Congressional Map Scores & Analysis

2025

BETTER UTAH Institute

About this Report

Utahns have a rare opportunity to better understand how congressional districts affect representation. After a court ruling required the state to redraw its congressional districts, three proposed maps—Option C, Plaintiff Map 1, and Plaintiff Map 2—are now on the table. Each map reflects different priorities when it comes to fairness, competitiveness, and how communities are grouped.

To help Utahns understand the real impacts of these proposals, this report analyzes the three maps using standard neutral redistricting metrics : **proportionality, competitiveness, compactness, splitting, and the efficiency gap.** Together, these measures provide a clearer picture of how each map would translate voters' choices into actual political power.

The stakes couldn't be higher. Congressional district boundaries influence who wins elections, how accountable lawmakers are to their constituents, and whether communities feel truly represented. A fair map doesn't guarantee political outcomes for any party but it does ensure that voters' voices are accurately reflected at the ballot box.

The Measures

Proportionality: How closely the share of seats a party wins matches its overall share of the statewide vote. A higher score on a scale of 0 to 100 indicates a more proportional map.

Competitiveness: How likely it is that more than one political party has a real chance of winning in a district. A higher score on a scale of 0 to 100 indicates a more competitive map.

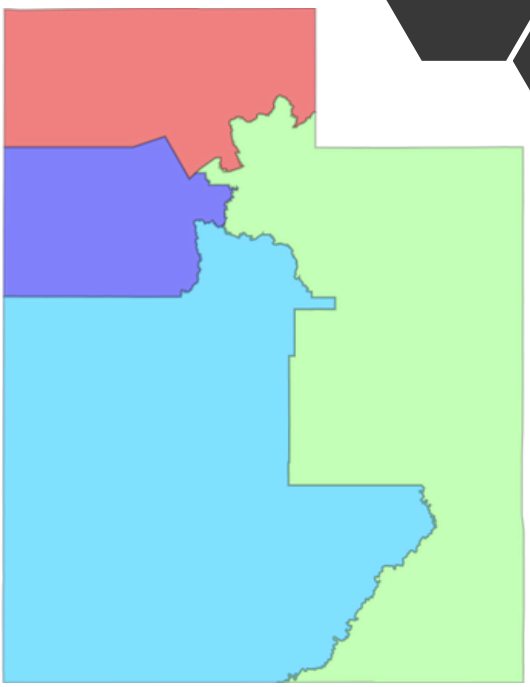
Compactness: How geographically tight and regularly shaped a district is, instead of being stretched or oddly contorted. A higher score on a scale of 0 to 100 indicates a more compact map.

Splitting: How often a map divides cities and counties between multiple districts. A higher score on a scale of 0 to 100 indicates fewer unnecessary splits.

Efficiency Gap: How much one party wastes more votes than the other through packing and cracking, indicating partisan bias in a map.

Partisan Margin: The number of percentage points one party is expected to win over the other in a given district, based on recent election results or projections.

Legislative Option C



Proportionality: 66/100

Competitiveness: 6/100

Compactness: 76/100

Splitting: 39/100

Efficiency Gap: 16.0% Republican

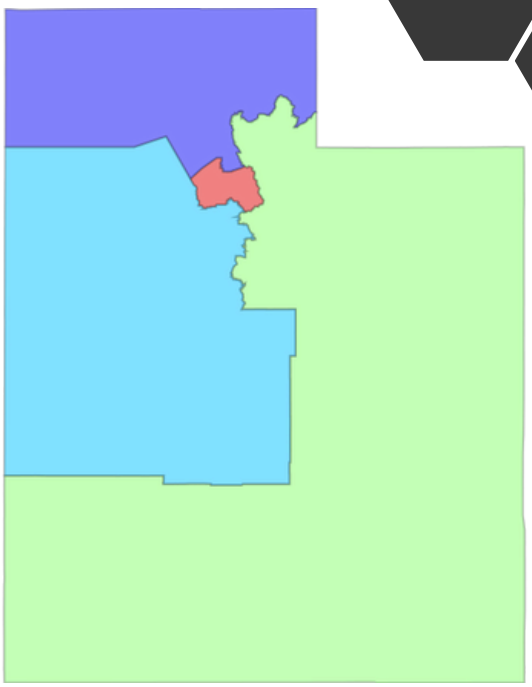
District	Republican	Democratic	Other	Partisan Margin
District 1	68.66%	25.90%	5.44%	R+43
District 2	56.60%	38.42%	4.98%	R+19
District 3	54.46%	41.04%	4.50%	R+13
District 4	75.77%	18.22%	6.01%	R+58
Statewide	63.55%	31.25%	5.20%	

Analysis

Option C produces three districts with strong Republican advantages, according to historical voting patterns, locking in three ultra-safe GOP districts and leaving just one (District 3) that's even remotely competitive on paper. A 16% Republican efficiency gap signals a substantial partisan skew, exactly the sort of number that courts and political scientists often flag as evidence of gerrymandering. Proportionality is poor, meaning seat outcomes are far out of line with actual statewide vote share (roughly 60% Republican statewide but potentially 100% Republican seats).

