The Supreme Court’s reapportionment decisions, beginning with *Baker v. Carr* in 1962, had far more than jurisprudential consequences. They sparked a massive wave of extraordinary redistricting in the mid-1960s. Both state legislative and congressional districts were redrawn more comprehensively—by far—than at any previous time in our nation’s history. Moreover, they changed what would happen at law should a state government fail to enact a new districting plan when one was legally required. This book provides the first detailed analysis of how judicial partisanship affected redistricting outcomes in the 1960s, arguing that the reapportionment revolution led indirectly to three fundamental changes in the nature of congressional elections: the abrupt eradication of a 6% pro-Republican bias in the translation of congressional votes into seats outside the South; the abrupt increase in the apparent advantage of incumbents; and the abrupt alteration of the two parties’ success in congressional recruitment and elections.

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ELBRIDGE GERRY’S
SALAMANDER

The Electoral Consequences of the
Reapportionment Revolution

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University of California, San Diego

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California Institute of Technology
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Elbridge Gerry was governor of Massachusetts from 1810 to 1812. During his term, his party produced an artful electoral map intended to maximize the number of seats it could eke out of its expected vote share. Contemporary observers latched onto one district in particular, in the shape of a salamander, and pronounced it a Gerry-mander.

This book is about a unique episode in the long history of American gerrymandering – the Supreme Court’s landmark reapportionment decisions in the early 1960s and their electoral consequences. The *dramatis personae* of our story are the state politicians who drew congressional district lines, the judges on the courts supervising their handiwork, and the candidates competing for congressional office. The plot of our story concerns the strategic adaptation of these actors to the new electoral playing field created by the Court’s decisions.

In writing our story, we have incurred numerous debts. Here we thank some of those we should, with apologies to those we have inadvertently forgotten. For conversations about and comments on our project, we thank R. Michael Alvarez, Bruce Cain, Andrea Campbell, Chris Den Hartog, Andrew Gelman, Dave Grether, Bernie Grofman, John Mark Hansen, Simon Jackman, Gary Jacobson, Sam Kernell, D. Roderick Kiewiet, Gary King, Morgan Kousser, Mat McCubbins, Mike McDonald, Jonathan Nagler, Steven Smith, Matthew Spitzer, Simon Wilke, and participants in seminars given at Princeton, UC Berkeley, UCLA, UC Riverside, the Hoover Institution, Northwestern University, the University of Minnesota, Yale University, the University of Chicago, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Harvard University, and the University of Rochester. For research assistance, we thank Chris Den Hartog, Mike McDonald, Meredith Rolfe, and the Reference Law
Preface

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