Abbott schools decent, they are free to pursue it.

III. TOWARD REPRESENTATIONAL ADEQUACY CLAIMS UNDER STATE AND FEDERAL CONSTITUTIONS

Part I of this Article argued that a legal strategy for attacking partisan gerrymanders should aim to (1) unravel the manageability knot that has confounded litigation to date under the Equal Protection Clause (the judicially discoverable standards are thought to be unmanageable, and the judicially manageable standards undiscov-
erable); (2) deter or remedy responsiveness-harming bipartisan gerrymanders; and, insofar as the strategy targets congressional gerrymanders, (3) answer the distinctive justiciability concerns associated with disaggregated redistricting.

This Part argues that these goals can be realized by finding in the relevant constitution an implied legislative duty to promulgate a redistricting framework addressed to the overall adequacy of representation. (The relevant constitution is the state constitution for cases about gerrymanders of the statehouse; for cases about congressional districts, it is the U.S. Constitution.183) I shall call this the representational adequacy/legislative duty approach. Developed with reference to the education cases, the strategy relies on a quasi-

183. Because the harms from a congressional gerrymander in one state depend on how other state’s congressional districts are drawn, see supra Part I.C, the criteria for congressional districting need to be established at the national level and thus by Congress or the U.S. Constitution (not a given state’s constitution).
A. A Sketch of the Idea

The premise of the representational adequacy/legislative duty approach is that there exists an implied constitutional duty for the legislature to act reasonably, in furtherance of basic democratic norms, in drawing or overseeing the drawing of legislative districts. What this duty of care entails depends on substantive democratic norms, such as majoritarianism and responsiveness, the available technology for advancing or thwarting those norms, voter preferences, and spatial patterns in the distribution of voters. The entailments of the legislative duty therefore vary over time, as technology develops and citizens sort themselves into geographic communities.

Several generations ago, no one imagined that state courts would find in the education clauses of their constitutions an implied legislative duty to create reasonably precise educational content standards, a system of testing calibrated to those standards, and an associated school-funding formula justified on the basis of an evidentiary record. But as education became ever more important for socioeconomic mobility, and as technologies for measuring educational attainment improved, courts began to recognize constitutional limits on legislative discretion with respect to the provision of education. Similar developments should inform judicial interpretation of generally worded constitutional provisions about electoral districts, electoral integrity, and the time, place, and manner of elections. Just as courts have held that the legislature, in “providing for” a system of public schools, must establish reasonably clear

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185. See, e.g., McDuffy v. Sec’y of the Exec. Office of Educ., 615 N.E.2d 516, 555 (Mass. 1993) (“The content of the duty to educate which the Constitution places on the Commonwealth necessarily will evolve together with our society.”); Claremont II, 703 A.2d 1353, 1359 (N.H. 1997) (“Mere competence in the basics—reading, writing, and arithmetic—is insufficient in the waning days of the twentieth century to insure that this State’s public school students are fully integrated into the world around them.” (emphasis added)); Seattle Sch. Dist. No. 1 v. State, 585 P.2d 71, 94 (Wash. 1978) (“We cannot ignore the fact that times have changed and that [education] which may have been ‘ample’ in 1889 may be wholly unsuited for children confronted with contemporary demands wholly unknown to the constitutional convention.”).
objectives for the school system, measure whether those objectives are being realized, and set up a corrective process for schools or school districts that fall short, so too may courts find in the representation clauses of the relevant constitution an implied legislative duty to establish a reasonable framework for partisan/ideological fairness and responsiveness in districting and for correcting district maps that fall short of the standards.

A court ruling on the existence of this legislative duty might sketch general guidelines for redistricting criteria, but the court would leave the details to be worked out in the future. As in the education cases, the initial remedy would be a legislative remand. The redistricting framework developed by the legislature on remand would govern judicial review of partisan fairness and responsiveness claims going forward—provided that the framework is substantively reasonable and sufficiently determinate for judicial application in politically sensitive cases.

What happens if the legislature does nothing or issues a wholly inadequate response to the initial judicial ruling? The education cases foreground two possibilities. As noted above, some state courts have held on separation of powers ground that they lack authority to make the discretionary choice among potential educational remedies. Occasionally these courts have fined intransient legislatures, or have ordered or threatened a temporary shutdown of the schools. In representational adequacy cases, a court operating under this conception of the separation of powers might fine the legislature for failing to adopt a reasonable framework for redistricting. But the court would not pass on the adequacy of district maps unless or until the legislature establishes suitable criteria for judicial review.

The other, and to my mind more attractive, response to legislative intransigence is to follow the path of the New Jersey courts in the Abbott litigation. After many years of inadequate legislative responses, the trial court finally appointed a professor of education as special master to develop programs and funding procedures for the

186. See supra Part II.B.
188. See supra notes 139-40 and accompanying text.
189. See supra notes 176-82 and accompanying text.
Abbott school districts. All the while, the courts made clear that these programmatic and funding remedies were provisional, subject to displacement if and when the State developed a decent plan for the Abbott districts.

In the representational adequacy setting, courts issuing provisional remedies might prescribe a metric of partisan bias and an upper limit. The court might also adopt a metric of competitiveness and set a target proportion of competitive seats. In cases about Congress, the provisional relief would include a protocol for determining which state’s congressional districts would be judicially redistricted in the event of a violation. These measures would govern subsequent representational adequacy litigation until such time as the appropriate legislature adopts a reasonable framework for districting and judicial review.

Though some critics have portrayed the Abbott litigation as a horror story of judicial micromanagement, it should be clear that analogous provisional remedies for representational inadequacy would not be nearly as intrusive. The management of high-poverty school districts is an ongoing process, and once the courts held that New Jersey had to provide for the particularized needs of impoverished children in the Abbott districts, it was inevitable that school administrators would return to court again and again with new ideas for how to better serve those needs. In the redistricting context, by contrast, the provisional remedy need only establish a couple of reasonably clear-cut benchmarks, compliance with which would be litigated once a decade.

B. Changed Conditions

In the previous Section, I suggested that much as changes in the value of education and in state capacity to provide and monitor

190. See supra notes 179-80 and accompanying text.
191. See supra notes 181-82 and accompanying text.
192. Cf. supra Part I.C (discussing the problem of remedial discretion owing to disaggregated redistricting of Congress).
193. See, e.g., City of Pawtucket v. Sundlun, 662 A.2d 40, 59 (R.I. 1995) (“The volume of litigation and the extent of judicial oversight [in the Abbott cases] provide a chilling example of the thicket that can entrap a court that takes on the duties of a Legislature.”).
194. To preclude more frequent litigation, the court might establish a per se rule against mid-decade redistricting, as some courts have done already. See infra Part III.E.1.
educational systems (arguably) altered what the duty of care requires of legislatures in this domain, so too may changes in representation and redistricting obligate legislatures to establish new frameworks for districting, including meaningful standards and accountability systems. It is worth considering these changes in some detail. Because representational adequacy/legislative duty claims would not, in general, draw upon clearly directive constitutional text or a constitutional tradition of legislative self-limitation in districting, arguments from changed conditions invariably loom large. Two recent changes are particularly important.

The first is the development by political scientists, statisticians, and law professors of various quantitative metrics of legislative maps’ partisan or ideological bias and the competitiveness of legislative seats. While rudimentary measures of partisan bias and competitiveness have been available for decades, there has been an explosion of recent work in this area, with a number of scholars developing metrics of partisan fairness that are easily implemented with open-source software. Several decades ago, it might have been reasonable to argue that legislators had no duty to establish judicially enforceable limits on biased maps of legislative districts because enforcement of those limits would have been so discretionary, inviting judges to substitute their preferences with respect to particular maps for the legislature’s. Today that argument is a nonstarter, now that a menu of easily implemented and potentially bright-line standards exists for legislatures to choose among.

The second and equally important development is the emergence of data vendors that use public and commercial datasets to estimate partisan “support scores” and turnout propensities for every registered voter. Piggybacking on newly digitized state voter files, the Democratic and Republican National Committees began constructing national electronic voter registries in the mid-2000s, and private firms such as Catalist entered the field as well. The resulting

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196. For prominent examples, see sources cited supra note 40.

197. See generally Eitan D. Hersh, Hacking the Electorate: How Campaigns Perceive Voters (2015); David W. Nickerson & Todd Rogers, Political Campaigns and Big Data, 28 J. ECON. PERSP. 51 (2014).

198. See Hersh, supra note 197, at 66-69. Catalist, now a leading liberal-side firm, started
databases combine individual-level voter histories and demographics from state voter files, individual-level records of campaign contacts and donations, block-level data from the census, and, frequently, individual-level data from consumer databases. These datasets have made it possible for campaigns to generate or purchase predictions for each registered voter of the probability that the voter will turn out in an election, support a particular candidate or political party, give money, or respond in a specified fashion to a campaign communication. As a shorthand, I will refer to the voter file supplemented with behavioral and political-preference predictions as the “augmented voter file.”

