

LWW LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF DANE COUNTY

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THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF DANE COUNTY'S POSITION STATEMENT ON THE LEGISLATURE'S RELEASE OF THE 2021 CONGRESSIONAL AND REPRESENTATIVE MAPS FOR WISCONSIN

October 28, 2021

I am speaking on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Dane County in opposition to the congressional and representative maps that the Legislature just released. These maps violate all the positions that the League represents in terms of transparent government responsibilities and procedures, the fair administration of justice, ethical social policy and informed and active participation in government.

I was an appointed member of the Dane County Redistricting Commission for the supervisory maps and the Madison Ad Hoc Redistricting Committee for the municipal and ward maps. These committees have spent countless hours working on nonpartisan redistricting with the direct mandate not to factor in incumbency. This Legislature has chosen to ignore all the work done by the People's Maps Commission, which considered massive citizen commentary and maps for the last year.

This Legislature, through Act 39, has re-engineered redistricting from a bottom-up process, with its foundation in local community work on maps, to the top-down mandate of this Legislature. Before Act 39, the Legislature reviewed all the local maps and only then drew the congressional and representative maps, incorporating the work of the local jurisdictions. With Act 39, this Legislature mandates that counties and municipalities must adjust to the Legislature's maps, thereby eliminating all local citizen input. Unlike in 2011, when this Legislature drew its maps in secret, citizens now know this Legislature has deliberately chosen to ignore the extraordinary citizen commitment to a nonpartisan process.

In another betrayal of the citizens of Wisconsin, this Legislature has hired private lawyers at taxpayer expense to leverage partisan advantage and create maps that earned the grade of "F" from the Princeton Gerrymandering Project, while the Peoples' Maps Commission received an "A" in terms of nonpartisanship.

To further its leverage, this Legislature petitioned the U.S. Supreme Court to dismiss the consolidated lawsuits in a federal court, which has scheduled a full evidentiary trial in January 2022 to hear all the evidence from citizens across the state. Instead, this Legislature is advocating that the Wisconsin Supreme Court hear the redistricting impasse as an original action, so that there will be no adversarial evidentiary trial. Unfortunately, the Wisconsin Supreme Court has granted the lawsuit as an original action, despite the fact that this same Court in 2009 rejected its years-long study, concluding "it was not the best forum to engage in fact-finding and draw new districts," and expressed its preference for having federal courts handle redistricting disputes.

The League of Women Voters of Dane County strongly opposes the maps created by this Legislature in a process that intentionally ignored the informed and active participation of its citizens. We vow to continue to fight this assault on our right to have nonpartisan representation in our state.

Joan Schwarz

Advocacy Chair
League of Women Voters of Dane County