



Draw the Lines

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INTERVIEWS WITH PROJECT LEADERS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

Draw the Lines PA (DTL) is barnstorming the state this fall to launch its three-year initiative to inform and engage Pennsylvanians around gerrymandering and democratic reform.

DTL will hold more than 20 events in September and October to spread the word that the battle to slay the gerrymander in Pennsylvania is not over and to introduce a new weapon in the fight: DistrictBuilder.

The barnstorming tour begins, appropriately, on Sept. 17, Constitution Day, in the city where our democracy was born, Philadelphia. It will also reach Erie, Pittsburgh, State College, Indiana County, Kutztown, Harrisburg, the Lehigh Valley, Scranton and Wilkes-Barre. New events are being added every week.

DistrictBuilder is a free, online tool that anyone can use to make their own, valid election maps and share them with elected officials. DTL developed it in partnership with Azavea, a Philadelphia-based mapping and GIS firm. Most of this fall's events will include a test drive of the tool.

To encourage people to draw election maps on DistrictBuilder, then share them with lawmakers, DTL is staging a series of statewide mapping competitions, with significant prizes.

The first competition opens on Sept. 17, with an entry deadline of Dec. 14. The challenge is to draw a valid, 18-district congressional map of Pennsylvania.

The competition has three divisions: school, higher education and adult. The competition will be judged first in three regions, West, Central and East, with regional winners going on to compete for state grand prizes of up to \$4,500 apiece. Winners will be recognized at an event in Harrisburg next January.

The portal to DistrictBuilder is the initiative's newly launched site, drawthelinespa.org. Here, people can find a trove of resources and activities to build their grasp of the redistricting issue and to prepare them to draw a great map. The site also features stories about citizens from around the state who are working for democratic reform. (The site was designed by P'unk Avenue of South Philadelphia.)

Some of the [barnstorming events](#) are open to the general public; some are aimed at college and secondary school audiences. You can follow the progress of the statewide blitz on DTL's social media:

Twitter: @drawthelinespa

Facebook: Draw the Lines PA

Instagram: @drawthelinespa

DTL is a project of the Committee of Seventy, a good government nonprofit based in Philadelphia. Each DTL region has its own nonpartisan [steering committee](#), made up of civic, education and business leaders from that region.

The chairs in the West are Maureen Lally-Green, dean of the law school at Duquesne University, and Frederick Thieman, Henry Buhl, Jr. Chair for Civic Leadership with the Buhl Foundation in Pittsburgh and the former U.S. attorney for the Western District of Pennsylvania. Duquesne serves as host organization for DTL in the west.

In the Central region, the co-chairs are former state Sen. Mike Brubaker of Lancaster County and the Rev. Sandy Strauss, director of policy and advocacy for the Pennsylvania Council of Churches. Widener University's Commonwealth Law School serves as the host organization in central Pennsylvania.

In the East, former Pennsylvania Gov. Mark Schweiker co-chairs the committee with Sharmain Matlock-Turner, CEO of the Urban Affairs Coalition. There, Seventy acts as the host organization.

The project is supported by grants from the William Penn, Heinz, Hillman, Pittsburgh, Benedum, Grable and Independence foundations, as well as individual donors.

DTL is distinct from Fair Districts PA, the citizen activist group working for changes in redistricting law in Pennsylvania, but works cooperatively with FDPA, which is one of DTL's more than 30 [partner organizations](#).