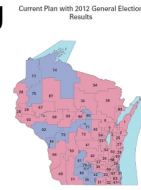


Federal Judge Orders New Legislative District Maps

Written by GBP Staff
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<http://newiprogressive.com/images/stories/S5/voting-right-s5.jpg>



Judges rule today in GOP Election Rigging Lawsuit that districts must be redrawn and in place for November elections in 2018. Given their track record, the people have good reason to be concerned that Republicans may not follow the spirit and intent of the ruling.

MADISON - In a historic win for election fairness, a Federal Appeals Court determined two months ago that Republican politicians in Wisconsin broke the law by drawing heavily skewed partisan district maps in 2011. The three-judge panel, consisting of two Republican and one Democratic appointed judges, declared the Republican maps an unconstitutional gerrymander and sided with voter rights advocates in striking down the rigged district lines.

Today, that same federal panel ruled Gov. Walker and the Republican-led legislature must redraw the legislative district lines by November 1, 2017 to be in place for November elections in 2018.



“The court found Republicans went out of their way to draw a blatantly partisan map in secret in order to undermine the rights of Wisconsin citizens,” said Assembly Democratic Leader **Peter Barca**

(D-Kenosha). “What we cannot and will not tolerate is another map drawn behind closed doors. A new map should be subject to public hearings in different parts of the state to ensure that voters are choosing their representatives, not the other way around.”



“Rather than trying to justify their unconstitutional election rigging efforts, Republicans should

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work with Democrats to protect voters and restore election fairness,” added Senate Democratic Leader **Jennifer Shilling** (D-La Crosse). “Democrats believe every voter deserves to have their voice heard. While this ruling is another step forward, it’s just the beginning of a serious conversation legislative leaders should have regarding our redistricting process. As a co-author of redistricting reform legislation with Sen. **Dave Hansen** and other Democratic leaders, I believe we must act to empower citizens and restore fairness to our election process.”



“The court’s decision to require new maps is good news for anyone who supports free, fair and competitive elections,” added Senator **Dave Hansen** (D-Green Bay). “The responsibility now falls on the Governor and Republican leaders to comply with the court’s order.”

Hansen went on to say “Given their track record of gerrymandering and voter suppression the people have good reason to be concerned that the Republicans may not follow the spirit and intent of the court’s ruling. All the more reason for the Legislature to pass Senate Bill 13 that creates a non-partisan process for drawing the new maps in a way that the public can trust and have confidence in.”



"Democrats believe that voting should be fair and elections should be meaningful," said Democratic Party of Wisconsin Chair **Martha Laning** in a statement today. "This is an incredibly important ruling for the people of Wisconsin and our democracy. Finally, after six years of an unconstitutional gerrymander, the voters will have a chance to truly have their voice heard."

"Many thanks to those who fought tirelessly to put the power of the vote back in the hands of the people. I look forward to a fair and transparent redrawing process and the restoration of a cornerstone of our democratic process," concludes Laning.

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Jay Wadd, Brandon Weathersby, Assembly Democrats, and Wisconsin Senate Democrats contributed to this report.