

Toolkit for Banning Gerrymandering in Wisconsin



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Introduction:

Who's This For?

This toolkit, assembled by the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign, is for grassroots activists who are working to ban gerrymandering in Wisconsin. It spells out the issue of gerrymandering as clearly as possible, along with talking points you can use with fellow citizens and policymakers alike. And it highlights the growing bipartisan grassroots movement in Wisconsin to ban gerrymandering that we're all a part of.

And, of course, it offers you lots of tools, including sample pledges, sample letters to the editor, and sample wording for resolutions and referendums. Plus, it gives you contact info for additional resources, speakers, and lawn signs.

Here's the underlying strategy behind this toolkit: As we reach more and more of our fellow citizens on this hot issue, and as we get more and more communities to pass resolutions and referendums in favor of banning gerrymandering, and as we get more and more candidates to sign the pledge in favor of banning gerrymandering, we'll bring enough pressure to bear on our elected officials to finally pass a law to give Wisconsin a fair process for independent, nonpartisan redistricting like they have in Iowa.

Feel free to use this toolkit in whatever way you can. Reprint it. Take sections of it. Grab whatever is useful to you in your campaign. You don't need to ask permission. You don't need to give credit. Steal it freely, and make it work for you. Let's win this thing!

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 percent of Wisconsinites wanted to ban gerrymandering. That included 63 percent of Republicans and 76 percent 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 summer of 2019, 47 county boards – most of them in “red” counties – had passed resolutions urging the state legislature to adopt nonpartisan redistricting.

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.

A Looming Threat

However, [there is talk](#) that the Republican leadership is trying to come up with a scheme to deprive Gov. Evers of his right to exercise a veto over the maps that they draw in 2021. Here’s how they could do it. Instead of passing a bill, which the governor could veto, they’d pass a joint resolution instead, and joint resolutions don’t go to the governor for signing or vetoing. So this would be a way for them to cut Evers out of the equation and get their rigged maps through. It would be a naked power play that goes against established practice and against current law.

The governor’s role in redistricting is long established and there is a 55-year-old Wisconsin Supreme Court precedent that prohibits the Legislature from ousting the governor out. But Speaker Vos and Majority Leader Fitzgerald could try it anyway. After all, they’ve done naked power grabs before. And they could rely on their pals on the Wisconsin Supreme Court to say it’s OK. That’s why it’s more important than ever to demand fair maps!

Talking Points to End Gerrymandering in Wisconsin

1. **The Founders of our country fought the War of Independence over fair representation.** Gerrymandering deprives Wisconsinites of fair representation.
2. **The health of our democracy depends on the integrity and fairness of our election system.** The more rigged the system is, the more cynical and apathetic the citizenry will become.
3. **Wisconsinites believe in fair play.** They are sick and tired of powerful elected officials rigging the game. Elected officials shouldn't choose their voters; voters should choose their elected officials. Wisconsinites, across the political spectrum, want to ban gerrymandering. A Marquette Law School poll showed that 72 percent of Wisconsinites want fair, nonpartisan redistricting – and that includes 63 percent of Republicans and 76 percent of Independents. The bipartisan support for banning gerrymandering is also reflected in the fact that the current reform bills have five Republican co-sponsors and in the fact that most of the 50 counties that are on board are “red” counties.
4. **If you're sick of the hyper-partisanship in Madison, you should be in favor of banning gerrymandering.** By creating “safe” districts, gerrymandering increases partisanship. The elected official needs to only appeal to the base and can ignore a huge chunk of his or her district. And if the official dares to compromise, the party leaders can “primary” that elected official for being insufficiently partisan. Wouldn't it be better to have a process that incentivizes decent compromise and civility instead of bullying and rudeness?
5. **It doesn't matter which party is doing it.** Gerrymandering is wrong.
6. **Yes, the Democrats had a chance to fix this back in 2009 and they didn't do it. Shame on them!** Democrats did hold a hearing on banning gerrymandering, but their leaders would not bring it to a floor vote. They probably thought they'd win in 2010 and could rig the map in their own favor.
7. **The partisan legal challenges cost the Wisconsin taxpayers a lot of money!** When one party engages in gerrymandering, and the other party sues, it's the Wisconsin taxpayer who foots the bill. The legal wrangling over the 2011 gerrymander cost the Wisconsin taxpayer upwards of \$4 million.
8. **No, the career civil servants at the Legislative Reference Bureau, who would be drawing the maps under the Iowa Model, could not rig them.** There is language in the bills that specifically forbids them from using political demographic data in drawing the maps or in showing other kinds of favoritism. If they tried to do this, they'd be prosecuted.
9. **Nonpartisan redistricting is transparent and inclusive.** The Iowa Model and the current reform bills require public hearings about the maps in every Congressional district in the state. It won't be a secretive, behind-closed-doors process in Madison.

10. **Wisconsin is falling behind other states.** And not just Iowa. In the last year, Colorado, Michigan, Missouri and Utah have adopted a fair maps process. Do we really want to be way behind Missouri and Utah?
11. **Critics would have you believe that Democrats are underrepresented in the Legislature because they pack themselves into Dane and Milwaukee Counties, not because of gerrymandering.** There are two persuasive rebuttals to this: First, in 2011, Republican leaders went way out of their way to rig the lines on districts far away from Madison and Milwaukee. And second, Republican voters also pack themselves: in the WOW Counties (Waukesha, Ozaukee, and Washington) and many rural counties. **The problem isn't with where you live. It's with the manipulative ways that political leaders draw lines around where you live.**

Grassroots Advocacy:

Current Reform Bills

In the 2019-2020 session, Senator Dave Hansen of Green Bay and Representative Robyn Vining of Wauwatosa have introduced companion bills to adopt the Iowa Model for Wisconsin: [Senate Bill 288](#) and [Assembly Bill 303](#).

SB288 and AB303 would give us a fair, independent, nonpartisan way to do redistricting. Their bills are co-sponsored by five Republicans: [Rep. Joel Kitchens](#) (R-Sturgeon Bay), [Rep. Jeffrey Mursau](#) (R-Crivitz), [Rep. Todd Novak](#) (R-Dodgeville), [Rep. Loren Oldenburg](#) (R-Viroqua), and [Rep. Travis Tranel](#) (R-Cuba City). That's four more Republicans than ever before. The bills would empower career nonpartisan civil servants at the [Legislative Reference Bureau](#) to draw the maps – and not the politicians.

Here's How to Contact Your Legislators to Support These Bills

Phone: toll-free legislative hotline at 1-800-362-9472 (266-9960 in Madison).

E-mail directory for Senators, [click here](#).

E-mail directory for Assembly members, [click here](#).