Writing in 2014, political scientists and campaign consultants David Nickerson and Todd Rogers reported that many campaigns were generating support scores and turnout propensities using rudimentary statistical models “taught in standard undergraduate ... classes.” More sophisticated actors were beginning to apply the machine-learning tools used by the private sector in marketing and other predictive-analytics applications. As the augmented voter file grows with each successive campaign (merging in more records of campaign contacts and voter behavior), and as statisticians and computer scientists develop ever more powerful tools for machine learning with big data, the partisan-preference and turnout predictions are sure to improve.

Why does this matter for districting? The answer follows from an important 2008 paper by John Friedman and Richard Holden. Friedman and Holden showed that the optimal strategy for a political party that controls redistricting depends on what the redistricters know about the political preferences of individual voters. If voter preferences can be observed, and voters placed on a continuum from strong Republican (or extreme conservative) to strong Demo-
cram (or extreme liberal), then the politically optimal strategy is to create districts composed of “matched slices” of the electorate—strong Republicans paired with strong Democrats, center-right Republicans paired with center-left Democrats, and so forth.\textsuperscript{205} When Democrats control redistricting, the Democratic “slice” in as many districts as possible will be slightly larger than the Republican slice; when Republicans run the show, the opposite will be true. The core idea is to neutralize the opposing party’s most reliable voters by combining them in a district with a slight majority of the redistricting party’s most reliable voters.\textsuperscript{206}

The augmented, geocoded voter file—with party support scores and turnout propensities for each registered voter—is precisely what redistricters need to implement matched-slice gerrymanders. It will be a game changer. To see why, consider how partisan gerrymanders were effected after the 2010 census, before anyone had figured out how to exploit augmented voter files for districting. We know something about gerrymandering techniques in the 2010 round of redistricting from the claims currently being litigated. The picture is most complete with respect to Wisconsin, as only \textit{Whitford v. Gill} has gone to trial, but court filings in \textit{Shapiro v. McManus} and \textit{League of Women Voters v. Rucho} suggest that partisan gerrymanders were executed similarly in North Carolina and Maryland.\textsuperscript{207}

205. See Friedman & Holden, supra note 51, at 115.
206. See id.
207. In North Carolina, as in Wisconsin, redistricters proxied the partisan strength of a district using the statewide vote for Republican candidates in recent elections. See Complaint, supra note 21, at 14 (quoting the following instruction from Republican legislators in charge of the redistricting process: “The only data other than population data to be used to construct congressional districts shall be \textit{election results in statewide contests since January 1, 2008, not including the last two presidential contests.” (emphasis added)).

In Maryland, plaintiffs challenging a Democratic partisan gerrymander claim that the redistricters were provided with the state Board of Election’s voter file, with “highly detailed geographic information about voter registration, party affiliation, and voter turnout across the State.” Shapiro v. McManus, 203 F. Supp. 3d 579, 586 (D. Md. 2016) (quoting the Complaint). But there was no allegation that the redistricters had access to or used partisan-support or turnout-propensity scores. Rather, Democrats implemented the gerrymander simply by shifting a large number of registered Republicans out of the target district and replacing them with a large number of registered Democrats. See id. at 587.

Kareem Crayton reports that in some states, some interested parties did purchase augmented voter files and used them to draft or evaluate maps, but the practice was not common, and the predictions were probably of much lower quality than the predictions will be in 2020 (with better models and more years of voter behavior in the file). Interview with Kareem Crayton, Managing Partner, Crimcard Consulting Services, in Washington, D.C. (Dec. 16, 2016).
The actors who created Wisconsin’s notorious partisan gerrymander were not craftily matching slices of strong Democrats and strong Republicans. Rather, they treated ward-level results from 2004-2010 statewide races as a rough proxy for the expected, ward-level vote share of a state assembly candidate in an open-seat race. They aggregated these expected vote shares within legislative districts, and on this basis rated proposed districts as “Safe,” “Lean,” or “Swing” for each party.

This approach treats as interchangeable any ward in which the Republican candidate won (on average) a given percentage of the vote in recent statewide elections. But some such wards are likely to perform quite differently than other such wards in legislative elections in the future. One reason is demographic change: the Republican-preferring share of the ward’s voting-eligible population could be rising or falling over time. Another and probably more important issue is that a ward composed of, say, 55 percent “weak Republicans” and 45 percent “weak Democrats” is likely to yield about the same average vote share for Republican candidates in statewide elections as a ward composed of 55 percent “strong Republicans” and 45 percent “strong Democrats,” yet these wards will perform very differently in elections where one candidate is an incumbent, or otherwise unusually strong or weak, and also in years in which the Republican party brand is unusually strong or weak. The Republican vote share in the ward composed of weak partisans will be much more volatile. A matched-slice gerrymander would account for this variation, but the political scientist who advised the Wisconsin redistricters had no individual-level data on partisan reliability. He evaluated the robustness of the Republican advantage in proposed maps by “shift[ing] the vote share of each district ten points [from the predicted level] in either direction,” and calculating the number of seats that Republicans would win under these scenarios. He made no effort to account for systematic differences in the likelihood that a voter, or a ward, would “swing” with the tide. To be clear, this was not a failure on the consultant’s part. As the plaintiff’s expert in Whitford v. Gill attested, the Republicans’

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209. Id. at 849-50.
210. Id. at 892.
consultant used standard methods—indeed the same methods that the plaintiff’s expert would use to construct and evaluate the map he submitted to the court.211

Sophisticated partisan gerrymanders after the 2020 census are likely to be carried out quite differently. Using augmented voter files, it will be possible to group voters into “slices” by party support score and turnout propensity, and to calculate the distribution of voter types in each proposed district. Though analysts have had some difficulty creating accurate predictions from data in the augmented voter files about who is likely to be a swing voter (as opposed to a hard-to-classify strong partisan),212 it will be easy enough to distinguish strong partisans from ambiguously classified voters, and to match slices of strong partisans. It will also be feasible to create much more realistic simulations of the distribution of voter turnout across legislative districts in high-turnout and low-turnout elections (using individual-level data on turnout propensities), and of the geographic distribution of partisan swings in “good” or “bad” years for a political party (by assuming not a uniform swing but a swing concentrated among voters classified as weak partisans). Absent legal or political constraints, the theoretical world conjured by Friedman and Holden will become our reality.213

Though the changed-conditions case for a legislative duty to promulgate redistricting standards is largely about technology, two further considerations may deserve some weight.

First, a growing body of work on political geography has made clear that in some states, the distribution of voters results in highly asymmetric gerrymandering opportunities.214 When one party’s

211. See id. at 847.
212. See Hersh, supra note 197, at 166.
213. Rebecca Green wonders whether the failure of quantitative prognosticators to predict the outcome of the 2016 presidential election will make redistricters reluctant to rely on the augmented voter file in the 2020 redistricting. Interview with Rebecca Green, Professor of the Practice of Law, William & Mary Law School, in Washington, D.C. (Dec. 16, 2016). I doubt it. Data acquired during and after the 2016 presidential election is likely to prove very useful for distinguishing reliable partisans from potential swing voters, as President Donald Trump appears to have dramatically underperformed with certain Republican demographic groups and dramatically overperformed with certain Democratic demographic groups. See, e.g., Nate Silver, Education, Not Income, Predicted Who Would Vote for Trump, FIVETHIRTYEIGHT (Nov. 22, 2016, 2:53 PM), http://fivethirtyeight.com/features/education-not-income-predicted-who-would-vote-for-trump/ [https://perma.cc/M7GC-AUVS].
214. See, e.g., Chen & Rodden, supra note 38; cf. McGann et al., supra note 36, at 100-21
supporters are more geographically clustered than the other party’s voters, intentional gerrymanders by the less clustered party result in extraordinary levels of bias, whereas gerrymanders by the more clustered party may achieve little more than an unbiased map.\textsuperscript{215} Under these conditions, it may also be particularly difficult to build a political consensus to limit partisan bias.

However, at the present time, it is not easy to make a strong changed-conditions argument based on political geography in the nation as a whole. The idea that political geography matters for gerrymandering and that liberals are inefficiently distributed is not new.\textsuperscript{216} And despite much popular and academic attention to the “partisan sort” playing out in our nation as a whole, there is actually little evidence that the sorting of voters into politically like-minded territorial communities is systematically advantaging Republicans relative to Democrats in the nation as a whole.\textsuperscript{217} Compact-district simulations conducted by Jowei Chen and David Cottrell suggest that Republicans following the 2010 round of redistricting would most likely win almost exactly half of the congressional districts drawn by a computer—not the large majorities implied by the

\textsuperscript{215.} See McGann et al., supra note 36, at 104-06 (using Illinois as an example of a state where, because of political geography, intentional Democratic gerrymandering achieved only an unbiased map); id. at 115-16 (acknowledging that in states such as Pennsylvania, where Democratic voters are concentrated in a few urban areas, it is relatively easy to create maps with strong pro-Republican bias).

\textsuperscript{216.} For an early paper on the subject, see Robert S. Erikson, Malapportionment, Gerrymandering, and Party Fortunes in Congressional Elections, 66 AM. POL. SCI. REV. 1234 (1972).

