

Rep. Barca: Supreme Court sidesteps final partisan redistricting decision

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MADISON - Today the U.S. Supreme Court issued a decision in Wisconsin's redistricting lawsuit, Gill v. Whitford. The decision essentially punts the case back to the lower Federal Court to demonstrate that individual citizen's rights were adversely affected in individual legislative districts. While the Court vacated the lower court's ruling, it did not dismiss the case, leaving open the strong possibility of further proceedings and a more definitive decision on the constitutionality of this type of extreme partisan redistricting in the future.

In response to the ruling, Representative Peter Barca (Kenosha/Racine) issued the following statement:

"The decision by the Supreme Court today is a partial victory in many ways. While certainly not a landmark, precedent-setting ruling, it leaves the door open and shows the pathway forward, especially through the concurring opinion written by Justice Kagan and joined by three others.

The Court did not rule on the actual merits of this case and thankfully they rejected the extreme decision by Justice Thomas and Gorsuch to dismiss this case. Instead, it ruled on a narrow and more technical matter and sent the case back to the Federal District Court to be considered further.

By offering the decision it did and by not rejecting the case based on the arguments presented, the seven justices signaled true willingness to make a more robust ruling on this issue in the future. The majority of the Court rejected the more extreme views of Justices Thomas and Gorsuch, and the vast majority of justices appear to make clear that they are open to finding extreme partisan gerrymandering unconstitutional.

After seven long years of watching our democracy being undermined and living under heavily distorted maps, the people of Wisconsin know all too well the harm caused when politicians draw maps in their own favor. No matter what their individual political ideologies or values may be, voters win when they can select their representatives, rather than the other way around. It says 'the will of the people shall be the law of the land' inside our State Capitol. The decision today does not yet accomplish that goal, but it shows the way to accomplish it."