If you don't know who your legislators are, [click here](#) – This link opens a map of Wisconsin legislative districts, and all you need to do is enter your address in the top right search bar.

Here's a Script for Urging Your Legislators to Vote for These Bills

“Hi. I urge Senator/Representative _____ to vote to ban gerrymandering and in favor of nonpartisan redistricting modeled after that used in Iowa. I'm sick and tired of politicians rigging the game. Please vote in favor of companion bills SB288/AB303.”

Here's a Script for Urging Committee Chairs to Hold Public Hearings on These Bills

“Hello. I strongly encourage [Senator Stroebel](#), as chair of the Senate Committee on Government Operations, Technology and Consumer Protection, to hold a public hearing on SB288, a bill to ban gerrymandering and bring nonpartisan redistricting to Wisconsin. Citizens and experts in the field from around the state should have opportunities to voice their views on how voting districts are drawn.”

“Hello. I strongly encourage [Representative Tusler](#), as chair of the Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections, to hold a public hearing on AB303, a bill to ban gerrymandering and bring nonpartisan redistricting to Wisconsin. Citizens and experts in the field from around the state should have opportunities to voice their views on how voting districts are drawn.”

Here's Republican Bill Co-Sponsor Rep. Mursau's Constituent Survey



Question of the Week: Non-Partisan Redistricting

Under the current Wisconsin Constitution, the legislature is ordered to redistrict legislative and congressional districts according to their new population numbers following a federal census, and at the same time, most municipalities also must divide their territory up into wards based on the new numbers. With limited exceptions, municipality-designated wards are required to consist of one or more whole, neighboring census blocks (the smallest geographic units for which census results are available).

Traditionally, the legislature has used these municipal wards to construct legislative and congressional districts, although the legislature may adjust the boundaries of a municipal ward and use the revised ward boundaries instead. Legislative and congressional redistricting done with this procedure are used to elect members of the legislature and members of Congress in the second year after a census. As the legislature is the body in control of drawing legislative district lines, it can lead to situations where the districts are drawn to favor one political party over another.

Legislation has been introduced this session that would create a new redistricting procedure that would be used after each federal census, putting the responsibility of redistricting in the hands of the non-partisan Legislative Reference Bureau (LRB). The bill, at its core, would require maps drawn by the LRB to satisfy the following criteria:

1. The plan must be based on population requirements and cannot take into consideration other things such as political party, race, color or language
2. Districts must satisfy equal population standards set out in the Wisconsin Constitution
3. District boundaries must coincide with municipal ward boundaries as much as possible, with wards divided among as few Assembly Districts as possible
4. Districts must be composed of neighboring territory and be as compact as possible
5. In preparing the plan, LRB must be strictly non-partisan, with no district drawn for the purpose of favoring a political party or legislator
6. There must be between 54 and 100 Assembly Districts, each Senate District must contain only whole Assembly Districts, and each Congressional District must contain only whole Senate Districts

I'd like to hear your thoughts on this legislation. Please take a moment to fill out my question of the week.

[Click here for my Question of the Week](#)

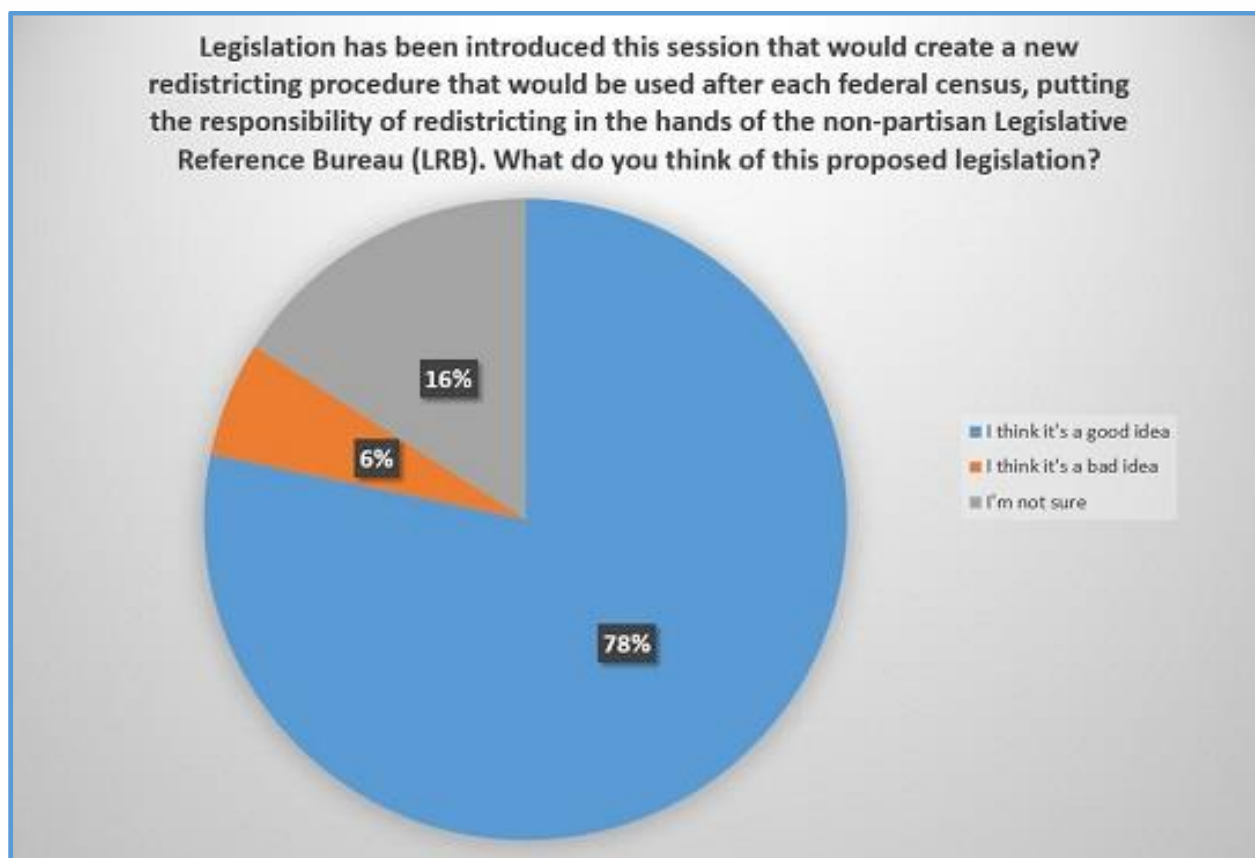
Non-Partisan Redistricting

Legislation has been introduced this session that would create a new redistricting procedure that would be used after each federal census, putting the responsibility of redistricting in the hands of the non-partisan Legislative Reference Bureau (LRB). ***What do you think of this proposed legislation?**

- ☐ I think it's a good idea
- ☐ I'm not sure
- ☐ I think it's a bad idea

Last Week's Results: Non-Partisan Redistricting

These results represent responses to last week's question from constituents of the 36th Assembly District that I received as of this morning. After reading the comments and responses from last week's question and looking over the bill, I've decided to add myself as a co-sponsor. If you would like to see a list of current co-sponsors or read over the bill, it can be found on the [legislative website](#).