\textsuperscript{217.} The sorting of voters into politically like-minded territorial communities could, in principle, advantage either party or no party, depending on which voters are moving or changing their political preferences. See McGann et al., supra note 36, at 118-19. Empirically, McGann and his colleagues find a net decrease in Democratic concentration at the county level between 2000 and 2010, suggesting that, if anything, pro-Republican gerrymanders are becoming harder, not easier, to create. Id. at 119-21. (Note, though, that the authors’ choice of counties as a geographic unit for assessing skewness in partisan geography is rather arbitrary, because there is no requirement that electoral districts be drawn around county boundaries.) Simon Jackman’s analysis of the “efficiency gap” in state legislative maps in the post-Reynolds era does show a trend toward greater pro-Republican bias. See Complaint, supra note 34, Exhibit 3 at 44-48. It does not, however, distinguish “population sorting” from “intentional gerrymandering” explanations for this trend. McGann and his colleagues find much greater pro-Republican bias in congressional district maps following the 2010 round of redistricting, as compared to the 2000 round, but attribute most of the difference to politics, not geography. See McGann et al., supra note 36, at 173-76.
inefficient-clustering-of-liberals hypothesis. In sum, evidence of inefficient clustering may bolster the case for a legislative duty to promulgate standards with respect to state legislatures in certain states, but it does not add much to the case for a congressional duty to promulgate standards with respect to congressional districts.

The other consideration, which does bear on congressional duties, is the unusual present-day dominance of the Republican Party in state government. In the wake of the 2016 elections, twenty-six states are under unified Republican control, as compared to six states under unified Democratic control. If this pattern persists through 2020, it means that Democratic and Republican gerrymanders of congressional district maps are unlikely to offset one another in the aggregate. There will be systematic pro-Republican bias, probably exacerbating the pro-Republican bias that has existed since the 2010 round of redistricting. Moreover, the Supreme

218. See Chen & Cottrell, supra note 38, at 336-39, 339 fig.7 (noting the very symmetrical distribution of predicted Republican victory probabilities).

Bear in mind that the algorithm used in Chen and Cottrell’s study (and most other “automated redistricting” exercises) does not actually sample, even approximately, from the underlying distribution of potential districting maps with a specified degree of compactness. Cf. Fifield et al., supra note 40 (manuscript at 17-21) (introducing a new algorithm and showing limits of previous methods with a simple, hypothetical example in which the universe of potential plans can be enumerated—something which cannot be done with real-world examples).


220. Scholars using different methods have come to different conclusions about the degree of pro-Republican bias in the post-2010 congressional map, but the different methods consistently show some bias toward Republicans. Compare McGann et al., supra note 36, at 70-73 (finding that 2010 round of redistricting increased pro-Republican bias in the aggregate map of congressional districts from roughly 3 percent to 9 percent), with Chen & Cottrell, supra note 38, at 336-38 (finding that the 2010 aggregate map in expectation awarded Republicans one more seat in the House of Representatives than they probably would have won under computer-generated maps of compact districts). In 2012, Republicans won a majority of the seats in the House of Representatives even though Republican candidates for the House received 1.5 million fewer votes than Democratic candidates. Michael P. McDonald, Geography Does Not Necessarily Lead to Pro-Republican Gerrymandering, HUFFINGTON POST: THE BLOG (July 1, 2013, 3:13 PM), http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michael-p-mcdonald/ geography-does-not-necess_b_3530099.html [https://perma.cc/FR3G-JK6R]. In 2016, Trump lost the popular vote to Hillary Clinton by about 2 percentage points, Nora Kelly, Hillary Clinton’s Lead Is Greater than Multiple Former Presidents, THE ATLANTIC (Nov. 24, 2016), https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/11/clinton-vote-lead/508667/ [https://perma.cc/6JWF-XTRB], but won the median congressional district by more than 3.5 percentage points, Nate Silver (@NateSilver538), TWITTER (Jan. 21, 2017, 4:25 PM), https://twitter.com/NateSilver538/status/822917985388138498 [https://perma.cc/DA4U-Z9M2].
Court’s decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*, which enjoined enforcement of the preclearance regime of the Voting Rights Act,\(^221\) removed a substantial constraint on pro-Republican gerrymanders in the South.\(^222\) There is, then, an exceptional risk of pro-Republican bias in the aggregate map of congressional districts following the 2020 redistricting. (Whether risks specific to a particular round of redistricting ought to weigh heavily in judicial conclusions about legislative duties is, of course, a question on which reasonable people may disagree.\(^223\))

To summarize, there is a decent but not unassailable changed-conditions argument that the legislative duty to act reasonably with respect to districting now requires the promulgation of partisan fairness and responsiveness standards. However, because much of the argument turns on the existence of data and technology that have not yet been exploited for redistricting, a judge might take a wait-and-see approach, declining to require standards until such time as this data is exploited and the consequences become apparent, most likely after the 2020 round of districting.\(^224\)

### C. The Three Difficulties, Reconsidered

I began this Article by outlining three problems with partisan gerrymandering claims under the Equal Protection Clause.\(^225\) Let us now consider how the representational adequacy/legislative duty approach responds to them.

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\(^{221}\) 133 S. Ct. 2612, 2631 (2013).

\(^{222}\) Nick Stephanopoulos estimates that as many as one-third of the electoral districts in the South where the minority community has the “ability to elect” a Black or Latino representative (almost certain to be Democratic districts) are not protected by section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, though they were protected by section 5. See Nicholas O. Stephanopoulos, *The South After Shelby County*, 2013 SUP. CT. REV. 55, 87-96. Redistricting simulations indicate that the section 5 preclearance regime was also an important constraint on pro-Republican gerrymanders, see Chen & Cottrell, supra note 38, at 336, as does the theoretical argument developed in Adam B. Cox & Richard T. Holden, *Reconsidering Racial and Partisan Gerrymandering*, 78 U. CHI. L. REV. 553 (2011).

\(^{223}\) But note that the 2010 round of congressional districting also resulted in pro-Republican bias. See McGann et al., supra note 36, at 174.

\(^{224}\) Cf. Altman & McDonald, supra note 40, at 72 (“Each decadal redistricting since 1960 brought with it tremendous advances in computing technology and repeated promises of electoral salvation by computer.”).

\(^{225}\) See supra Part I.
Bipartisan Lockups? The approach I have sketched is unlikely to induce a spate of bipartisan gerrymanders, because the adequacy theory just as readily supports legal attacks on responsiveness-damaging bipartisan gerrymanders as it does attacks on one-party gerrymanders that result in gross asymmetries in the translation of votes into representation. This is so because, in most cases, the judicial decisions about whether legislated representational adequacy criteria are constitutionally sufficient would be grounded on general electoral integrity and fairness provisions, rather than on provisions of the constitutional text that narrowly target partisanship in redistricting. (As Part II.A.1 explained, only a few state constitutions expressly address partisan fairness in districting.)

Congress and Disaggregated Redistricting. The representational adequacy/legislative duty approach can handle the disaggregated redistricting of Congress. We saw in Part I that disaggregated redistricting means that the national map of congressional districts is often in flux, which makes it hard for a court to establish how severe the partisan bias or lack of responsiveness is at any point in time. We also saw that disaggregated redistricting leaves courts with massive, standardless discretion at the remedy stage because partisan-bias or lack-of-responsiveness violations could be remedied by redrawing congressional districts anywhere in the country.

If plaintiffs develop a theory of legislative duty by analogy to the education cases, it is not so critical that they identify “the map” of congressional districts at any point in time. As Part II.A.3 explained, the overall quality of the system of public schools is a joint product of state and local decisions, which are constantly in flux. This has not prevented courts from recognizing a legislative duty to issue standards or finding the state’s school system as a whole constitutionally inadequate. Findings of unconstitutionality in the education context are usually associated with severe, persistent educational inequalities.226 It is the track record and likely future of the state’s educational system that prompts judicial intervention, rather than the level of educational quality or opportunity observed at a moment in time.227 Similarly, the strength of the plaintiffs’ argument for implied legislative duties in representational adequacy

226. See generally Ryan, supra note 154.
227. See supra note 168.
cases will turn much more on the evidence concerning the history and likely future of representational harms than on the particulars of the legally operative map of legislative districts at a moment in time.

