

Wisconsin Fair Maps Coalition: Praises Governor's proposal for People's Maps Commission

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Coalition continues to call on legislature to pass nonpartisan redistricting reform

MADISON—The WI Fair Maps Coalition praises Governor Evers' proposal for a "People's Maps Commission" to ensure transparency and accountability in the legislative and congressional redistricting process. Evers made the proposal during his State of the State speech this evening.

"The people of Wisconsin are demanding accountability, and want a nonpartisan, fair, transparent, and less expensive process to draw legislative district maps, and Governor Evers deserves applause for continuing to advocate for reform," said Sachin Chheda, Chair of the WI Fair Maps Coalition and director of the Fair Elections Project. "We strongly believe that Wisconsin should institute a new, open process into law through passage of the Hansen/Vining bill, and through consideration of a constitutional amendment. With the Speaker refusing to act, despite broad public support and bipartisan sponsorship, this is a strong first step towards a long-term bipartisan solution."

As the Governor noted, 50 Wisconsin counties, representing more than three-quarters of the state's population, have passed resolutions calling for nonpartisan redistricting reform. In addition, eight counties and a handful of municipalities have passed referendums calling for an "Iowa Model," and 18 additional counties and

municipalities have already scheduled referendums in 2020.

“There are dozens of nonpartisan and bipartisan grassroots groups across the state that have made this a top priority, and hundreds of activists fighting for this reform,” said Carlene Bechen, statewide Fair Maps Organizer for Wisconsin Voices. “Just last week, dozens showed up in Ozaukee County, and new referendums were put on the ballot in Portage County and Marquette County, demonstrating broad interest in every corner of Wisconsin.”

The proposed nonpartisan redistricting process has been used in Iowa for decades, and involves transparency in data, public hearings, map-drawing by nonpartisan legislative staff, and a forced up-or-down vote for legislators with no amendments, reducing the opportunity for incumbent protection, corruption, and map-rigging. The bills, SB288 and AB303, are being put forth by Sen. Dave Hansen of Green Bay and Rep. Robyn Vining of Wauwatosa, and have a bipartisan list of more than four dozen sponsors.

“Our coalition is strong, growing, and making a difference,” said Dana Schultz, co-chair of the Coalition and director of Wisconsin Voices. “The people of Wisconsin are more engaged than ever, and are telling our legislators that they can’t hide behind gerrymandered maps anymore.”

“It’s time to restore Wisconsin’s reputation for clean government and open democracy,” said Erin Grunze, executive director of the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin. “A nonpartisan process is the best way to ensure a responsive, accountable legislature.”

“Every resident of Wisconsin deserves to be counted fairly and for their vote to count,” said Shauntay Nelson, Wisconsin State Director for All Voting is Local. “It’s time to end all forms of gerrymandering that serve to undermine fair representation.”