

[Miller says new district isn't payback](#) (Winston-Salem Journal – July 6, 2011)

By Associated Press

[Rep. Brad Miller](#) said Tuesday he doesn't consider proposed new boundaries for his district payback for how he helped draw [U.S. House](#) districts 10 years ago. [Miller](#), a Democrat from [Raleigh](#) who has served five terms in [Congress](#), estimated that the apartment where he now lives sits barely 200 yards within the 13th Congressional District proposed by Republicans late last week. The proposed boundaries contain all or portions of 14 counties, compared to the current seven, and may contain less than one-third of his current constituents, [Miller](#) said. The [13th District](#) proposal already has two Republicans talking about running in it next year. Forsyth [County Republican Party](#) [Chairman Nathan Tabor](#) said over the weekend that he will run for the seat. [Tabor](#) ran in the [GOP](#) primary for the 5th District seat in 2004. Rockingham [County District Attorney Phil Berger Jr.](#), the son of state [Senate leader Phil Berger](#), told [The Associated Press](#) on Tuesday that he's considering a bid. [Miller](#) was in the state [Senate](#) in 2001 and led the [Senate Redistricting Committee](#) that helped come up with current congressional boundaries, including a new 13th seat for [North Carolina](#). He ran the following year and won. [Miller](#), 58, said his power in the redistricting process a decade ago has been

exaggerated, particularly in getting the congressional maps approved. He said the districts he helped draw reflected [North Carolina](#) as a competitive two-party state. Republicans are overhauling his district as part of a broader plan that would increase the chances of [Miller](#) and at least two other Democratic incumbents losing their seats. "They're doing it because they can," [Miller](#) said in an interview. "It has much more to do with the work that I'm doing in [Washington](#) — there are some very powerful interest groups that I have been making a nuisance to ... than some kind of payback." Democrats currently have a 7-6 seat advantage in North Carolina's congressional delegation, but Republicans now get the chance to redraw the boundaries for the next decade because they won majorities in both chambers of the [General Assembly](#) in last fall's elections. The new draft boundaries released increased the percentage of Republican registered voters in the [13th District](#) by more than 10 percentage points. The [GOP](#) map removed more than 200,000 [Wake County](#) voters from Miller's current district and added [Republican-leaning Surry](#) and [Stokes](#) counties and the portion of the [Rockingham County](#) that had been in the 5th District. The 13th also would no longer include portions of [Greensboro](#).

[Sen. Bob Rucho](#), R-Mecklenburg, the current [Senate Redistricting Committee chairman](#), also dismissed the district lines as a way to enact revenge on [Miller](#), pointing out all incumbents would remain in their current districts. But [Rucho](#) said it was inappropriate for [Miller](#) to run for a seat he had a hand in drawing. "He got exactly what he wanted," [Rucho](#) said. "If this was payback, why would he be sitting back in his district?" [Rucho](#) was drawn out of his [Senate](#) district in 2003, after [Miller](#) already had left the legislature for [Congress](#).

[Rucho](#) returned to the legislature in 2008. The younger [Berger](#), who was re-elected to a four-year term last year, said he likes what he's doing now as [a prosecutor](#) but serving in [Congress](#).

"would be an interesting opportunity for anybody." He could face allegations of favoritism, because his father leads a chamber that would help draw the districts and vote on them.

[Berger](#)

already lives in the

[13th District](#)

. He said winning an election

is "not about your father, but it's about the message that you can bring." He said Tuesday that he had never met the younger [Berger](#) but had heard that [Berger](#) is an effective [prosecutor](#) and well liked in

[Rockingham County](#)

and surrounding areas. "From what I (hear) about his prosecutorial record, he's very tough on crime, and he's done an excellent job,"

[Tabor](#)

said. When asked if he thought

he could defeat [Berger](#) in 2012, [Tabor](#) said, "This is a pretty wide-open election. It's definitely going to be an interesting race."

[Miller](#) said it was too

early to discuss whether he would run again next year but that the proposed boundaries would delete areas where he has lived and worked for decades and put them in the 4th District represented by Democrat

[David Price](#)

[Miller](#)

said he would like to keep working in

[Congress](#)

on financial reform and environmental issues. The draft map also would increase the percentages of

[GOP](#)

voters in the 11th District represented by

[U.S.](#)

[Rep. Heath Shuler](#)

, the 8th District of

[Rep. Larry Kissell](#)

and the 7th District by

[Rep. Mike McIntyre](#)

. The eight-term incumbent

[McIntyre](#)

may have the best opportunity among the four to retain a seat. Democrats argue Republicans are packing their voters into essentially three districts to make surrounding seats more beneficial to Republican candidates. Two of the three districts would be considered majority-black districts represented by incumbents

[Mel Watt](#)

in the

[12th District](#)

and G.K. Butterfield in the 1st District. In a statement Tuesday,

[Watt](#)

said, the

[12th District](#)

proposal, if approved, would almost assuredly face legal challenges over whether they lessened the influence of black voters and "represents a sinister Republican effort to use African-Americans as pawns in their effort to gain partisan, political gains in [Congress](#) ." [Rucho](#) said mapmakers "followed the letter of the law" and created districts that would allow black voters the chance to elect their favorite whenever [Watt](#) or Butterfield ultimately retires.