As for remediying aggregate harms from disaggregated redistricting, a court that finds an implied congressional duty to establish partisan fairness and responsiveness standards for the system of congressional districts could easily hold that any reasonable legislative remedy must include procedures for ascertaining compliance with the legislated standards and curing violations. In the education setting, courts have told the legislature to establish mechanisms for oversight and reform of schools that persistently fall short of state standards.228 At least two courts have found their state’s school accountability system constitutionally inadequate, and other courts have carefully reviewed accountability systems before approving them.229 Translating this idea to congressional districting, a court might hold that Congress must enact legal norms or presumptions that would allow courts to determine as matter of law what is “the map” of congressional districts, and that would channel the court’s remedial discretion.230

The Manageability Puzzle. The Gordian Knot of partisan gerrymandering litigation is that the judicially discoverable constitutional standards have been regarded as unmanageable, and the judicially manageable standards as undiscoverable, that is, as insufficiently tethered to constitutional norms.231 The representational adequacy/legislative duty approach untangles this knot by partitioning responsibilities across institutions. It calls on courts to “discover” mainly that the Constitution under present conditions requires some reasonable limitation on redistricting for partisan advantage, and that the Constitution vests primary responsibility for the

228. See supra Part II.B.2.
229. See cases cited supra note 159.
230. For example, the legislated framework might provide: (1) that for purposes of representational adequacy challenges to congressional districts, “the map” of districts is the then-operative map in each state or, if no such map exists, a judge-drawn map that mimics the most recently operative map to the maximum feasible extent; and (2) that violations shall be remedied by permuting a list of the fifty states and redrawing state congressional delegations in order, going down the permuted list until compliance with the legislated standards is achieved.
231. See supra Part I.A.
development of standards in the legislature. The first proposition is not far removed from the recognition in Vieth that extreme partisan gerrymanders are unconstitutional, and the second accords with the Supreme Court’s repeated statements that redistricting is primarily a job for the political branches. As between various reasonable limitations on partisan/ideological bias and lack of responsiveness, the Constitution is indifferent. But if the legislature, given an ample period of time, fails to adopt some reasonable limitation, the courts would prescribe a “manageable” fallback, subject to legislative revision. In this way, the courts could create bright-line rules for policing gerrymanders without also holding, implausibly, that the Constitution entails a particular metric of bias and a particular cutoff to separate constitutionally acceptable from unconstitutionally extreme bias.

As a solution to the manageability problem, the representational adequacy/legislative duty approach heavily depends on an idea voiced by Justice Scalia in Vieth v. Jubelirer: the manageability of a less-than-determinate legal standard depends on how frequently it must be applied. The representational adequacy/legislative duty approach would engender three distinct species of partisan gerrymandering claims, which are likely to be litigated with different frequencies, and which would be resolved on the basis of different kinds of standards.

One set of cases (Type I) would concern triggering conditions for the legislative duty. The court would decide whether representational adequacy had deteriorated (or been threatened) to such a degree, and whether the technology for standard setting had developed to such a degree, that the legislature must establish a redistricting framework with enforceable criteria for partisan/ideological fairness and responsiveness. Type II cases would concern the reasonableness of legislatively promulgated frameworks. Type III cases would assess redistricters’ compliance with the framework.

232. See Berman, supra note 26, at 782.
233. See, e.g., Upham v. Seamon, 456 U.S. 37, 41 (1982) (per curiam) (“From the beginning, we have recognized that ‘reapportionment is primarily a matter for legislative consideration and determination.’” (quoting White v. Wieser, 412 U.S. 783, 794-95 (1973))).
234. See 541 U.S. 267, 285-86 (2004) (plurality opinion) (rejecting the plaintiffs’ argument for policing partisan gerrymanders using standards adapted from racial gerrymandering cases because partisan motives in redistricting are ubiquitous whereas racial motives are much less common).
Type I representational adequacy cases—raising the question of whether the legislature must promulgate a redistricting framework for representational adequacy—would be largely one-shot cases in much the same way as justiciability cases are one-shot cases. They would be litigated on the basis of similarly indeterminate legal standards and kitchen-sink evidentiary records.\textsuperscript{235} Just as the threshold question of whether to treat a constitutional injury as justiciable requires an open-ended weighing of costs and benefits,\textsuperscript{236} so too does the threshold question of whether to require legislative promulgation of redistricting standards. Note also that Type I decisions would not invalidate any map of legislative districts; as such, these cases have less potential than conventional partisan gerrymander claims to engender criticism of the courts for partisan favoritism. The need for a constraining legal standard is therefore less acute.

Of course, the decision about whether to recognize a justiciable legislative duty in a Type I case must account for potential manageability problems in Type II and Type III cases.

In the education setting, courts have usually handled Type II cases by spelling out a few loose guidelines for the legislature to follow,\textsuperscript{237} giving broad but not unquestioning deference to legislation enacted to implement the guidelines.\textsuperscript{238} The same strategy could work for redistricting. For example, a court might say that the legislated standards must be designed to ensure that the party that wins a majority of the votes earns a majority of the seats; that there is a reasonable number of competitive seats; and that the map is roughly symmetrical between the parties according to the legislatively chosen measure of symmetry. And, just as some courts have

\textsuperscript{235} To be sure, if a court were to find that no such duty exists given current conditions, the duty question could be relitigated in the future if conditions change. But that is not much different than asking the courts to revisit a nonjusticiability holding in light of changed conditions.


\textsuperscript{237} See, e.g., Abbeville Cty. Sch. Dist. v. State, 767 S.E.2d 157, 176-79 (S.C. 2014) (declining on separation of powers grounds “to provide the General Assembly with a specific solution to the constitutional violation” but discussing as “instructive” the educational frameworks commended by courts in New York and Wyoming), amended by 777 S.E.2d 547 (S.C. 2015), and superseded and amended by 780 S.E.2d 609 (S.C. 2015).

\textsuperscript{238} Some courts have refrained from issuing guidelines; others have been quite specific in “advising” the legislature. For a review of the academic commentary on this point, see Bauries, supra note 85, at 721-34.
required the legislature to provide for accountability measures that kick in when schools fail to achieve educational standards, a court might require the legislature to specify a process for updating maps when the fairness and responsiveness standards are not achieved.

Naturally, judicial evaluation of the reasonableness of legislated frameworks would be informed by justiciability considerations. If judges believe that they may only review partisan or ideological fairness claims concerning particular legislative maps using bright-line rules, then the legislature in promulgating standards will have breached its duty of care if the standards are not sufficiently precise. To the extent that judges insist on legislative promulgation of bright-line rules in Type II cases, there is no need to worry about the manageability of Type III cases. These cases will be manageable by construction. Courts will simply refuse to hear them until such time as appropriate, judicially manageable standards come into being. In all likelihood these will be legislated standards, but if the legislature drags its feet or issues ridiculous standards, the courts may institute a provisional judge-made alternative.

I concede that there is some risk of a protracted conflict between courts and lawmakers over the reasonableness of legislated redistricting frameworks, such as in Type II cases. I respond to this concern in the “objections” Section below.

D. State Law, Article I, or Equal Protection?

As a pragmatic strategy for policing partisan gerrymanders, the representational adequacy/legislative duty approach is quite attractive. Doctrinally it may prove a harder sell. We saw in Part II.A.1 that neither the U.S. Constitution nor most state constitutions specifically address partisan/ideological fairness or responsiveness in districting. A theory about representational adequacy and legislative duties will in most cases have to be patched together from textual provisions cast at a high level of generality. This Section offers

239. See cases cited supra note 159.
240. As noted above, this provision would be critical for any framework for congressional districting because of the remedial-discretion problem.
241. Unless, perhaps, the legislature provides for review and enforcement of the standards by a nonjudicial institution.
242. See infra Part III.E.1.
a few thoughts about strategies for establishing the theory. I revisit several potential textual anchors, including state constitutional provisions, Article I, and the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

Litigators should probably advance the theory first under state constitutional law, focusing on two sets of states: (1) those whose constitutions include what Justin Levitt terms “prohibitions on undue favoritism” in districting, and (2) those whose courts have recognized legislative duties under generally worded education clauses, and whose constitution has similarly general provisions about “free and open” elections or voters’ “equal right to elect.” The former states present the best opportunity for making strong arguments grounded in the constitutional text; the latter for arguments by analogy to education precedents. The table in the Online Appendix identifies these states—twenty-two in total.

Attorneys bringing state law claims should aim their fire on state legislative gerrymanders, not congressional districting. Because the normative value of a competitive or party-symmetric map of congressional districts in a given state depends on how congressional districts are drawn in other states, it makes little sense to read state constitutions as establishing a legislative duty to promulgate state-specific criteria for congressional districting.

243. See Levitt, supra note 94.
244. The existence of such general provisions is designated in columns one and two of the table in the Online Appendix. Elmendorf, supra note 5.
245. The arguable separation of powers objection to “abstract” judicial declarations about legislative duties will be substantially undercut if the state’s courts have made such declarations under analogous provisions of the state’s constitution.
246. See Elmendorf, supra note 5. Litigators should also target states whose electorates are roughly split between Democrats and Republicans. In one-party states, the high court and the legislature are likely to be closely politically aligned, both presently and in their expectations about the future, and the court may therefore resist arguments for constitutional limitations on political gerrymanders.
247. See supra Part I.C.
248. However, if a group of states were to undertake to develop a coordinated process for congressional districting, subject to normative criteria that would apply to all of their districts, courts in these and other states might read their state constitutions as obligating the legislature to cooperate in this effort. (A bill to form an interstate redistricting compact between Maryland and Virginia has been introduced in Maryland. See Rob Richie & Austin Plier, Maryland Can’t Act Alone to End Gerrymandering, WASH. POST (Mar. 25, 2016), https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/maryland-cant-act-alone-to-end-gerrymandering/2016/03/25/cc27542-e61d-11e5-bc08-3e03a5b41910_story.html?utm_term=.f7d84a541387 [https://perma.cc/E39B-VJRL].) But without some prospect of coordinated redistricting, it is
Given the collective action barriers to bottom-up coordination of congressional redistricting across states, partisan fairness and responsiveness standards for the aggregate map of congressional districts and procedures for adjusting state-specific maps to comport with those standards probably have to come from Congress. Article I *may* provide the requisite textual hook for an implied congressional duty to enact a redistricting framework addressed to partisan/ideological fairness and responsiveness, but litigating this theory would be an uphill climb for many reasons.\(^{249}\) I see little prospect for a robust representational adequacy jurisprudence under Article I—unless state courts lead the way in recognizing analogous duties under state constitutions and the state constitutional experiment comes to be seen as a great success.

