



Long, winding road - Opinion

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It is a long and winding road upon which Paul J. Mathison has embarked, but not nearly as crooked as the path that politicians take to carving their own, safe legislative districts.

Mr. Mathison got a good look at the internal working of the state government in Harrisburg while working as a lobbyist and, quite literally, ran away.

He has embarked on a 1,000-mile jog around the commonwealth to raise awareness of the need for an honest legislative redistricting process in the wake of the 2010 census. It's a noble quest.

For the last half of the last decade, lawmakers in Harrisburg doggedly refused to reform the corrupt state government. One of the principal instruments that they retained is their control over the redistricting process.

The animating concept of representative democracy is that voters get to choose their representatives. Through gerrymandering - drawing districts in order to ensure safe seats - politicians pick their voters.

Mr. Mathison took his personal crusade for honest redistricting to Scranton last week and, as he said, "time is running out."

Honest redistricting would be the biggest possible reform because it would create the prospect of truly competitive elections in scores of districts where the biggest challenge for incumbents now is figuring out how to spend their campaign money.

The Legislature deliberately rejected systemic reform, but that doesn't mean the current commission can't do it.