

Assembly votes along party lines to push back redrawing city council, county board boundaries

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The Assembly passed along party lines a bill today that would delay redrawing of boundaries for city councils and county boards until just before 2023 elections.

Under AB369, the February 2022 primary and April 2022 general election for local offices would be held under current maps drawn in 2011.

Speaker Robin Vos, R-Rochester, accused Dems of over-exaggerating the bill's contents and asked for a 25-minute recess so Dems could walk to Gov. Tony Evers' office and ask if he wants to amend it.

Rep. Mark Spreitzer, D-Beloit, called the recess a "cheap political stunt" and claimed Vos wants Wisconsin to remain gerrymandered. Minority Leader Gordon Hintz, D-Oshkosh, echoed Spreitzer's claims, adding "no one has less credibility on redistricting than the Speaker."

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Spreitzer also raised concerns over the involvement of Joe Handrick, a former Republican lawmaker who helped create the maps gerrymandered in 2011, in drafting the bill as Vos' outreach director. Vos denied that the bill would intentionally delay fixing gerrymandered maps, calling Dems' accusations "B.S" and a "fantasy story totally not based in reality."

The bill, approved 59-38, is not about drawing legislative districts, Vos said.

The bill would not affect the timing of redistricting for Congressional or legislative districts, which must be redrawn before the 2022 election. It also would require

municipalities to draw wards that take into account any legislative or congressional maps drawn off the 2020 census numbers.

The bill comes amid delays in gaining 2020 census data, which is expected to be delivered by September. Vos cited support from the League of Wisconsin Municipalities and Wisconsin Counties Association to allocate more time for redistricting.

Under the bill, counties would have until February 22, 2022 to adopt district plans, but municipalities may not adopt new ward plans before April 15 or later than May 15.

But Deb Andraca, D-Whitefish Bay, claimed maps can be redrawn in time for 2022 elections and voiced her concerns about lack of transparency in the redistricting process.

“They are tired of the secrecy,” Andraca said of Wisconsin voters. “They are really tired of the gerrymandering.”