The remaining option is to try to shoehorn the representational adequacy approach into equal protection or First Amendment doctrine. It *may* be possible to do this using rebuttable presumptions that function as penalty defaults and thereby prod legislatures into promulgating partisan/ideological fairness criteria. However, because it may be mooted by *Whitford*, I shall provide only a brief, uncertain, and probably fruitless attempt to mold the representational adequacy approach into a new constitutional framework.

\(^{249}\) The Supreme Court has described the Elections Clause, U.S. CONST. art. I, § 4, cl.1, as “impos[ing] the duty” to regulate congressional elections upon the states, while conferring upon Congress “the power to alter [state] regulations or supplant them altogether.” *Arizona v. Inter Tribal Council of Ariz., Inc.*, 570 U.S. 1, 8 (2013). The implication is that Congress’s role is discretionary, though perhaps it would be an abuse of discretion for Congress not to prescribe a new redistricting framework under contemporary conditions. See McGann et al., *supra* note 36, at 205-10.

A further complication is the lack of precedent for judicial review of congressional inaction. There would also be serious questions about standing because “representational inadequacy” is a broadly shared injury; because it is speculative whether any voter presently dissatisfied with her congressional district would see her district redrawn if Congress were to establish a new framework for congressional districting; and because federal courts might conclude that they lack authority to provide a remedy if Congress fails to act. Some of these barriers might be overcome by analogy to administrative law, where courts have allowed challenges to agency failures to initiate rulemaking, *see*, e.g., *Massachusetts v. EPA*, 549 U.S. 497, 532-35 (2007), and relaxed causation and redressability requirements when plaintiffs allege that the agency failed to comply with proper procedures, *see* *Lujan v. Defs. of Wildlife*, 504 U.S. 555, 572 n.7 (1992) (“The person who has been accorded a procedural right to protect his concrete interests can assert that right without meeting all the normal standards for redressability and immediacy.”).
footnote-level sketch of the argument, leaving its development for another day.\footnote{The argument would run roughly as follows: All nine Justices in Vieth agreed that partisan gerrymanders that “go too far” violate the Equal Protection Clause. See Berman, supra note 26, at 782. Yet the lesson of Bandemer, Vieth, and LULAC is that the crafting of effects-based standards for policing partisan gerrymanders is beyond the judicial ken. This seems to leave courts with two choices: either hold partisan gerrymanders nonjusticiable, or presume that partisan intent renders the map of legislative districts unconstitutional. A conclusive presumption of excessive partisanship from partisan intent would be contrary to the position of all nine Justices in Vieth that such gerrymanders are permissible if they do not go too far. See id. Additionally, a conclusive presumption would contravene Justice Kennedy’s premise that partisan gerrymandering claims generally should not succeed unless plaintiffs “show a burden, as measured by a reliable standard, on [their] representational rights.” LULAC v. Perry, 548 U.S. 399, 418 (2008) (Kennedy, J). But these problems would not arise if states could rebut the presumption of excessive partisanship by showing that the map at issue complied with reasonable, legislatively promulgated standards for partisan or ideological fairness. This rebuttable-presumption framework would have two important effects. First, it would give legislators a very strong political incentive to enact fairness criteria, because without such criteria partisan objectives could not be pursued at all. Consequently, it is unlikely that courts would often strike legislative maps as partisan gerrymanders without plaintiffs “show[ing] a burden, as measured by a reliable standard, on [their] representational rights.” See id. The reliable standard in question would be chosen and codified by the relevant legislature. Different states would no doubt come up with different standards, but that is a feature, not a bug. On this understanding, what equal protection requires is simply that states, in drawing legislative districts, act in accordance with some reasonable conception of democratic fairness. See id. at 414 (majority opinion). Because there are many such conceptions, the standards can vary from state to state, so long as they are reasonably designed to achieve certain minimal objectives, such as preventing an ideological or partisan minority from securing a majority of seats in the legislature. Notice that this approach would shunt much of the litigation over partisan bias into state court, at least in cases about state legislative maps. This follows from Grove v. Emison, which states that federal courts must “defer consideration of disputes involving redistricting where the State, through its legislative or judicial branch, has begun to address that highly political task itself.” 507 U.S. 25, 33 (1993). Federal courts would determine whether a state’s redistricting framework was sufficient to rebut the presumption of excessive partisanship, but the retail-level decisions about whether particular enacted maps comply with a state’s partisan fairness criteria and procedural rules would be made in state tribunals. Id. This is significant for the manageability of the federal courts’ equal protection jurisprudence, for as we have seen, the manageability of a legal standard for political question purposes depends on the frequency with which the courts must apply it. See supra note 234 and accompanying text. However, cases about congressional maps would probably be litigated in federal court since the corresponding criteria for partisan/ideological fairness would almost certainly have to be prescribed in federal legislation. It would not make sense to treat compliance with state-specific criteria as sufficient to rebut the presumption of excessive partisanship with respect to congressional maps, because, as we saw in Part I.C, extreme bias in any given state’s map may actually reduce rather than increase the level of bias in the congressional map as a whole.}
E. Some Objections

This Section addresses four objections to the idea of fashioning a partisan gerrymandering jurisprudence on the template of the educational adequacy cases: (1) that the model will merely induce protracted, standardless battles over the reasonableness of legislatively promulgated standards; (2) that the model is motivated by a mistaken premise about “judicially discoverable and manageable” standards; (3) that the model runs afoul of the separation of powers; and (4) that the model depends too much on state courts, which may lack the necessary political independence to police gerrymanders. In considering the last objection, I provide an overview of cases litigated under state constitutional theories in connection with the 1990, 2000, and 2010 redistricting cycles. Almost all of these cases concern compliance with explicit criteria for legislative districts, rather than broadly worded provisions about electoral fairness and integrity.

1. Reverse-Engineered Standards and Intractable “Type II” Disputes

There are two respects in which the representational adequacy problem may diverge from its educational analogue in ways that might be thought to undermine the legislative-duty strategy for “managing” constitutional disputes.

First, politics: Courts in education cases sometimes provide useful political cover for lawmakers who want to pursue reforms but face resistance from constituents or interest groups.251 This dynamic is unlikely to be present in representational adequacy cases, where judicial interventions could jeopardize incumbents’ job security and the majority party’s ability to protect its majority. Judges weighing representational adequacy claims will probably anticipate intense pushback from the legislative branch.

Second, computer technology has made it very easy to draw maps and evaluate them according to any number of specified criteria and

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251. See Koski, supra note 148, at 1271-72 (discussing political context of the Kentucky Supreme Court’s seminal decision in Rose).
metrics. Legislators could try to exploit the variety of plausible normative criteria and metrics by first drawing the map they want—say, to protect incumbents, or to advantage the dominant political party—and then reverse engineering normative “standards” that would justify the map. (It is harder to reverse-engineer educational standards so as to justify a program of educational reform.)

If courts find a legislative duty to promulgate redistricting criteria in advance of mapmaking, we might enter a world in which many state legislatures issue a new set of reverse-engineered criteria every ten years, shortly after the release of the census data. Plaintiffs who dislike the ensuing map will ask courts to invalidate the legislated criteria. The survival of the legislature’s criteria will turn on judicial application of a fuzzy “reasonableness” standard, with the fate of the maps likely hanging in the balance. If the court rejects the legislated standards and invalidates the maps, the legislature may respond by issuing a new set of reverse-engineered criteria and then another map, forcing the court to apply the fuzzy reasonableness test yet again. The world so feared by opponents of standardless judicial review in partisan gerrymandering cases will have been realized, albeit with the battle shifting from the Type III question of whether the enacted maps are constitutionally permissible to the Type II question of whether the legislature reasonably exercised its duty to promulgate an adequate redistricting framework.

This scenario is not far-fetched, but neither is it fatal to my proposal. There are at least three reasonable ways for courts to deal with it, short of simply rejecting the premise that such conflicts are to be avoided. First, a cautious court could adopt a very deferential

252. For a high-tech example, see Yan Y. Liu et al., PEAR: A Massively Parallel Evolutionary Computation Approach for Political Redistricting Optimization and Analysis, 30 SWARM & EVOLUTIONARY COMPUTATION 78, 80-86 (2016). For discussion of lower-tech examples tailored for use by the general public, see Micah Altman & Michael P. McDonald, Technology for Public Participation in Redistricting, in REAPPORTIONMENT AND REDISTRICTING IN THE WEST 247, 250-58 (Gary F. Moncrief ed., 2011).

