

Surprise Victory on Fair Maps

Written by Wisconsin Democracy Campaign, Matt Rothschild
Monday, 07 March 2022 10:40 - Last Updated Tuesday, 08 March 2022 10:59

<http://newiproggressive.com/images/stories/S5/wi-fair-maps-s5.jpg>



New maps are slightly better than the 2011 maps and significantly better than the maps the Republicans rammed through the Legislature. But these are still not fair maps, says Rothschild, and the fight goes on.

MADISON—The Wisconsin Supreme Court last Thursday delivered a surprise, if partial, victory on the issue of fair maps.

In a 4-3 ruling written by Justice Brian Hagedorn, the Court chose the maps drawn by Gov. Tony Evers as the maps the state will use in our elections starting in August.

This means that our maps, though still biased toward Republicans, won't be nearly as biased as the maps that the GOP had presented, first in the Legislature and then to the Court.

As Gov. Evers exclaimed: "Hell yes! Today's ruling isn't a victory for me or any political party, but for the people of our state who for too long have demanded better, fairer maps and for too long went ignored—today's victory is for them."



Basically, Evers beat the Republicans at their own game. They wanted a "least change" approach to the grotesquely rigged 2011 maps, and the conservative majority on the Wisconsin Supreme Court unfortunately accepted that approach last fall. But then Evers presented the Court with a map that adhered more closely to that requirement than the Republicans' map!

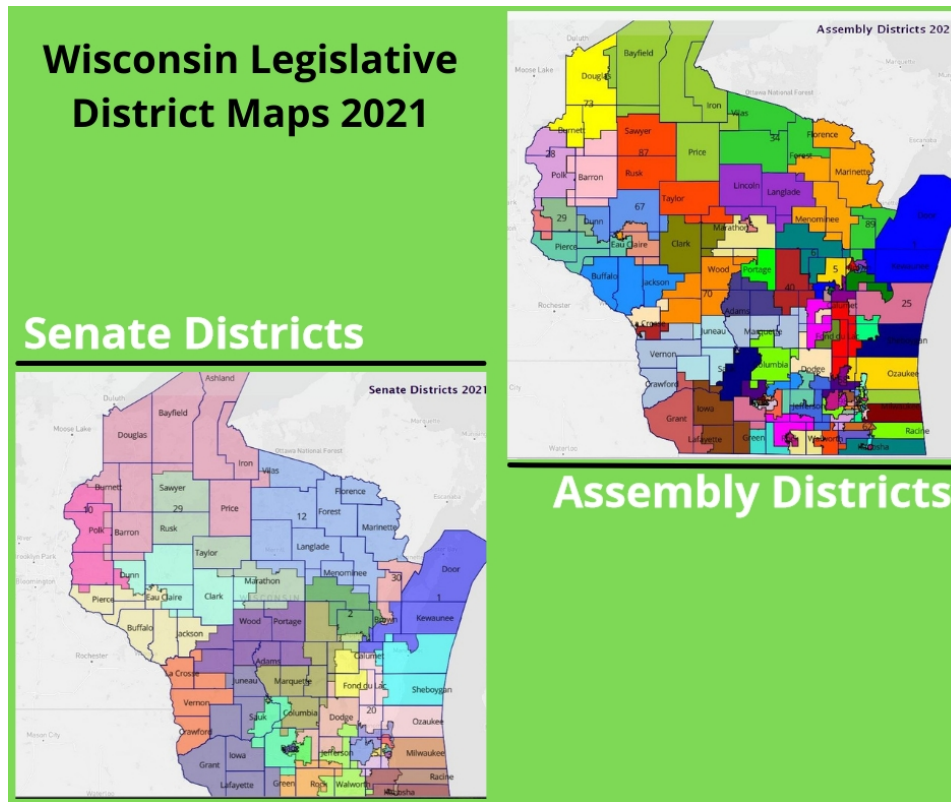
As Hagedorn wrote: "The Governor's proposed senate and assembly maps produce less overall change than other submissions." His maps moved fewer Wisconsinites around than the

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Republican maps. “No maps from any other party perform nearly as well as the Governor's on core retention,” wrote Hagedorn.



Evers’s map also will provide seven majority-minority districts in Milwaukee, two more than the Republican Legislature had proposed to the Court.

Bottom line: These new maps are slightly better than the 2011 maps and significantly better than the maps the Republicans rammed through the Legislature. But these are still not fair maps – not by a long shot.

As Justice Ann Walsh Bradley note in her concurring opinion: “The ‘least change’ approach necessarily enshrines the partisan advantage adopted by the political branches ten years ago. Its application undermines, rather than fulfills, the promise of a truly representative government.”

So the fight for fair maps -- and for a truly representative government – goes on.

But it could have been a lot worse, so today we should rejoice in this partial victory.

And tomorrow we’ll get back to work, and we’ll keep working until we finally ban partisan gerrymandering in Wisconsin.