

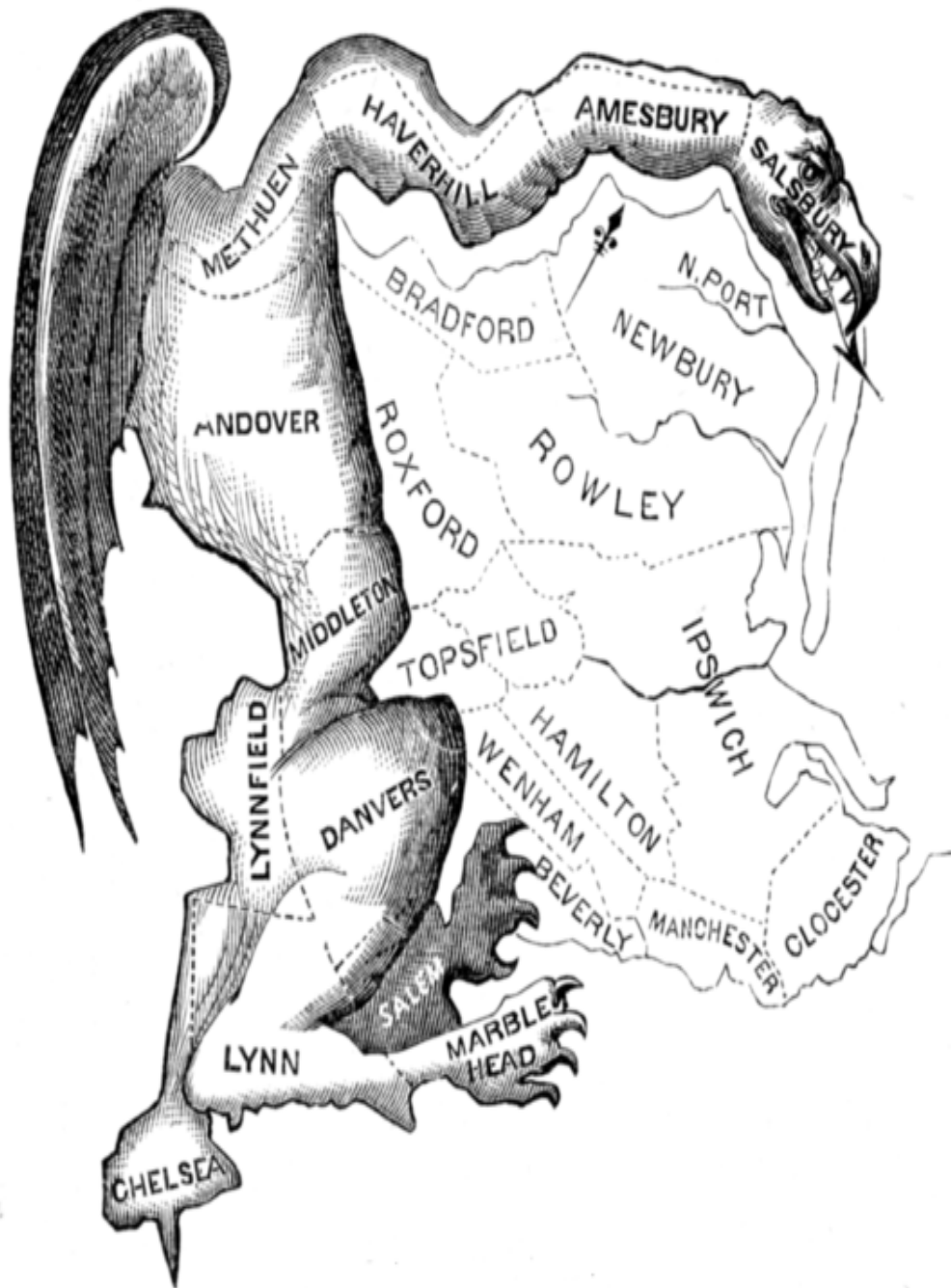
Gerrymandering

American Government

Unit 2

Redistricting vs. Gerrymandering

- Redistricting is the changing of political boundaries.
- This redistribution usually occurs after a census in order to keep voting districts apportioned equally.
- This process is controlled by elected officials.
- A form of redistricting in which electoral district (or constituency boundaries) are manipulated to form an electoral advantage for some particular group (illegal when affecting racial or ethnic balance).
- Typically the elected officials draw district lines to benefit their political party or help ensure their re-election.



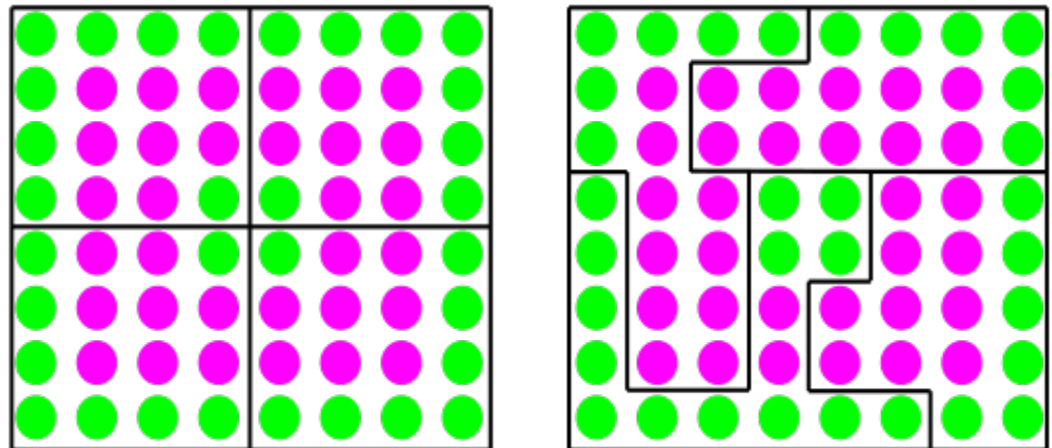
- Printed in 1812, this political cartoon illustrates the electoral districts drawn by the Massachusetts legislature to favor the incumbent Democratic-Republican party candidates of Governor Elbridge Gerry over the Federalists.
- The name Gerrymandering comes from a combination of his name and salamander (representing the odd shapes these distorted districts form).
- The cartoon depicts the bizarre shape of a district as a dragon.