253. This is so because of tremendous uncertainty about what reforms would help to achieve state standards, particularly for high-poverty student populations. See generally Elmendorf & Shanske, supra note 71 (manuscript at 8-20).

254. Alternatively, the court would apply the previous legislated standards, if deemed reasonable.

255. That courts have managed educational adequacy litigation with fuzzy standards
standard of review for Type II cases. Virtually any legislative choice of nonpartisan districting criteria would be accepted. If the upshot is a spate of reverse-engineered partisan gerrymanders or incumbency-protection plans, so be it. At least the legislature will have to justify its plans according to some set of public-spirited criteria, rather than as partisan power grabs. As Justin Levitt has suggested, any reform that induces redistricters to explain their choices in public-regarding terms should help to reinforce norms of fair play.256

Alternatively, the court could spell out some pretty clear limits on what it will accept as “reasonable” redistricting criteria. For example, the court might say that because voting and representation is largely mediated by political parties,257 the legislature must justify perhaps suggests that the familiar arguments for bright-line rules in partisan gerrymandering cases are overblown.


257. Legislators self-organize into party caucuses and delegate critical responsibilities to party leaders. See John H. Aldrich, Why Parties?: The Origin and Transformation of Political Parties in America 208-11 (1995). Within a party caucus, the roll-call votes of representatives are only weakly correlated with district-level measures of citizen ideology. See Nolan McCarty et al., Does Gerrymandering Cause Polarization?, 53 Am. J. Pol. Sci. 666, 670-72 (2009) (estimating that 80 percent of polarization in the House of Representatives reflects divergence between how a Democrat and Republican would represent the same district, as opposed to divergence in voter preferences across districts). To be sure, some territorial representation does occur in the form of constituent service, but even this is filtered through party: citizens greatly prefer to communicate with own-party legislators. See David E. Broockman & Timothy J. Ryan, Preaching to the Choir: Americans Prefer Communicating to Copartisan Elected Officials, 60 Am. J. Pol. Sci. 1093 (2016). Likewise, legislators systematically discount the opinions of constituents who affiliate with the other party. See Daniel M. Butler & Adam M. Dynes, How Politicians Discount the Opinions of Constituents with Whom They Disagree, 60 Am. J. Pol. Sci. 975 (2016).

Vote choice in congressional and state legislative elections appears to be largely driven by partisanship, retrospective evaluations of the President, and to some extent ideological proximity. The relevant literature is vast. See, e.g., Gary C. Jacobson & Jamie L. Carson, The Politics of Congressional Elections 123-24 (9th ed. 2016) (discussing partisanship and voting in congressional elections); Stephen Ansolabehere & Philip Edward Jones, Constituents’ Responses to Congressional Roll-Call Voting, 54 Am. J. Pol. Sci. 583, 589-90, 596 (2010) (discussing partisanship and perceived agreement with roll-call votes as factors in voting in congressional elections); Danielle A. Joesten & Walter J. Stone, Reassessing Proximity Voting: Expertise, Party, and Choice in Congressional Elections, 76 J. Politics 740, 741, 749-50 (2014) (finding that the vast majority of voters support the more ideologically proximate candidate in congressional elections, but that “cross-pressured” partisans—self-identified Democrats who are ideologically closer to the Republican candidate, and self-identified Republicans who are closer to the Democratic candidate—voted more often for the
its redistricting framework in terms of a theory of effective partisan competition. The court might further hold that this requires drawing districts so that: (1) the median district leans toward the party preferred by most eligible voters in the state; (2) partisan asymmetry (somehow measured) is not more than one standard deviation worse than the historical average; and (3) the number of competitive districts exceeds some constitutional minimum. Though aggressive, this holding would allow the legislature to choose among the professionally accepted metrics of partisan bias, competition, and district-level preference. It would also give the legislature a zone of discretion to make trade-offs between partisan fairness and other considerations, such as respect for territorial communities or adherence to political subdivision boundaries. What is most important for present purposes is that this holding would define the zone of legislative discretion with clarity. Decisions in the zone would pass muster; everything outside of it would be rejected.

The third way for courts to respond to envelope-pushing legislatures in Type II cases is to hold that any reasonable redistricting framework must address and limit incentives for partisan and incumbency-protection excesses. This might be done with timing rules, as Adam Cox has argued.258 For example, the court might hold that legislated criteria must be established at least one session prior

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to the drawing of maps. Standing and ripeness doctrines could then be used to defer legal challenges to the criteria until the legislature revises the map. If the legislature’s criteria were not accepted by the court, the legislature on remand would be unable to enact new criteria to govern mapmaking for the next election. The maps would have to be redrawn in accordance with previously established criteria, or provisional judge-made standards, rather than new criteria reverse-engineered to justify the current legislature’s preferred map.

To further discourage legislative overreach, the court might deem mid-decade redistricting constitutionally impermissible (several state courts have done so already\textsuperscript{259}). That would prevent the legislature from answering a judicial invalidation of its criteria by issuing new criteria and then a new map in the next legislative session. If legislated redistricting criteria cannot be evaluated by the courts pre-redistricting (because of ripeness/standing), and if the legislature cannot respond to an adverse court decision by revising the criteria for purposes of maps that will govern the next decade of elections (because of the one-session-in-advance rule for issuing criteria and the no-mid-decade-redistricting rule), then the legislature will probably adopt criteria that stay well within the bounds of reasonableness.\textsuperscript{260}

Importantly, the no-mid-decade-redistricting rule would reduce the number of Type II cases that the courts confront.\textsuperscript{261} The rule would have this effect directly by precluding re-redistricting between census years. As well, by raising the stakes of judicial invalidation of legislated criteria, the rule would encourage legislatures to redistrict pursuant to previously established, judicially validated criteria. Finally, insofar as the rule discourages legislative overreach in the choice of redistricting standards, there would be fewer “strong” potential claims for plaintiffs to bring when standards are


\textsuperscript{260.} Cox argues that prohibitions on mid-decade redistricting are salutary because they put line-drawers behind a “partial veil of ignorance” regarding the distribution of voters across districts over the life of the plan. Cox, supra note 258, at 418-19.

\textsuperscript{261.} Recall, per Vieth, that the manageability of a fuzzy standard depends on how often it must be applied in sensitive cases. See supra note 234 and accompanying text.
adopted or changed, and thus, in all likelihood, fewer Type II claims reaching the courts.

Beyond the timing rules, state supreme courts may discourage legislative overreach by establishing venue and case-management procedures that engender ex ante uncertainty about the ideology of reviewing courts.262 For example, redistricting cases could be assigned to a trial judge chosen by lot from the state’s population of trial judges. Complementing this randomization, the state supreme court could hold that questions about the reasonableness of legislated criteria, and about maps’ compliance with the criteria, are mixed questions of law and fact subject to clear error appellate review.263 This would privilege the reasonableness judgment of an “ideologically random” trial court over the judgment of the state supreme court, whose ideology will usually be known to mapmakers. The resulting uncertainty should induce legislators to exercise some restraint even during periods when a majority of the state supreme court is ideologically aligned with the majority party in the legislature.

Finally, the state supreme court could invite the legislature to establish checks on judicial overreaching. To illustrate, the legislature might partition merits-review and remedial responsibilities among judges, stipulating that if a court finds the legislated framework for redistricting unconstitutional, the remedy stage of the proceeding and the determination of whether enacted maps are permissible must be assigned to other judges. This partitioning of responsibilities would ensure that no judge could arrogate map-invalidation or map-redrawing powers to himself by holding the redistricting framework unconstitutional.264

262. In twenty-two states, the state supreme court has exclusive rulemaking authority with respect to the judicial system. See generally Christopher Reinhart & George Coppolo, Cal. Office of Legislative Research, 2008-R-0430, Court Rules in Other States—Legislative Approval (2008).


264. A power-loving trial judge is probably less likely to find the redistricting criteria unconstitutional if he has been divested of map-review and remedial authority.
2. Is the Legislative Duty Superfluous?

This Article’s account of the manageability dilemma that has confounded equal protection challenges to partisan gerrymanders presupposes that federal courts, having determined that the Constitution requires some limit on partisanship in redistricting, may not simply pick a metric of partisan bias and a threshold for how much is too much unless the Constitution (properly understood) actually privileges that particular metric and cutoff.265 The recognition of a legislative duty to promulgate standards is a way around this dilemma, because it vests the choice among metrics/thresholds in another institution and conceptualizes any judicially established standard as a stop-gap remedy for the legislature’s failure to act, rather than as a specification of what the Constitution commands.