Results published week of October 25, 2019.

Here's a Pledge for Voters to Take

"I believe that Wisconsin should have a level playing field and fair elections. That's why I pledge to vote only for candidates who promise to support fair maps legislation to ban partisan gerrymandering in Wisconsin."

[Click here to open voter pledge postcard PDF file.](#)

[Sign an online voter pledge](#) on the Wisconsin Fair Maps Coalition new website.



The postcard features a black background on the top half. On the left is a white silhouette of Wisconsin. To its right, the text "WISCONSIN DESERVES FAIR MAPS" is written in large, bold, white capital letters. Below this, the text "End Gerrymandering In Wisconsin" is written in bold white letters. The bottom half of the postcard has a white background. On the left, the title "Voter Pledge" is in a large serif font. Below it is a quote: "I believe that Wisconsin should have a level playing field and fair elections. That's why I pledge to vote only for candidates who promise to support fair maps legislation and ban partisan gerrymandering in Wisconsin." To the right of the quote is a large empty rectangular box for a signature. Below the quote are several lines for personal information: Name, Address, City/PO: and Zip, E-Mail, Phone: and Cell. At the bottom left are two checkboxes: "Volunteer?" and "OK to share my name with legislators". On the right side of the white section, the text "WI Fair Maps Coalition 5027 West North Ave. Milwaukee, WI 53208" is printed.

Voter Pledge

"I believe that Wisconsin should have a level playing field and fair elections. That's why I pledge to vote only for candidates who promise to support fair maps legislation and ban partisan gerrymandering in Wisconsin."

Name _____

Address _____

City/PO: _____ Zip _____

E-Mail _____

Phone: _____ Cell _____

Volunteer? ☐


☐ OK to share my name with legislators

WI Fair Maps Coalition
5027 West North Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53208

Here's a Pledge for Candidates to Take

"I pledge to support fair maps legislation along the Iowa Model to ban partisan gerrymandering in Wisconsin, and I will refuse to vote for any gerrymandering scheme."

[Click here to download a PDF version of candidate pledge card.](#)

 WISCONSIN DESERVES FAIR MAPS	
End Gerrymandering In Wisconsin	
<h3>Candidate Pledge</h3> <p>"I pledge to support fair maps legislation along the Iowa Model to ban partisan gerrymandering in Wisconsin, and I will refuse to vote for any gerrymandering scheme."</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Address _____</p> <p>City/PO: _____ Zip _____</p> <p>E-Mail _____</p> <p>Phone: _____ Cell _____</p> <p>District or Office _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Incumbent <input type="checkbox"/> Candidate</p>	 Wisconsin Fair Maps Coalition c/o Wisconsin Democracy Campaign 203 S. Paterson St, Ste 100 Madison WI 53703

Short Guide to Writing Letters to the Editor

1. Keep them short. That means under 200 words.
2. Make one point only, or two at the very most.
3. Do not use screaming words or exclamation points!!! Keep the tone measured.
4. Submit the letter within 24 hours of the offending article (or the article you want to commend).
5. Cite the article by title and date in your first paragraph.
6. Give your name, address, and phone number.
7. Make sure you are submitting it to the right person: The Letters to the Editor Page Editor (or the Opinions editor, or the editor in chief). Most websites will give you the correct address.
8. Send an email within 48 hours to ask, politely, whether they are going to run it.
9. Most papers have a once a month rule on letter writers, so obey it.
10. Read your letter out loud before you send it in.

Here's a Sample Letter to the Editor in Favor of the Hansen/Vining Bills

Dear Editor,

I hope this newspaper, and the citizens of this community, endorse the current bills to ban gerrymandering in Wisconsin, which have bipartisan support.

Sen. Dave Hansen (D-Green Bay) and Rep. Robyn Vining (D-Wauwatosa) have introduced two bills, SB288 and AB303, to give us a fair, independent, nonpartisan way to do redistricting.

Their bills are co-sponsored by five Republicans: Rep. Joel Kitchens (R-Sturgeon Bay), Rep. Jeffrey Mursau (R-Crivitz), Rep. Todd Novak (R-Dodgeville), Rep. Loren Oldenburg, (R-Viroqua), and Rep. Travis Tranel (R-Cuba City).

This bipartisan support is not surprising. A Marquette Law School poll earlier this year showed that 72 percent of Wisconsinites want to ban gerrymandering, and that includes 63 percent of Republicans and 76 percent of Independents.

The people of Wisconsin are sick and tired of elected officials, from whatever party, rigging the maps to keep themselves in power. We want fair play and a level playing field.

Gerrymandering is wrong, whether Republicans are doing it or Democrats are doing it.

Let's solve this problem once and for all and pass these bills to ban gerrymandering in Wisconsin.

[Name]

[Address]

[phone]

Here's a Sample Letter to the Editor Opposing Any Effort to Ace Out Evers

Dear Editor,

There is a move afoot to deprive Gov. Evers of the right to veto the new redistricting maps that the Legislature will draw after the Census in 2020.

This would not be fair play. In fact, it would violate long-established practice, and it would violate the Wisconsin State Constitution, as the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled 55 years ago in a case called *Reynolds v. Zimmerman*.

But this doesn't seem to trouble Speaker Robin Vos or Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald. Neither Vos's office nor Fitzgerald's "would categorically rule out the possibility of trying to approve maps without getting Evers' approval," the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reported recently.

Please oppose any such effort to undermine our system of checks and balances. We don't need any more rigged maps in Wisconsin.

[Name]

[Address]

[phone]

Here's a Sample Letter to the Editor to Get Your Community on Board

Dear Editor,

Our community must go on record to oppose partisan gerrymandering in Wisconsin.

The rigging of our political maps is wrong, whether Democrats are doing it or Republicans are doing it.

It makes for too many safe seats so elected officials can ignore a big chunk of their constituents.

It makes for hyper-partisanship and lack of cooperation because the elected officials have nothing to fear – except being “primaried” by someone even more partisan than they are.

And it's just plain wrong. No party in power should be able to rig district maps to keep themselves in power for ten years. That's just plain nuts!

Banning gerrymandering has enormous bipartisan support in Wisconsin.

