

THE SUPREME COURT: REDISTRICTING AND VOTING RIGHTS

During the past two years, a number of words and phrases have dominated the headlines including “voting rights,” “voter suppression,” “gerrymandering,” “redistricting,” and “reapportionment.” What do these words and phrases mean, and how do they affect voters, especially minority voters, and the political process?

Where does the right to vote come from and how is it protected? What does the United States Constitution say and how has the United States Supreme Court (SCOTUS) interpreted the various provisions of that document to ensure the right of citizens to vote?

Every ten years, the Constitution requires that the states engage in a redistricting process to distribute the 435 Congressional seats among the 50 states. How does this process work? Is it the same throughout the country? What is the role of state legislatures and the courts in the process?

What does the Constitution say about state legislatures? Do state legislative seats have to be readjusted and if so, what are the methods for doing so?

This course will discuss and answer these and other questions as we consider the right to vote and the implications of that simple phrase. The course will study methodologies being used in various states and will focus on New Jersey and Ohio as two states with different approaches to and outcomes in the redistricting process. The course will focus on the historical role of SCOTUS and what the future may hold as the nation becomes more partisan and divided on this and other issues.

Finally, this course will explore how campaign finance laws and the SCOTUS decision in *Citizen’s United v. Federal Election Commission* changed the campaign and voting landscape as well as how the SCOTUS interpretation of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 affected minority voting in the past and for the future.

This six-week course is primarily a lecture course, but time will be left in each session for questions and limited discussion. Non-mandatory readings and additional materials will be offered to participants during the course.

LEADER: Philip Carchman is a retired Judge of the Superior Court of New Jersey, Appellate Division.

FORMAT: Hybrid

MAXIMUM: Unlimited

THURSDAYS 10:00 a.m. to noon 6 sessions starting September 29th through November 3rd