But perhaps the legislative-duty part is unnecessary. Perhaps the courts, having determined that some limit is necessary, may pick whatever metric and cutoff seems best at the time, while allowing legislative revisions.266 Many scholars have argued that the U.S. Supreme Court sometimes creates legislatively revisable doctrinal rules to implement constitutional norms.267 The leading example is Miranda v. Arizona, which established the rule that police officers, prior to interrogating a person in custody, must inform the subject “in clear and unequivocal terms that he has the right to remain silent.”268 But the Court also indicated that the Miranda-warning requirement was provisional.269 It was to remain in place unless or until “we are shown other procedures which are at least as effective in apprising accused persons of their right of silence and in assuring a continuous opportunity to exercise it.”270 Similarly, in Smith v.
Robbins, the Court characterized the procedure for withdrawal of defense counsel stipulated by *Anders v. California* as a “prophylactic framework” intended “to vindicate the constitutional right to appellate counsel,” rather than as a “constitutional command.” Because “the Constitution itself does not compel the *Anders* procedure,” the states remained free to adopt alternatives.

If one sees legislatively revisable rules as an ordinary part of constitutional doctrine, then the Gordian Knot of partisan gerrymandering jurisprudence is pretty easy to untangle. The courts just need to choose a metric of partisan bias and a cutoff for how much is too much, while stating that legislatures may enact reasonable alternatives. I am sympathetic to this approach, which seems much more plausible than holding that equal protection entails a particular metric and cutoff, but there remain significant objections.

First and most basically, the proposition that federal courts have authority to craft doctrinal standards that go beyond what the Constitution “commands” is hotly disputed. Second, the leading examples of this practice, such as *Robbins* and *Miranda*, address situations where constitutional noncompliance (ineffective appellate counsel and coerced confessions) may be hard for courts to observe absent the prophylactic rule. In both cases, the provisional judge-made rule is information forcing. In the redistricting context, by contrast, any judicially selected metric of partisan bias and cutoff

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271. 386 U.S. 738, 744 (1967) (requiring appointed criminal defense counsel who concludes that appeal would be frivolous to file “a brief referring to anything in the record that might arguably support the appeal”).


273. Id.


275. See *Robbins*, 528 U.S. at 280-81; *Miranda*, 384 U.S. at 461.
would essentially define the constitutional norm—how much of a burden on partisan representational rights is too much—rather than generate information that courts or other actors need to measure the burden. To treat such norm-defining doctrinal standards as legislatively revisable would represent a fairly substantial break with conventional, *Marbury*-derived understandings about the judicial role, and might end up destabilizing important election law precedents, such as the one-person, one-vote requirement of *Reynolds v. Sims*.276

3. Reviewing Maps vs. Requiring Frameworks: Separation of Powers Objections

One might argue on separation of powers grounds for an interpretive presumption against implied legislative duties. For a court to find a legislative duty is, in effect, to exert control over the legislative agenda, and due regard for the coordinate branches of government arguably counsels against this. Also, when courts undertake to implement broadly worded constitutional provisions about education or representation by directing the legislature to establish standards and evaluation systems, rather than by making record-based determinations that particular schools or particular legislative maps are in fact constitutionally inadequate, the courts are engaged in an essentially speculative enterprise. This is in tension with the familiar notion that the courts’ job is to find facts and apply law to facts, leaving more speculative, policy-minded determinations to the legislature.277

276. 377 U.S. 533 (1964); cf. Berman, *supra* note 26, at 836 (“[T]he one-person, one-vote rule, at least as applied in congressional districting, is a [nonstandard] decision rule that directs courts to conclusively presume that the challenged scheme is arbitrary and capricious from the mere fact that it minimally departs from perfect equipopulousness.”). If equal protection’s “operative proposition”—the constitutional command—requires only a nonarbitrary distribution of population across legislative districts, and if legislatures are generally free to replace judge-made “decision rules” with other decision rules that reasonably implement the “operative proposition,” then massive deviations from population equality could suddenly become permissible. Cf. Berman, *supra* note 26, at 835-36. For example, a state could probably require apportionment on a county basis rather than a population basis, at least as to one house of the state legislature (by analogy to the U.S. Senate).

277. *Cf.* LULAC v. Perry, 548 U.S. 399, 419-20 (2006) (Kennedy, J.) (casting doubt on a proposed symmetry standard for a partisan gerrymandering claim because it would enable courts to invalidate maps before the predicted partisan injury had actually materialized). Note
These arguments invite a couple of responses. The “it is too speculative” objection papers over the fact that rulings about the existence of manageable standards always depend on a speculative, forward-looking weighing of costs and benefits. A ruling on the existence and contours of the legislative duty would be analogous to a justiciability ruling about manageable standards. The considerations to be weighed are very similar, and the holding would be meant to bring about the establishment of manageable standards.

As for judicial incursions on the legislative agenda, the extent of the incursion depends greatly on the remedy for legislative inaction. If the remedy would be a provisional, judge-made standard, the initial legislative remand just gives the legislature the option to act, without compelling it. The intrusion would be far more severe if the court threatened to hold the legislature in contempt, fine lawmakers, or otherwise coerce legislative action. This is a reason for courts to think carefully about remedies, but not to reject the representational adequacy/legislative duty approach altogether.

4. Dependence on Dependent State Courts

A final objection to the strategy I have sketched is that it relegates the policing of state legislative gerrymanders to state courts. State courts were notorious in the pre-Reynolds era for passivity in the face of grossly malapportioned legislative districts. This passivity may have reflected a lack of political independence from state legislatures, on whom state courts depend for their budgets. Such dependencies may make state courts equally reluctant today to hear or vindicate “representational adequacy” claims. Moreover, many states in the present day are essentially one-party democracies, in which Democrats or Republicans control the legislative and executive branches and comprise a supermajority of the electorate.

also that one justice dissented from the canonical educational adequacy decision on the ground that the court was issuing an advisory opinion. See Rose v. Council for Better Educ., Inc., 790 S.W.2d 186, 223-25 (Ky. 1989) (Leibson, J., dissenting).

278. See supra note 236 and accompanying text.
279. See supra Part III.B.
281. See id. at 96.
282. See Ballotpedia, supra note 219.
 justices in these one-party states are likely to identify with the dominant party, and may be reluctant to circumscribe its control over redistricting.

These are potent concerns. Yet state courts appear to be waking to the problem of the gerrymander. Writing in 2006, David Schultz compared state constitutional litigation in the 1990 and 2000 rounds of redistricting. In the 1990s, eleven state courts heard challenges to reapportionment plans, but “only four ... undertook more than a perfunctory analysis of their constitutions and only two used it to invalidate all or part of a reapportionment plan.” Both plaintiff victories turned on provisions requiring legislative maps to respect political subdivision boundaries. After the 2000 round of redistricting, nine cases were litigated in state court. In seven of these cases, courts provided a substantial state constitutional analysis, and in five cases, the map at issue was invalidated in whole or in part. (Two state courts held mid-decade redistricting unconstitutional on state grounds, in contrast to the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in LULAC v. Perry, which rejected this per se rule.)

My research assistants extended Schultz’s analysis and found that state court engagement with redistricting increased during the 2010 cycle. State constitutional claims were litigated in nineteen states. Plaintiffs prevailed in whole or in part in six of these


284. Id. at 1129.

285. Id. at 1112.

286. Id. at 1129.

287. Id. Also, in a decision postdating Schultz’s paper, the Arizona Supreme Court engaged in a substantial state constitutional analysis. See Ariz. Minority Coal. for Fair Redistricting v. Ariz. Indep. Redistricting Comm’n, 208 P.3d 676, 686-87, 689 (Ariz. 2009) (upholding challenged maps because, inter alia, the redistricting commission “engage[d] in a deliberative effort to accommodate” competitiveness and other goals).

288. Schultz, supra note 283, at 1131.

289. See In re 2011 Redistricting Cases, 294 P.3d 1032 (Alaska 2012) (concerning compliance with judge-made procedures designed to ensure that VRA districts do not deviate from state constitutional requirements more than necessary); Vandermost v. Bowen, 269 P.3d 446 (Cal. 2012) (concerning interim maps to be used when enacted maps are put to a referendum vote); In re Reapportionment of the Colo. Gen. Assembly, 332 P.3d 108 (Colo. 2011) (per curiam) (concerning compliance with state constitutional requirement about political subdivision splits); League of Women Voters of Fla. v. Detzner, 172 So. 3d 363 (Fla. 2015) (concerning partisan intent); Solomon v. Abercrombie, 270 P.3d 1013 (Haw. 2012) (per curiam)
cases,\textsuperscript{290} additionally, the Arizona Supreme Court intervened to protect the independence of the state’s nonpartisan redistricting body.\textsuperscript{291} Notable too is that some of the courts that ruled for defendants nonetheless carved out or suggested a substantial judicial role in policing the redistricting process.\textsuperscript{292}
In the post-2010 round of state constitutional redistricting litigation, a number of plaintiffs asserted claims that went beyond arguments about noncompliance with traditional districting criteria, such as minimization of political subdivision splits. In Florida, the courts found violations of a recently enacted state constitutional prohibition on redistricting for partisan advantage. \(^{293}\) To similar effect, Kentucky’s courts struck down a map because the legislature had not \textit{consistently} applied the criteria said to justify departures from population equality. \(^{294}\) The inconsistency suggested that some other impermissible purpose was probably at work. \(^{295}\) Most recently, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court invalidated the state’s congressional district map as a partisan gerrymander in contravention of the “free and equal elections” clause of the state constitution. \(^{296}\) On the other hand, the Ohio Supreme Court declined to infer a general obligation of partisan impartiality from explicit constitutional requirements for compact, contiguous, and equally populated legislative districts, \(^{297}\) and the West Virginia Supreme Court rejected a state constitutional partisan gerrymandering claim largely on the basis of U.S. Supreme Court’s decisions under the federal constitution. \(^{298}\)