A Marquette Law School poll earlier this year showed that 72 percent of Wisconsinites want to ban gerrymandering, and that includes 63 percent of Republicans and 76 percent of Independents.

Already, 50 county boards—representing more than 78% of the state's population—have passed resolutions urging the state legislature to ban gerrymandering in Wisconsin and give us independent, nonpartisan redistricting. Also 9 communities have also successfully passed county- or municipal-wide referendums for voters to weigh in directly.

Our community should do this, too.

It's time for fair play and a level playing field.

[Name]

[Address]

[phone]

Fair Voting Maps Town Hall Tips & Suggestions

Most Wisconsin citizens support fairness in our government and democratic institutions. Gerrymandering is destroying fairness in our election process, by creating an *UNFAIR ADVANTAGE* for one political party over the others.

PURPOSE: While creating an open and non-partisan process to draw Wisconsin's new voting districts is the goal of the Fair Maps initiative, organizers need to determine the purpose or purposes of the town hall.

- Educating the community
- A resolution by your County Board of Supervisors
- An advisory referendum on a ballot supported and put forth by your County Board of Supervisors
- A resolution by your City Council, Town or Village Trustees
- An advisory referendum on a ballot supported and put forth by your City Council or Town or Village Trustees.

DATE: Choose a few dates as you are working to secure a venue and speaker(s) then lock it in.

TIME: Consider your audience -- in most communities, weekday evenings work best. In winter months, Saturdays may also work.

VENUE: Selecting a venue where all citizens will feel welcome, safe and comfortable must be considered.

- Consider the number of citizens you hope to attend and the building's accessibility and safety (parking, wheelchair accessible, appropriate lighting, etc):
 - Library Meeting Rooms
 - Town Halls where available
 - Churches
 - Senior Centers
- Is WiFi available?
- Is a projector and screen available?
- Is a podium and microphone available? A second microphone from which the audience can ask questions should also be considered.

SPEAKER OR SPEAKERS

- Consider inviting a [Fair Maps speaker](#) along with a speaker to address another timely issue. This may increase your draw. *Healthcare, Infrastructure, Environment, Water Quality, Farming Issues, Money and Influence in Politics*
- Be sure to request speaker bios to promote the Town Hall (media invitations) and to be prepared for their introduction at the event
- Plan for a podium and microphone and head table and chairs if more than one speaker. Ask if your speaker requires Wifi and audiovisual equipment (projector/screen).

INVITING ELECTED OFFICIALS

- Send an email invitation to:
 - all County Board Supervisors
 - all Mayor and Village Presidents
 - all City Alders, Town and Village Trustees
 - your State Senator
 - all State Assembly representatives for your county
- At the Town Hall be sure to ask if there are any elected officials in attendance and ask that they stand. Thank them for attending.
- Create a list of all Elected Officials that have been invited and display it on a table. Announce that all elected officials have been invited. Point out where the invitation list is located for attendees to review. If an elected official responds that they were unable to attend, announce that as well.

INVITE THE MEDIA

CO-SPONSERS

- Invite other grassroots organizations co-sponsor and promote your Town Hall with email blasts and on social media.
- Wisconsin Democracy Campaign, Fair Elections Project, Common Cause are always willing to co-sponsor and provide speakers, as well as suggest local co-sponsors.
- Here are two sources with lists of local action networks interested in political reforms: [Wisconsin Grassroots Network](#) and [Indivisible local groups](#)

YARD SIGNS & POSTCARDS

- Contact [Wisconsin Fair Elections Project](#) to get information on obtaining Fair Maps [lawn signs](#). Yard signs are ordered in bundles only (minimum 25 for \$100); postcards are free. **They are available for pickup in Milwaukee.** In some cases, volunteers can work with you to get them to you.

ASSIGN MEMBERS OF YOUR GROUP TO BRING REFRESHMENTS & MAKE A FEW LEGIBLE SIGNS TO DIRECT ATTENDEES – keep it simple.

DAY OF THE EVENT

- Set up clearly marked sign-in & refreshment tables
- Assign a few members of your group to greet and direct attendees to the room
- Sign-in table should ask for Name, Address, Phone & Email
- Ask if they will **sign the petition**: “[End Gerrymandering—Wisconsin Deserves Fair Voting Maps!](#)” (Download a pdf [here](#).)
- Assign a member of your group to open the Town Hall and introduce your speakers.
 - After the speakers have completed their presentation have a member of your group present the “ASK.” (There is an example of an “ASK” in the [Toolkit](#).)
 - You will want to include instructions on how attendees can reach their County Board Supervisor, City Council Members or Village Trustees depending on your goal.

Local Fair Maps Initiatives:

How to Pass a County Board Resolution to Ban Gerrymandering

(This is adapted from a toolkit by [Citizen Action of Wisconsin](#).)

Step 1: Find a Champion on the Board

This board member should be someone that is well liked and respected by other board members across ideological lines.

Step 2: Appeal to Fairness and Bipartisanship

Stress that rigging the maps is wrong, whether Republicans or Democrats are doing it. Wisconsinites deserve a level playing field and equal representation.

Step 3: Get to know the committee that will review the resolution first.

Before your resolution is introduced to the full board, it will first have to pass a committee. Each county is different, but often the committee that will review your resolution first will bear the name “legislative” or “executive.” Work with your champion to get to know the members on this committee before the resolution is introduced. Present your argument to them and make sure you have all your yes votes secured before the committee votes.

Step 4: Reach out to each of the board members to see how they will vote.

It’s imperative that you make sure you have enough votes to pass the resolution before bringing it up – having it defeated is a setback for the statewide effort. Work with your champion to reach out to each of the board members to get an idea of how they feel about the issue. You don’t just want to find people who will vote yes – you want to find other board members who will speak up and advocate for the resolution during the discussion. If there is opposition on the board, you don’t want those voices to drown out support and intimidate board members into voting no. Don’t spend a lot of time trying to convince people who will obviously vote against it. Focus on the moderates who will be swayed by a sound argument.

Step 5: Bring lots of supporters to the county board meeting.

When it’s time to vote on the resolution, make sure to bring as many of your supporters to the meeting as possible. And call up friendly organizations and ask them to bring their members to speak up on behalf of fair maps. For example, your local [Citizen Action Organizing Cooperative](#), a nearby chapter of the [League of Women Voters](#), the [Wisconsin Farmers Union](#) have all supported the resolution in other counties. It is very important to have constituents from each of the county districts represented. Ask them to read a short statement about why they feel their county board representative should vote yes. Encourage them to focus on the key points of your argument: fairness, nonpartisanship, and equal representation.

Step 6: Get press coverage.