On the plus side, the map scores decently on compactness, but the low competitiveness and high partisan bias make it politically lopsided. The map connects urban and rural areas in ways that affect how Democratic votes are distributed.

Plaintiff Map 1



Proportionality: 100/100

Competitiveness: 12/100

Compactness: 80/100

Splitting: 47/100

Efficiency Gap: 6.5% Republican

District	Republican	Democratic	Other	Partisan Margin
District 1	42.70%	52.69%	4.61%	D+10
District 2	68.65%	25.90%	5.44%	R+43
District 3	71.96%	22.28%	5.76%	R+50
District 4	70.32%	24.70%	4.98%	R+45
Statewide	63.55%	31.25%	5.20%	

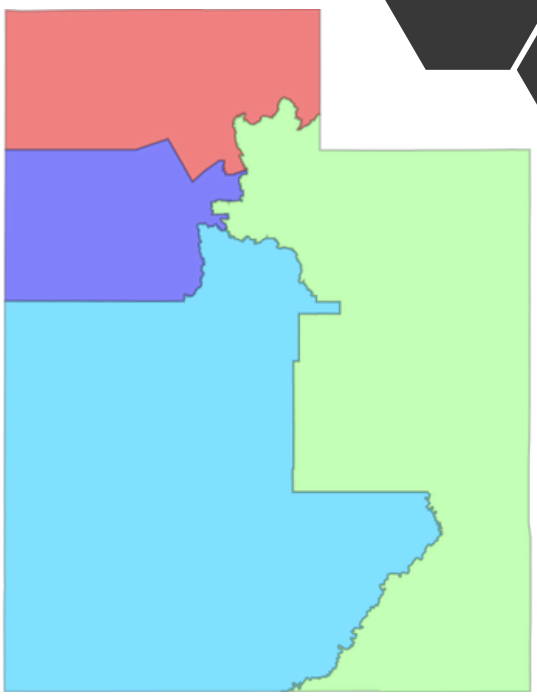
Analysis

This map draws one clear Democratic-leaning district (District 1) while leaving the other three as solid Republican seats. Proportionality scores a perfect 100 because the seat distribution (1 Democratic, 3 Republican) lines up closely with statewide vote share.

However, competitiveness is still quite low. Instead of creating more swing districts, this map locks in each district for one party or the other—basically a “one blue, three red” carve-up. The efficiency gap drops significantly from Option C, indicating fairer treatment of Democratic votes overall.

Compactness is slightly better than Option C, and the splitting score is modestly improved. This map results in one Democratic-leaning and three Republican-leaning districts, aligning closely with statewide voting patterns and reducing overall efficiency gap measures.

Plaintiff Map 2



Proportionality: 100/100

Competitiveness: 29/100

Compactness: 71/100

Splitting: 40/100

Efficiency Gap: 7.4% Republican

District	Republican	Democratic	Other	Partisan Margin
District 1	68.65%	25.90%	5.44%	R+43
District 2	45.94%	49.35%	4.71%	D+3
District 3	63.80%	31.48%	4.72%	R+33
District 4	75.77%	18.22%	6.01%	R+58
Statewide	63.55%	31.25%	5.20%	

Analysis

This map also achieves full proportionality, but with a twist: instead of locking in one blue seat, it creates one genuinely competitive Democratic-leaning district (District 2). Its competitiveness score (29/100) is notably higher than either of the other two maps.

The efficiency gap remains low, and compactness is decent, though slightly lower than Option C and Plaintiff 1. This design seems to aim for both proportionality and more voter choice, especially in District 2, where elections could actually be contested.

Map Comparison

Metric	Option C	Plaintiff 1	Plaintiff 2
Proportionality	66/100	100/100	100/100
Competitiveness	6/100	12/100	29/100
Compactness	76/100	80/100	71/100
Splitting	39/100	47/100	40/100
Efficiency Gap	16.0% R	6.5% R	7.4% R
Dem-Leaning Districts	0	1	1 (competitive)

Analysis

- Option C keeps the current partisan skew intact—uncompetitive, tilted strongly Republican, with a glaring efficiency gap.
- Plaintiff Map 1 corrects the partisan imbalance neatly by creating one safe Democratic district and three safe Republican ones. It's fairer by the numbers but still largely noncompetitive.
- Plaintiff Map 2 creates one district with closer margins between parties, increasing competitiveness while maintaining proportionality.

Politically, Plaintiff 1 is the clean proportional fix, whereas Plaintiff 2 injects some electoral competitiveness into the mix. Option C shows different characteristics on these metrics .

Conclusion

The analysis shows a clear divide between the Legislature's Option C map and the two plaintiff-submitted alternatives; however, different stakeholders may prioritize different criteria for different reasons. It further highlights significant differences among the three maps in proportionality, competitiveness, and efficiency gap scores.

The plantiff maps align more closely with statewide vote share, while Option C maintains the existing partisan distribution. Each map reflects different trade-offs between fairness, competition, and community representation.

It will be up to the court to determine which map satisfies applicable legal and constitutional standards.

This analysis is provided for educational purposes only and does not constitute a recommendation for or against any specific redistricting map.

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