http://newiprogressive.com/images/stories/S5/2015-budget-s5.jpg

Where political parties are allowed to pick their voters and protect their majorities we have seen growing polarization as the party in power feels protected from the wishes of the voters. Independent redistricting has been shown to reduce polarization.

GREEN BAY - In response to the U.S. Supreme Court decision upholding independent drawing of legislative districts, it is time for Wisconsin to move forward with passage of legislation that would create an independent Redistricting Advisory Commission to oversee the legislative and congressional redistricting process.



"The conservative U.S. Supreme Court has upheld the ability of states to enact laws creating an independent non-partisan redistricting process. It is time for Wisconsin to join the growing movement to end the ability of politicians and political parties to rig district lines to protect their jobs and their majorities," said Senator **Dave Hansen** (D-Green Bay), author of **Senate Bill 58** to create a non-partisan redistricting process.

In its decision, the Court upheld the right and interest of the public to have a fair and independent process that takes politics out of redistricting.

According to Hansen, "It doesn't matter which party is in power, Republicans or Democrats, gerrymandering districts to protect the power of politicians for either party violates the spirit of a true democracy. The people have a right to free, fair elections where their votes actually matter, regardless of where they live."

Research commissioned by the USC Schwarzenegger Institute showed that after independent redistricting was implemented in California, their state legislature became less polarized with the gap in polarization between the parties falling 15% in the Assembly and 10% in the state Senate

based upon the votes taken by members of both parties.

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Here in Wisconsin the proposed state budget contains a number of items vastly opposed by Wisconsin residents including a $250 million cut to the state's public universities, cuts to public schools and taxpayer funding for the Bucks arena.

"If legislators from both parties had to be concerned with the wishes of all the voters we likely would not have seen these provisions in the state budget," said Hansen. "Instead we might likely see a budget that would have enough votes from both parties to have already been approved by the Legislature."

Now, the budget process is delayed as Republican leaders attempt to pass a budget bloated with special interest giveaways in exchange for cuts that harm the middle-class.

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Senate Staffer Jay Wadd contributed to this article.