Call up or email local reporters, editors, and TV and radio producers and let them know about the county board meeting at least three days ahead of time. Be prepared to give them quotes (or have your champion give them quotes) about why the resolution is so important. At the press conference, be sure that your supporters have attractive home-made signs. After the resolution passes, send out a press release to the same media folks and to [Todd Richmond](#) and [Scott Bauer](#) at the Associated Press and to the [Wheeler Report](#), which is a news source that politicians in Madison read all the time. Also contact [Melanie Conklin at the Wisconsin Examiner](#) (a new progressive online news source).

Step 7: Make sure your success is widely known!

Your local Clerk will distribute the resolution to state officials as outlined in the resolution. Also make sure to notify [Beverly Speer at the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign](#), who is tracking counties that have passed the resolution.

Why Wisconsin Needs Fair Maps: A Primer for County Boards on Gerrymandering and Redistricting

1. What is redistricting?

After the U.S. Census is completed at the start of each decade, the legislature in Wisconsin has the responsibility to redraw the political district maps so that there are roughly equal numbers of people in each district to ensure equal representation.

2. What is partisan gerrymandering?

Partisan gerrymandering is the rigging of political maps to serve a partisan purpose: to solidify the power of the political party that is in the majority. They do this by consciously and [cleverly](#) drawing district maps so that their voters will dominate more districts, thus giving them more seats.

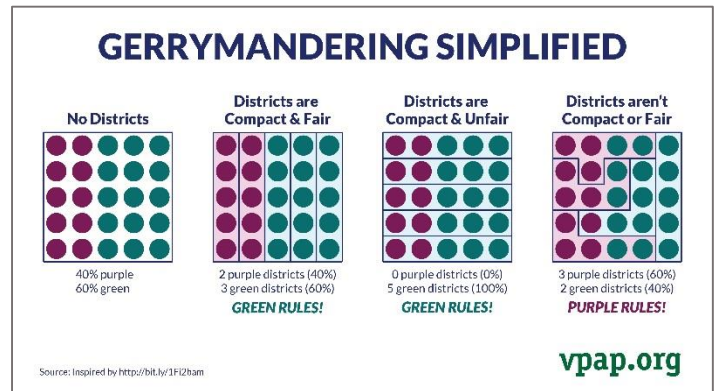
3. Is this a problem in Wisconsin?

Over the years, parties in Wisconsin have tried to draw maps that increase their representation. So this is a bipartisan problem that requires a nonpartisan solution.

The latest and most egregious example of gerrymandering in Wisconsin was the 2011 redrawing by the Republican leadership. A panel of federal judges ruled it unconstitutional after the plaintiffs demonstrated that it was one of the worst examples of gerrymandering in recent American history. With sophisticated computer modeling based on past voting patterns and other demographic data, the leadership, in secret, prepared several different maps by moving some lines here and some lines there, and each successive map predicted an increase in the GOP's seats. The final map chosen was one that predicted one of the largest increases. It also tore apart already existing political boundaries and communities of interest. For example, 58 counties were split among legislative and Congressional districts in the 2011 process—the most in Wisconsin history. Wisconsin's [redistricting case](#) was rendered moot by the U.S. Supreme Court in June 2019, which ruled that the judiciary had no role to play in such cases.

4. Is there a better way?

Actually, Iowa solved the problem of partisan map rigging more than 35 years ago. Rather than have the dominant party in the legislature come up with the maps, Iowa has nonpartisan career civil servants draw the maps, with specific criteria prohibiting them from including any demographic data related to voting and requiring them to keep political maps as compact as possible and to hold public hearings across the state about the new maps. Ultimately, the legislator still has the authority to approve maps, so we can make this change without a constitutional amendment. The so-called [Iowa Model](#) is supported by good government groups like the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin. And bipartisan legislation has been introduced for Wisconsin to adopt the Iowa Model. It's been introduced this session by Sen. Dave Hansen and Rep. Robyn

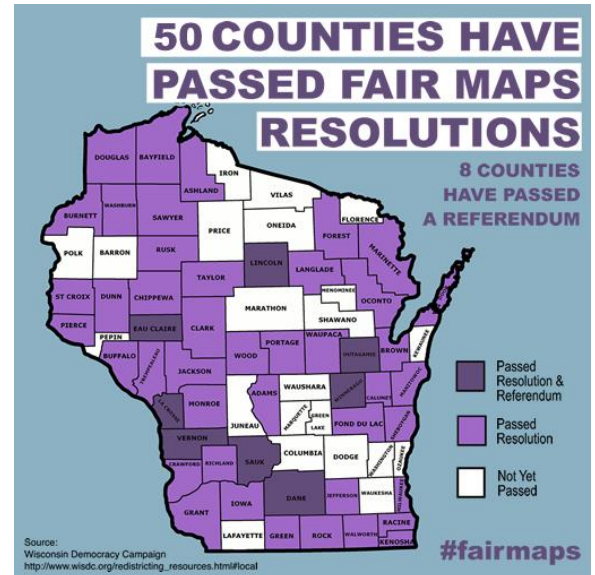


Vining ([Senate Bill 288](#) and [Assembly Bill 303](#)). The bill currently has **five Republican co-sponsors**.

5. What are Wisconsin counties doing about this?

Already, [50](#) Wisconsin County Boards have passed resolutions calling on the State of Wisconsin to adopt a process of nonpartisan redistricting along the lines of the Iowa Model. There is a lot of momentum on this issue: Most of these county boards came on board in the last three years.

At the 2017 annual conference of the Wisconsin Counties Association, 57 county representatives voted in support of a resolution to have the Wisconsin Counties Association endorse nonpartisan redistricting for Wisconsin. Seventeen of the 24 remaining county boards are thus on record in support of reform and should formally pass a resolution.



Also, [eight counties](#) – Dane, Eau Claire, La Crosse, Lincoln, Outagamie, Sauk, Vernon and Winnebago -- have passed a voter advisory referendum in favor of banning gerrymandering. A Marquette Law School poll earlier this year showed that 72 percent of Wisconsinites want to ban gerrymandering, and that includes 63 percent of Republicans and 76 percent of Independents.

6. Why is this so important?

It's about fair play. It's about being above board and transparent. It's about democracy, with everyone having an equal voice and a meaningful vote. It's about lessening the partisanship that is crippling our government and poisoning our political climate. It's about having real political competition instead of having so many "safe" seats that elected officials don't have to listen to some voters in their district or even compete for their votes. Voters should choose who represents them; representatives shouldn't choose their voters.

7. Who do I call for more information about this?

Lincoln County Board Supervisor Hans Breitenmoser has helped spearhead this movement in Wisconsin for fair maps and nonpartisan redistricting. He can be reached at 715.218.1398.

