

GERRYMANDERING IN WISCONSIN 101

What Is Gerrymandering?

Gerrymandering is when a political party in power redraws the boundaries of voting districts after the federal Census in crafty ways to give their party a further advantage.

Why Is It So Bad?

It rigs the political game in favor of one-party rule. It decreases competition. It muffles the voices of citizens who are in the minority. It deprives Wisconsinites of equal representation. And it leads to hyper-partisanship.

The Solution Is Easy: The Iowa Model

Iowa solved the problem of gerrymandering 40 years ago, so we don't have to reinvent the wheel here in Wisconsin. In Iowa, career civil servants – and not the leaders of the party in power – draw the district maps there, using specific criteria that prohibit them from using demographic voting data to rig the districts in favor of one party or another. The Iowa Model also ensures public participation, with hearings held all around the state. The process works well in Iowa, and it'll work well here in Wisconsin, too. We need to pass legislation to ban gerrymandering and adopt the Iowa Model. Legislation to do just that has been introduced.

Wisconsinites of All Persuasions Want to Ban Gerrymandering

Having a fair, independent nonpartisan way to do redistricting is overwhelmingly popular among Wisconsinites. A Marquette Law School poll in early 2019 found that 72% of Wisconsinites wanted to ban gerrymandering. That included 63% of Republicans and 76% of Independents.

A Mass Movement Rises, County by County

Over the past five years, a large and dynamic mass movement has been growing in Wisconsin to ban gerrymandering. Citizens across the state have been gathering together to call on their elected officials to fix this problem. By the end of summer of 2020, 54 county boards – three quarters of them in “red” counties – had passed resolutions urging the state legislature to adopt nonpartisan redistricting, and 17 had passed countywide referendums – most by more than 72%.

What's Likely to Happen in 2021

The Legislature, if it remains in Republican hands, will draw another rigged map. This time, though, Gov. Evers will veto it. In such an impasse, a judge will appoint a nonpartisan expert to draw the maps, so they should be fairer than they were in 2011.

That's why it's more important than ever to demand that [legislators and candidates for the Legislature pledge](#) to support nonpartisan redistricting. And [we, the voters, pledge](#) to only vote for those who do.

