

Common Sense Wisconsin: Lauds Republican legislative leaders for launching public redistricting website

Posted on Thursday, Aug 12, 2021

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

[Brookfield...] Common Sense Wisconsin Executive Director Joe Handrick, recognized as one of Wisconsin's top redistricting experts, issued the following statement upon the launch of the drawyourdistrictwisconsin.com website.

“Common Sense Wisconsin applauds the Republican legislative leadership for granting public access to this website and encouraging Wisconsinites to submit their own redistricting plans. This is the true ‘people’s commission,’ as no politician will hand-pick who can and cannot participate. We encourage the public to engage and we hope they follow our 10-point redistricting guidelines to help them get to a fair map that the courts will approve.

“We do not know whether the public site will include partisan election data for users. If it does, we would encourage people to not use that function. Draw maps using the ten legal guidelines and do so without regard to partisanship — this is the best way to draw a good map.”

Using the drawyourdistrictwisconsin.com website, any Wisconsin resident can submit a statewide map, or regional plan to the legislature. Submission dates are September 1, 2021 to October 15, 2021.

Common Sense Wisconsin's 10-principles of redistricting are below

10 Legal Principles for Wisconsin Redistricting Blueprint for a Constitutional Map

1. The Legislature draws new maps – The Wisconsin Constitution says the Legislature must draw new districts and must do so based on the latest US Census¹. The Wisconsin Legislature now has a site that permits the public to participate and submit ideas. Go to drawyourdistrictwisconsin.com
2. New districts must be relatively equal in population – The United States Constitution places equal population at the center of redistricting². Grossly unequal population between districts can be evidence of a gerrymander.
3. The United States Voting Rights Act (VRA) and Equal Protection Clause of the US Constitution must be followed – There can be no retrogression in minority electoral opportunities. If they can be drawn without violating other redistricting criteria, districts with a geographically compact majority-minority population must be created³. When creating districts under the VRA, race cannot be the predominant factor considered⁴.
4. Districts must be compact and contiguous⁵ – As the Supreme Court said in *Shaw v Reno*, redistricting is one area in which appearances do matter. Lack of compactness can be evidence of a gerrymander⁶. Note: Some municipalities in Wisconsin contain island territory. Such islands have been permitted by the federal courts in order to keep municipalities whole
5. Core retention is important – Retaining the core of existing districts is a neutral redistricting criterion⁷. The federal court in 2002 rejected the Democrat's map partly because it performed poorly on core retention⁸. Low core retention (grossly deviating from the existing districts with which voters are accustomed) can be evidence of gerrymandering.
6. Minimize municipal splits – While population equality is paramount, it should be achieved with a minimal number of towns, villages, and cities being split. Prior courts have taken this into account and balanced this criterion with the need for equal population⁹. Excessive splitting can be evidence of a gerrymander.
7. Preserve communities of interest – This criterion is related to municipal splits, but it can also apply to populations within a municipality and to communities of interest that extend over multiple municipalities¹⁰.
8. Minimize temporary disenfranchisement – If a voter is moved from an even to and odd-numbered senate district, that voter will go 6 years without opportunity to vote for a state senator. In the process of evening out population disparities, some temporary disenfranchisement will occur. A significant amount can be evidence of gerrymandering, however. The federal court in 2002 rejected the Democrat map partly for this reason⁸.
9. Preserve the proper number of seats – There must be 33 state senate districts and 99 state assembly districts, and three assembly districts must be nested

within each senate district¹¹.

10. Senate districts shall be staggered – Odd-numbered senate districts are to be filled in 2022¹².

Citations

1. 1 Article 4, Section 3 of the Wisconsin Constitution
2. 2 Article 1, Section II and the 14th Amendment to the US Constitution
3. 3 Section II of the United States Voting Rights Act
4. 4 14th Amendment (Equal Protection Clause) to the US Constitution
5. 5 Article 4, Section 4 of the Wisconsin Constitution
6. 6 Shaw v Reno; Bush v Vera
7. 7 Abrams v Johnson
8. 8 Baumgart v Wendelberger
9. 9 Prosser v Elections Board
10. 10 Baldus v GAB
11. 11 4.001 Wisconsin Statutes
12. 12 Article 4, Section 5 of the Wisconsin Constitution