"This isn't a one party sin. It happens on both sides, and that's why we introduced [in 2013] our bipartisan bill to change how we redistrict in Wisconsin."

Former State Senator Dale Schultz (R-Richland Center). He and fellow retired State Senator Tim Cullen (D-Janesville) tour the state educating the public on the need for fair and impartial legislative redistricting reform.

Template for Local Fair Maps Resolution

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING CREATION OF A NONPARTISAN PROCEDURE FOR THE PREPARATION OF LEGISLATIVE AND CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING PLANS

WHEREAS, pursuant to Article VI, Section 3 of the Wisconsin Constitution, the Wisconsin Legislature is directed to redistrict state legislative districts “according to the number of inhabitants” at its next session following the decennial federal census. The Legislature also reapportions congressional districts at the same interval pursuant to federal law; and,

WHEREAS, because state and federal legislative redistricting is controlled by the majority party at the time of the redistricting, legislative and congressional plans in Wisconsin have been subject to partisan influence that puts the desires of politicians ahead of the electoral prerogative of the people. Redistricting to achieve partisan gains is improper, whether it is done by Republicans or Democrats; and,

WHEREAS, a panel of federal district court judges ruled that the redistricting done in Wisconsin in 2011 was unconstitutional. Legal fees in defense of the 2011 redistricting cost taxpayers in excess of \$4 million, and,

WHEREAS, the state and congressional districts belong to the citizens of Wisconsin and not to any legislator, interest group or political party, the redistricting process should not be a tool used by those in power to protect and bolster their power, but should be designed with the best interest of Wisconsin’s democracy and its citizens; and,

WHEREAS, Wisconsin’s historical practice of redistricting by the majority party in each legislative chamber is an outdated practice that stifles political competition, discourages compromise, ensures continued control by the party in power, and lacks the transparency necessary to reinforce citizens’ faith in the democratic process; and,

WHEREAS, there is a critical need at this time to restore trust, compromise and fair competition in Wisconsin politics.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the [REDACTED] hereby insists the State Legislature, before the start of the next redistricting process following the 2020 federal census, to pass legislation that creates a fair, nonpartisan procedure for the preparation of legislative and congressional redistricting plans; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the process promotes more accountability and transparency and prohibits the consideration of voting patterns, party information, and incumbents’ residence information or demographic information in drawing the maps, except as necessary to ensure minority participation as required by the U.S. Constitution; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the [REDACTED] advocates for an amendment to the Wisconsin Constitution giving the responsibility of legislative redistricting to a nonpartisan commission; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the [REDACTED] Clerk is directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Governor of the State of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Counties Association, the Wisconsin Towns Association, the Wisconsin League of Municipalities, all members of the State Legislature and to each Wisconsin County Board.

50 COUNTIES HAVE PASSED FAIR MAPS RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION

8 HAD A RE

Legend:

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3

#fairmaps

List of 50 Wisconsin Counties that Have Passed a **Fair Maps Resolution**

- [Adams County \(1/16/18\)](#)
- [Ashland County \(11/14/17\)](#)
- [Bayfield County \(10/31/17\)](#)
- [Brown County \(10/18/17\)](#)
- [Buffalo County \(4/16/19\)](#)
- [Burnett County \(2/22/18\)](#)
- [Calumet County \(9/19/17\)](#)
- [Chippewa County \(6/13/17\)](#)
- [Clark County \(12/18/13\)](#)
- [Crawford County \(2/19/19\)](#)
- [Dane County \(6/01/17\)](#)
- [Door County \(3/25/14\)](#)
- [Douglas County \(5/18/17\)](#)
- [Dunn County \(4/19/17\)](#)
- [Eau Claire County \(6/20/17\)](#)
- [Fond du Lac County \(4/16/19\)](#)
- [Forest County \(6/20/17\)](#)
- [Grant County \(3/20/18\)](#)
- [Green County \(7/11/17\)](#)
- [Iowa County \(4/16/19\)](#)
- [Jackson County \(5/15/17\)](#)
- [Jefferson County \(5/09/17\)](#)
- [Kenosha County \(8/15/17\)](#)
- [La Crosse County \(8/17/17\)](#)
- [Langlade County \(2/18/14\)](#)
- [Lincoln County \(3/21/17\)](#)
- [Manitowoc County \(10/30/17\)](#)
- [Marinette County \(12/17/13\)](#)
- [Milwaukee County \(6/22/17\)](#)
- [Monroe County \(8/23/17\)](#)
- [Oconto County \(12/6/17\)](#)
- [Outagamie County \(5/23/17\)](#)
- [Pierce County \(11/12/19\)](#)
- [Portage County \(6/20/17\)](#)
- [Racine County \(8/28/2018\)](#)
- [Richland County \(10/31/17\)](#)
- [Rock County \(2/27/14\)](#)
- [Rusk County \(9/19/17\)](#)
- [St. Croix County \(5/2/17\)](#)
- [Sauk County \(9/19/17\) \(vote\)](#)
- [Sawyer County \(11/12/19\)](#)
- [Sheboygan County \(9/17/19\)](#)
- [Taylor County \(10/30/13\)](#)
- [Trempealeau County \(9/18/17\)](#)
- [Vernon County \(9/19/17\)](#)
- [Walworth County \(12/10/13\)](#)
- [Washburn County \(5/21/19\)](#)
- [Waupaca County \(4/16/19\)](#)
- [Winnebago County \(7/17/18\)](#)
- [Wood County \(10/15/13\)](#)

List of 8 Counties and 1 Town that Have Passed a **Fair Maps Referendum**

- Dane County: 4/1/14, 82% in favor
- Eau Claire County: 11/6/18, 74% in favor
- [La Crosse County](#): 4/2/19, 77% in favor
- Lincoln County: 11/6/18, 65% in favor
- Outagamie County: 4/3/18, 72% in favor
- Sauk County: 11/6/18, 72% in favor
- Vernon County: 4/2/19, 71% in favor
- Winnebago County: 11/6/18, 69% in favor
- [Town of Newbold](#): 4/2/19, 69% in favor

Local Referendum How-To Guide and Case Study

[WI Redistricting Referendum Project: A How-To Guide and Case Study](#) (Sept 20, 2019)
([MS Word version](#))

Three Templates for a Local **Fair Maps Referendum** including **Ballot Language**

- 1) [Milwaukee County Board Supervisor Johnson's Draft Resolution for a Fair Maps Referendum](#) (MS Word version)
- 2) [Pierce County Wisconsin Resolution -- 2 in 1 resolution including approval for a county Fair Maps referendum](#)
- 3) [Generic Resolution Template for a Fair Maps Referendum](#) (MS Word version)

RESOLUTION NO. [resolution #] RE: TO CONDUCT COUNTYWIDE ADVISORY REFERENDUM ON CREATION OF NONPARTISAN PROCEDURE FOR THE PREPARATION OF LEGISLATIVE AND CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING PLANS AND MAPS

WHEREAS, the [if applicable Name of County] County Board of Supervisors on [DATE] passed a resolution calling for nonpartisan legislative and congressional redistricting maps; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Article IV, Section 3 of the Wisconsin Constitution, the Wisconsin Legislature is directed to redistrict state legislative districts “according to the number of inhabitants” at its next session following the decennial federal census. The legislature also reapportions congressional districts at the same interval pursuant to federal law; and

WHEREAS, there are numerous indicators that the citizens of Wisconsin are concerned about the practice of redistricting by whichever party holds the majority, because it may stifle political participation and competition, discourage collaboration and compromise, and lack the fairness necessary to our democratic process, by undermining the principle of one-person-one vote.

