**THE PRINCETON GERRYMANDERING PROJECT
ANNOUNCES RESULTS OF THE GREAT AMERICAN MAP-OFF**

*Map Contest Winners Inspire Public Input
with Innovative Redistricting Maps in Seven States*

Seventy-Five Elite Entrants Accepted to Princeton MapCorps

August 3, 2021 – Princeton, New Jersey – The Princeton Gerrymandering Project (PGP) is pleased to announce the winners of its Great American Map-Off, a contest challenging the public to draw redistricting plans in anticipation of the 2021 redistricting cycle.

The Great American Map-Off utilized free online mapping tools allowing members of the public to draw their own redistricting plans to be judged in the contest's four unique categories: communities of interest, stealth gerrymander, competitiveness, and partisan fairness. Participants were encouraged to enter any or all categories, which are fully detailed within the contest rules on PGP's website. The site also includes links for mapping tools and resources, including Representable, Dave's Redistricting App, and All About Redistricting.

"We were fortunate to receive diverse entries from amatuer mappers both within the U.S. and Canada," said Hannah Wheelen, Data and Technology Lead for Princeton Gerrymandering Project. "In some cases, entrants had only rudimentary mapping experience, but had substantial familiarity with local communities, underscoring the importance of public engagement within the mapping process and any public input periods following the upcoming release of redistricting maps. People can use these available online tools, and they can have a voice in the redistricting process."

Winners were chosen as follows:

Overall Winner

The first place winner, and winner of the grand prize, is Nathaniel Fischer of Boone, North Carolina. Nate used multiple datasets to craft districts in North Carolina incorporating communities of interest, with the intent to create a map that a native North Carolinian would be excited about. Nate currently lives in Durham, North Carolina and is a recent graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He previously worked as an intern at Common Cause North Carolina and is currently a Communications Associate at Equality NC.

Category Winners — Best Communities of Interest Map

In addition to overall winner Nathaniel Fischer, Peter Haywood, a recent graduate of the Bronx High School of Science, wins for communities of interest mapping by creating an impressively compact map of New York state districts incorporating his detailed knowledge of regions and communities. Peter is a proud native New Yorker who plans to study political science in college.

Category Winner — Best Stealth Gerrymander Map

Note: The contest was designed around these categories to illustrate not only the public's ability to draw "good" districting maps, but also "bad" maps, or stealth gerrymanders, that reveal how maps can be drawn using data in ways that produce gerrymanders without being readily visible to a casual observer. The contest aimed to highlight how stealth gerrymanders are used more often in recent years to distort fair representation.

A student team taking Josina Dunkel's AP Human Geography course from Stuyvesant High School in New York City entered a stealth gerrymander map for Ohio which managed to achieve majority representation for a minority party in Ohio while still maintaining compact lines and mainly following county boundaries.

Category Winners — Best Competitiveness Maps

Kenneth Kellet, a recent graduate of the University of Central Florida, produced winning maps highlighting both competition and incumbency in Florida. Kellet is currently pursuing a career in the field of GIS and data analysis, having worked for the Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest Heritage Program, creating and verifying shapefiles related to the preservation of cultural resources in Central Montana.

Silas Domy, a graduate of Bowdoin College in Government & Legal Studies and Environmental Studies, also produced notable maps highlighting competition and incumbency in Florida. Silas is currently the Research and Development Coordinator for the Elder Abuse Institute of Maine, where he works to ensure that the agency's programs are backed up by data.

Category Winners — Best Partisan Fairness Maps

Isak Dai, a first-year student studying Government at Georgetown University who notes he has used Dave's Redistricting App since the age of 12, submitted a winning map of Colorado that emphasized metric optimization, such as the seats / votes curve and ranked votes graphs, and emphasized community cohesion.

Dinos Gonatos used computer optimization to maximize compactness, keep county splits down, and maximize partisan fairness in his winning map of Wisconsin, with an emphasis on

optimizing the seats / votes curve and ranked votes graph. Dinos holds a BA in Physics from Princeton, a PhD in Physics from the University of Chicago, and an MBA from Babson College.

Princeton MapCorps

Seventy-five entrants drew maps that were considered of the required technical caliber to gain admittance to the Princeton MapCorps. The MapCorps was founded within the Princeton Gerrymandering Project (PGP) to allow amateur mappers to generate districting maps in coordination with PGP's data team supplemented by technology and tools developed at Princeton. Working primarily with [Dave's Redistricting App](), the MapCorps serves to apply a diverse human skillset to map evaluation and assist the PGP team and state level partners for the duration of the 2021 redistricting process.

As pioneers in the field of electoral science, members of the Electoral Innovation Lab focus on the science behind democracy reform—including work that promotes fair districting, reforms primary and election rules, and centers the voting process on citizens. Drawing on resources from the Princeton Gerrymandering Project, the Princeton Election Consortium, and the Open Primaries Education Fund, the Lab uses data, math, law, and science develop policy reforms, legal scholarship, academic research, and test policy theory, legislative actions, election rules, districting optimization and community strategies. Our team works in cities, states, and nationally, across multiple disciplines, to improve the structural aspects of democratic systems, including investigating ways to reduce polarization, optimize citizen resources, and bring representatives closer to the citizens they serve. By putting electoral science tools in the hands of everyday people, ultimately giving more assessment power to voters, our goal is to empower citizens to repair and strengthen democracy, too.

For more information visit https://gerrymander.princeton.edu/ and https://democracy.princeton.edu/ .

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For media inquiries, and for additional biographical information about contest winners, please contact:

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