

Citizen Action of Wisconsin: SCOTUS Decision to postpone new state election maps is disappointing news for Wisconsin voters

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Citizen Action of Wisconsin Redoubles its Efforts for Redistricting Reform

MILWAUKEE, WIS. – Today, the U.S. Supreme Court decided to stay the order by federal judges that required Wisconsin to redraw its unconstitutional voting maps by this November. The stay means that even if the people ultimately win the Gill v Whitford court case in the U.S. Supreme Court, it will be tougher to have fair maps in place by the 2018 election.

“Candidates need time to prepare and campaign within their districts. We hope this case will be decided quickly, otherwise we could be facing another unfair election in 2018,” responded Robert Kraig, Executive Director of Citizen Action, which has been leading a statewide campaign for redistricting reform. “But we are not deterred. Our members are more committed than ever to fight for fair maps.”

In January, a federal trial panel ordered Wisconsin to redraw its election maps by November 2017 following the landmark decision last fall that Wisconsin’s legislative districts were an unconstitutional partisan gerrymander. Attorney General Schimel appealed both the ruling and the order to redraw the maps. The U.S. Supreme Court is expected to decide on the Gill v Whitford case within the year.

Citizen Action of Wisconsin members from across the state have identified partisan gerrymandering as one of their top concerns. They have been advocating for redistricting reform legislation, state Senate Bill 13 and Assembly Bill 44, which would move the responsibility for drawing voting maps out of the hands of politicians and into the hands of the nonpartisan Legislative Reference Bureau. The bills are based on a successful model used in Iowa for thirty years. They are currently stuck in committee.

“Attorney General Schimel is trying to claim that redrawing the maps fairly by November would cost the state too much money. We know better,” said Anna Dvorak, an organizer for Citizen Action of Wisconsin. “A nonpartisan redistricting process is not only fair and impartial, it also would cost taxpayers far less than the two million tax dollars and counting used to draw and defend the current maps. Legislators should hold a public hearing on the bills so that voters can learn the truth.”