WHEREAS, the current procedure allows the legislature of the majority party to prepare redistricting plans and maps that may result in unfair partisan plans and maps, allowing the legislature to choose its voters rather than the voters choosing their representatives, which is commonly called gerrymandering.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the [Name of County] County Board of Supervisors, in legal session assembled, does hereby approve that the following question be placed on the [Date of Election] ballot as an advisory referendum question:

Question: Should the Wisconsin legislature create a nonpartisan procedure for the preparation of legislative and congressional district plans and maps?

YES _____ NO _____

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Corporation Counsel prepare a Notice of Referendum to be published by the [Name of County] County Clerk in accordance with statutory requirements;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution and the referendum shall be filed with the [Name of County] County Clerk no later than 70 days prior to the April 7, 2020 election at which the question will appear on the ballot.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the County Clerk is directed to send results of the referendum to the Governor of the State of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Counties Association, the Wisconsin Towns Association, the Wisconsin League of Municipalities, all members of the state legislature, and to each Wisconsin County Board.

FISCAL NOTE: There will be minimal cost to the County depending on the size of the ballot.

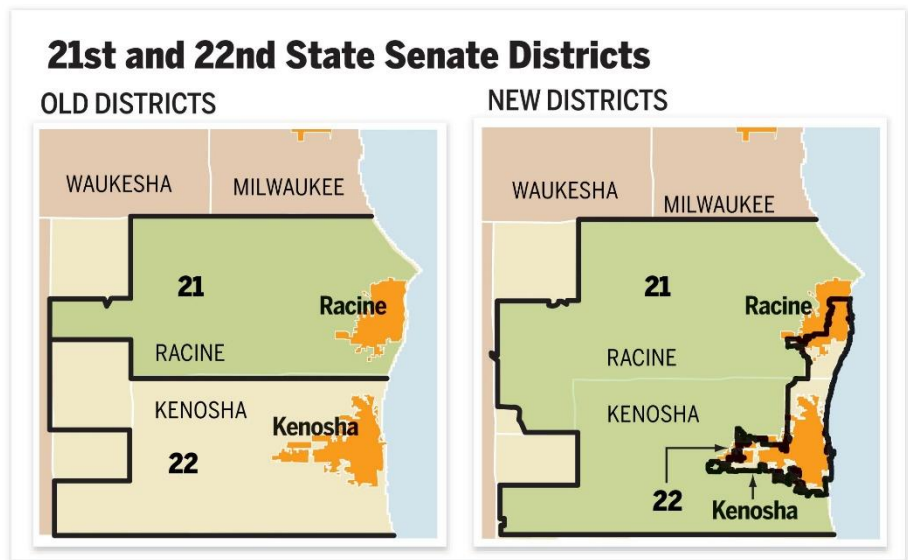
Submitted by: [name of committee/supervisors]

Resolution approved on this [date] on a vote of [vote count] with [number] ayes, [number] nays, [number] abstentions, and [number] excused.*

*The vote of the Board shall be by roll call with the results of such vote being recorded in the minutes of the meeting during which the vote was taken.

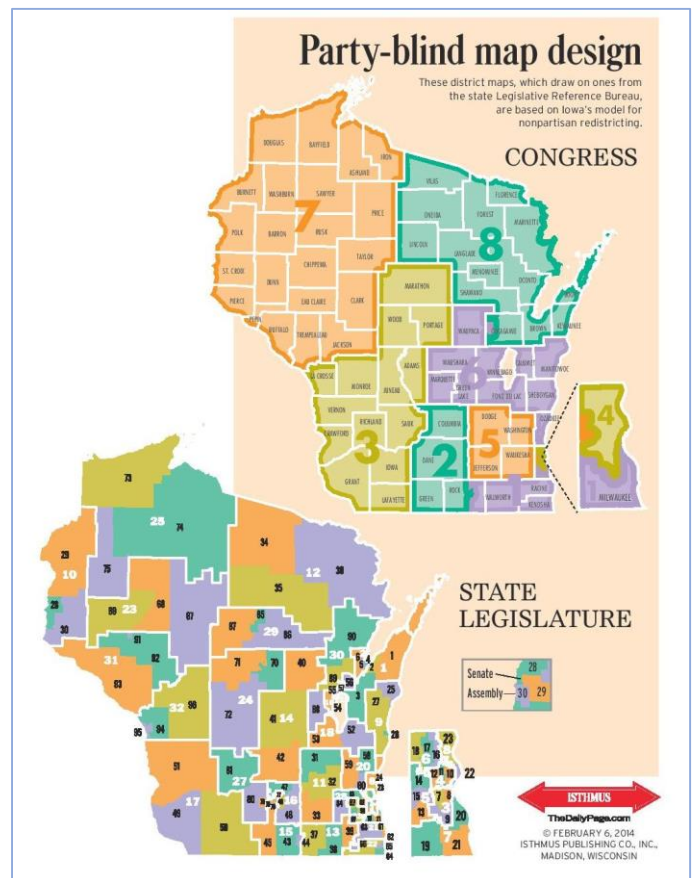
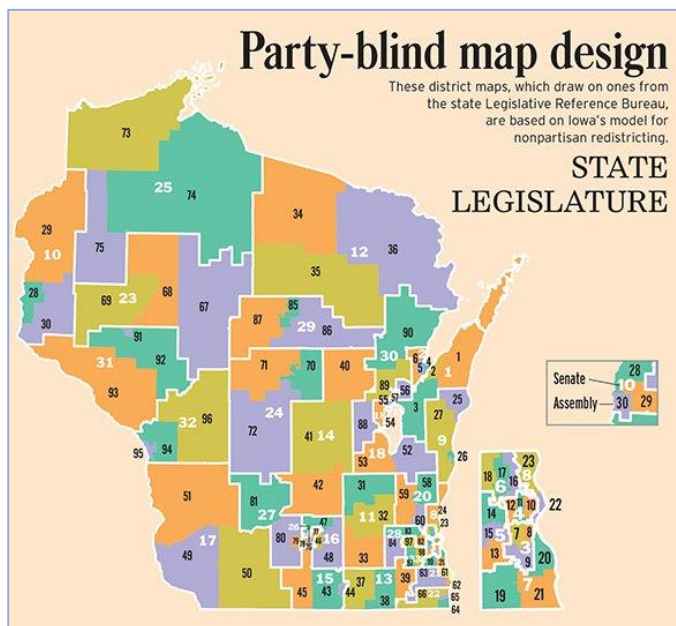
Additional Graphics to Communicate the Need to End Gerrymandering

The cities of Racine and Kenosha were packed into one Senate district while their respective counties were carved vertically to create a safe GOP district to the west that cut out longtime Democratic state Sen. Bob Wirth.