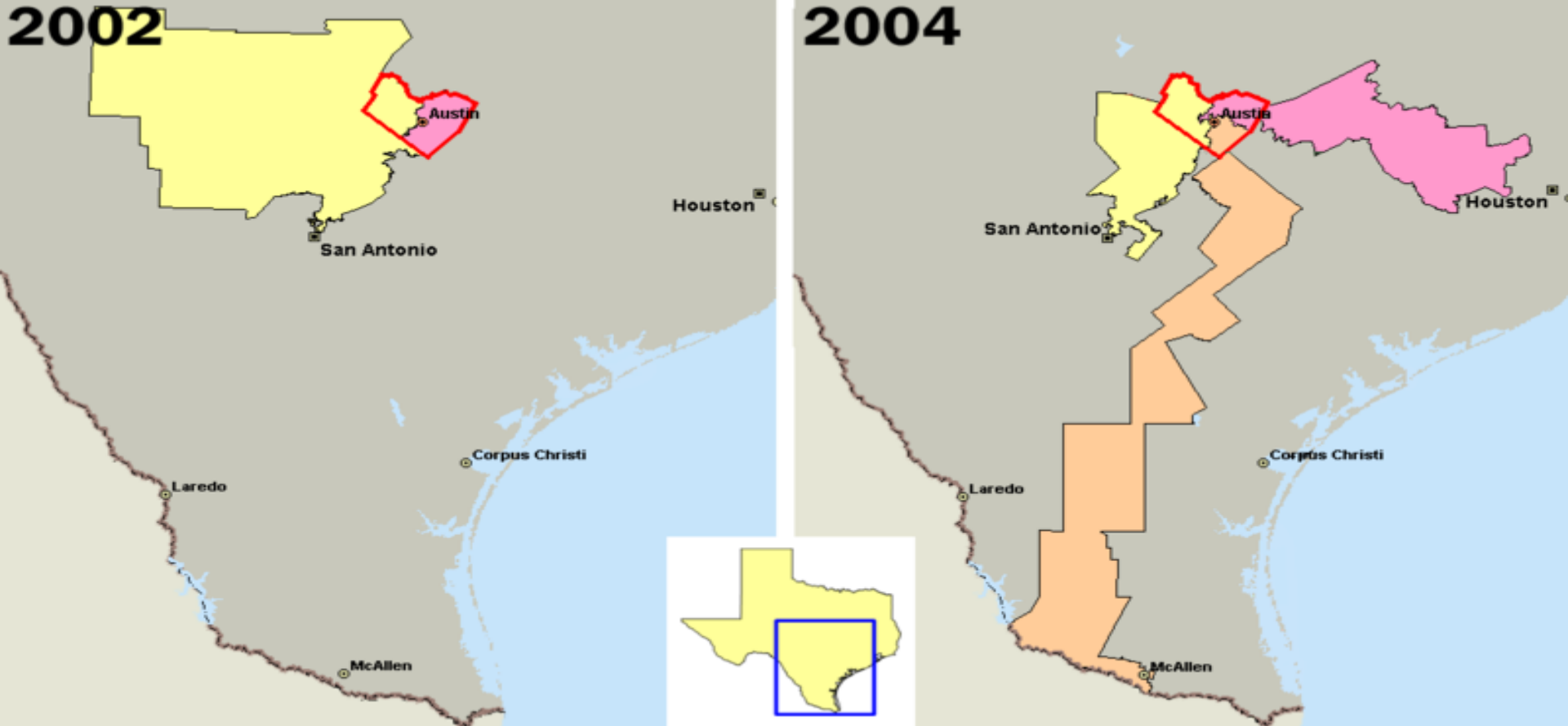
Methods: "*Packing and Cracking*"

- There are two main strategies behind gerrymandering:
 - maximizing the effective votes of supporters
 - minimizing the effective votes of opponents
- *Packing*: to place as many voters of one type into a single district to reduce their influence in other districts.
- *Cracking*: spreading out voters of a particular type among many districts in order to reduce their representation by ensuring they do not have enough votes to win in any particular district.

Packing and Cracking (EX.)

- Redrawing the balanced electoral districts in this example creates a guaranteed 3-to-1 advantage in representation for the magenta voters.
- Here, 14 green voters are *packed* into one district and the remaining 18 are *cracked* across the 3 other districts.





- In 2003, Republicans in the Texas legislature redistricted the state, diluting the voting power of the heavily Democratic county by dividing ("cracking") its residents out to more Republican districts.
- The district in orange is the infamous "Fajita strip" district 25 (mostly Hispanic, intended as a Democratic district), while the other two districts are intended to elect Republicans.
- District 25 has now been redrawn as a result of the 2006 U.S. Supreme Court decision.