In Alaska and North Carolina, courts carefully reviewed circa-2010 legislative maps for compliance with judge-made \textit{procedures} for redistricting. \(^{299}\) The procedures in question were crafted to help

\(^{293}\) \textit{See} Detzner, 172 So. 3d at 369, 416.
\(^{294}\) \textit{See} Fischer, 366 S.W.3d at 908, 919.
\(^{295}\) \textit{See id.}
\(^{297}\) \textit{See Wilson v. Kasich}, 981 N.E.2d 814, 819-20, 823 (Ohio 2012). The court did not consider whether other, more generally worded provisions of the state constitution might yield such a requirement.
\(^{299}\) \textit{In re 2011 Redistricting Cases}, 294 P.3d 1032, 1033, 1036-38 (Alaska 2012) (requiring redistrictor to first draw maps pursuant to state constitutional criteria, without regard to VRA, and then to make the minimal adjustments necessary to comply with VRA); Dickson v. Rucho, 781 S.E.2d 404, 413 (N.C. 2015), \textit{vacated}, 137 S. Ct. 2186 (2017) (reviewing legisla-
courts ascertain whether redistricters’ ostensible efforts to comply with the federal Voting Rights Act’s required substantial departures from state constitutional criteria. For present purposes, the particulars of these procedures are much less important than the larger principle for which they stand: judges may concoct procedural requirements for redistricting so as to facilitate judicial enforcement of otherwise-hard-to-enforce constitutional norms. This is broadly in keeping with the representational adequacy/legislative duty approach.

Finally, plaintiffs litigating post-2010 maps in New Jersey, North Carolina, and Missouri sought to remedy partisan bias or a lack of competitive districts by invoking hortatory constitutional provisions about popular authority and public officials’ duty to govern “for the good of the whole.” These claims failed—and understandably so, as the constitutional provisions in question were not addressed to the electoral process as such. By contrast, the clauses on which plaintiffs have relied in educational adequacy cases are unquestionably about education. Similarly, the textual hooks for representational adequacy claims discussed in Part II.A.1 of this Article are about elections. It is worth noting, however, that the Missouri Supreme Court did analogize the “good of the whole” provision of the

ture’s compliance with “nine criteria that the General Assembly must follow in drawing new district lines,” including a temporal sequence for drawing “VRA” and “non-VRA” districts and a number of bright-line rules about the crossing of county borders).

300. See In re 2011 Redistricting Cases, 294 P.3d at 1033, 1036-38; Dickson, 781 S.E.2d at 413. Curiously, while both courts require maps to be drawn in a particular sequence, one requires VRA districts to be drawn before anything else, Dickson, 781 S.E.2d at 413, and the other requires the initial maps to be drawn blind to the VRA, In re 2011 Redistricting Cases, 294 P.3d at 1033, 1036-38.

301. Of course, under the approach I have sketched, the legislature would have primary responsibility for crafting these procedures. See supra Part III.A.

302. See Pearson v. Koster, 359 S.W.3d 35, 42 (Mo. 2012) (per curiam) (deeming “good of the whole” and “general welfare” provisions of the state constitution nonjusticiable); Gonzules v. State Apportionment Comm’n, 53 A.3d 1230, 1254-55 (N.J. Super. Ct. App. Div. 2012) (finding no private right of action to enforce state constitutional provision which provides, “All political power is inherent in the people. Government is instituted for the protection, security, and benefit of the people. and they have the right at all times to alter or reform the same, whenever the public good may require it.” (quoting N.J. CONST. art. 1, para. 2(a))); Dickson, 781 S.E.2d at 440 (finding nonjusticiable a state constitutional provision which provides, “All political power is vested in and derived from the people; all government of right originates from the people, is founded upon their will only, and is instituted solely for the good of the whole.” N.C. CONST. art. 1, § 2).

303. See supra Part II.A.1.a.
state constitution to the education clause. In earlier school finance cases, Missouri courts had found the education clause too lacking in “specificity or direction” to be enforced judicially. Unsurprisingly, the state supreme court deemed the even flabbier “good of the whole” provision nonjusticiable. State courts in New Jersey and North Carolina have been much more receptive to claims under the education clauses, yet as best I can tell, the education analogy was not advanced in redistricting litigation brought under “good of the whole”-type provisions of the North Carolina and New Jersey Constitutions.

In summary, while there are reasons to worry about state court dependence and partisanship, the trends in state court redistricting jurisprudence leave me cautiously optimistic. State courts are willing to enforce explicit redistricting criteria, and the stage is now set for a new generation of claims under more open-ended electoral provisions. No doubt some of these claims will fail on justiciability grounds, but, with the education analogy and precedents close at hand, others may well succeed.

**CONCLUSION**

This Article has outlined a new legal strategy for attacking maps of legislative districts with high levels of ideological/partisan bias or

304. See Pearson, 359 S.W.3d at 42 (discussing Mo. CONST. art. IX, § 1(a) (“A general diffusion of knowledge and intelligence being essential to the preservation of the rights and liberties of the people, the general assembly shall establish and maintain free public schools.”)).

305. Id. (discussing Comm. for Educ. Equal. v. State, 294 S.W.3d 477, 488 (Mo. 2009)). Recall that nonjusticiability is the minority position among state courts in educational adequacy cases. See supra note 144 and accompanying text.

306. Pearson, 359 S.W.3d at 42. In another Missouri redistricting case, plaintiffs invoked the “free and open elections” provision of the Missouri Constitution, Article I, Section 25, but never advanced a theory about what it requires beyond the compactness, contiguity, and population equality requirements found in Article III, Section 2 of the state constitution. See Johnson v. State, 366 S.W.3d 11, 18 (Mo. 2012) (“[Plaintiffs] claim that the plan is unconstitutional ... because the districts do not meet the requirements of contiguous territory, compactness, and population equality.” (citing Mo. CONST. art I, §§ 2, 25)).


low levels of responsiveness. Inspired by the educational adequacy cases, the strategy asks courts to recognize a legislative duty to promulgate standards for districting, as well as a framework for enforcing those standards. If the legislature abdicates its duty, courts would issue provisional, judge-made standards, subject to legislative revision.

I leave for future work a related question: Might the education analogy prove equally valuable in cases about barriers to voting, such as identification requirements, rollbacks in early voting, and the like? Litigants have generally attacked these barriers piece-meal, but a number of judges, both liberals and conservatives, have suggested that the permissibility of any given voting requirement probably ought to depend on what else the state has done to enable, or thwart, political participation. The educational adequacy cases, which often turn on holistic evaluations of the state’s system of public schools, may again prove instructive as courts feel their way toward new models for judicial superintendence of the voting process.

309. For a rare exception, see League of Women Voters of Ohio v. Brunner, 548 F.3d 463, 466 (6th Cir. 2008) (“[P]laintiffs ... filed a sixty-six page, 212-paragraph complaint alleging ‘a voting system in Ohio’ that suffers from ‘non-uniform standards, processes, and rules, and that employs untrained or improperly trained personnel, and that has wholly inadequate systems, procedures, and funding.’”).

310. See, e.g., Clingman v. Beaver, 544 U.S. 581, 607-08 (2005) (O’Connor, J., concurring) (“A panoply of regulations, each apparently defensible when considered alone, may nevertheless have the combined effect of severely restricting [electoral] participation and competition. Even if each part of a regulatory regime might be upheld if challenged separately, one or another of these parts might have to fall if the overall scheme unreasonably curtails associational freedoms.”); Frank v. Walker, 768 F.3d 744, 753 (7th Cir. 2014) (“To the extent outcomes help to decide whether the state has provided an equal opportunity, we must look not at Act 23[, the state’s voter-ID requirement.] in isolation but to the entire voting and registration system.”); League of Women Voters of N.C. v. North Carolina, 769 F.3d 224, 242 (4th Cir. 2014) (“By inspecting the different parts of House Bill 589 as if they existed in a vacuum, the district court failed to consider the sum of those parts and their cumulative effect on minority access to the ballot box.”); N.C. State Conference of NAACP v. McCrory, 997 F. Supp. 2d 322, 349 (M.D.N.C. 2014) (suggesting that the fact “that black North Carolinians have reached ‘parity’ with whites in turnout for presidential elections” should figure heavily in the analysis of alleged barriers to voting under section 2 of the Voting Rights Act), aff’d in part, rev’d in part sub nom. League of Women Voters of N.C. v. North Carolina, 769 F.3d 224 (4th Cir. 2014).