Journal Sentinel

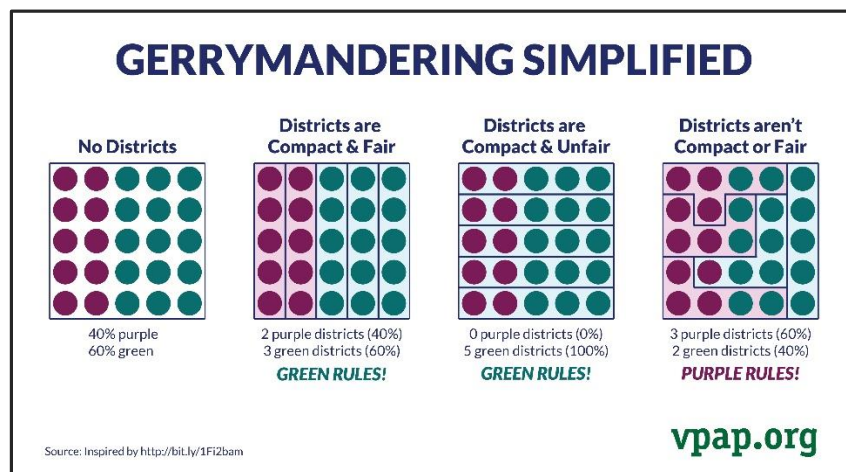
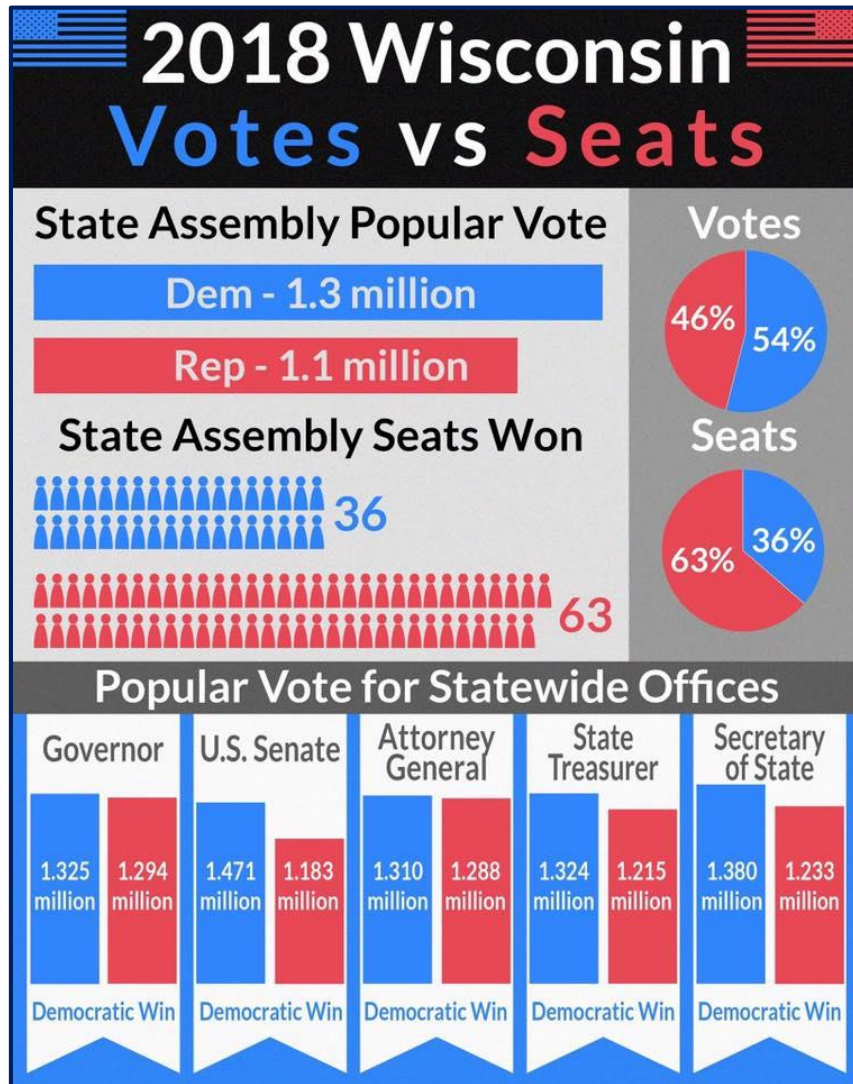
These state legislative district maps, drawn by the nonpartisan Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau in 2014, are based on Iowa's model for nonpartisan redistricting. (Source: [Isthmus](http://Isthmus.com))



< Compare to
[current](#)
[gerrymandered](#)
[Assembly District](#)
[map](#)

2018 Wisconsin Votes v. Seats Won

(source: Brian Evans)



Contacts and Speakers

The following people and their organizations can give you some help on a variety of matters relating to your redistricting reform efforts -- **including providing public speakers:**

- **[Matt Rothschild](#) and [Beverly Speer](#) at the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign:**
(608) 608-255-4260 ~ [Facebook](#) ~ [Twitter](#)
- **[Erin Grunze](#) at the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin:**
(608) 256-0827 ~ [Facebook](#) ~ [Twitter](#)
- **[Jay Heck](#) at Common Cause of Wisconsin:**
(608) 256-2686 ~ [Facebook](#) ~ [Twitter](#)
- **[Sachin Chheda](#) and [Kris Lennon](#) at the Wisconsin Fair Elections Project:**
[Facebook](#) ~ [Twitter](#) (Contact [Wisconsin Fair Elections Project](#) to get information on obtaining [Fair Maps Lawn Signs](#).)
- **[Dana Schultz](#) at Wisconsin Voices:**
(414) 226-4289 ~ [Facebook](#) ~ [Twitter](#)