

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Time for political reform

In his May 23 op-ed, “Kagan quietly declares war on gerrymandering,” Richard L. Hasen described a widening judicial recognition that gerrymandering for partisan purposes may have disproportionate racially based impacts. But gerrymandering for partisan benefit poses a serious danger on its own. Intractable partisanship in Congress is undermining the country’s ability to move forward with consensus approaches to security, social well-being and future solvency, with reputational consequences for democratic governance worldwide.

As long as districts are “safe” for one party, primaries will produce candidates with the purest ideological records who gained backing by pledging to resist compromise. One hopes the courts will remedy this distortion and instead favor district lines rewarding candidates who advocate for not just the political majority but every community in the district. Democracy, after all, with its presumption of greater justice — hence legitimacy — is best measured by how reliably the rights of minorities are upheld.

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