

Fair Elections Project: 14 referendums to ban gerrymandering pass in Wisconsin

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MADISON—In the Nov. 3 election, voters in 11 counties and 3 municipalities passed non-binding advisory referendums in favor of ending gerrymandering and adopting a process of independent, nonpartisan redistricting in Wisconsin.

The counties and municipalities include: Adams County, Bayfield County, Brown County, Crawford County, Door County, Dunn County, Iowa County, Jefferson County, Kenosha County, Rusk County, Waushara County; the City of Barron, the City of Racine, and Land O' Lakes.

Wisconsin now has a total of 28 counties and 19 municipalities which have passed such referendums. In addition, 54 of Wisconsin's 72 county boards have passed resolutions urging the Legislature to pass a law requiring independent, nonpartisan redistricting. These 55 counties which have passed a referendum, resolution, or both, represent about 80 percent of Wisconsin's citizens.

"Every single referendum passed with overwhelming margins, proving that people across Wisconsin are sick of partisan games," said Sachin Chheda, director of the Fair Elections Project. "Fair district maps mean every voice is heard, not just the extreme right and left. The people of Wisconsin want real solutions, and they want a Legislature that reflects the will of the people, not just Party bosses."

"This movement to ban gerrymandering is gaining momentum among citizens across the board," said Matt Rothschild, the executive director of the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign. "Politicians who ignore it or oppose it do so at their political peril."

“Make no mistake, this election’s successes are a direct result of the work of countless grassroots activists across the state,” said Carlene Bechen, the fair maps organizer for Wisconsin Voices and the Wisconsin Fair Maps Coalition. “Even in 2020, in the most extraordinary of circumstances, folks from all walks of life and affiliations are showing up and demanding a fair playing field.”

Every 10 years, after the Census is completed, each state must set new district lines to reflect changes in where people live, and each district needs to have roughly the same number of people in it. The Census Bureau is planning on delivering the data from its 2020 Census to the states next year.