

Milwaukee Supervisor Ortiz-Velez: Praises IRC and SEWRPC for creating strong map for Latino community

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MILWAUKEE – County Supervisor Sylvia Ortiz-Velez praised the Independent Redistricting Committee (IRC) and Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) for their role in drafting a supervisory district map that yielded two strong Latino-majority districts.

“I am proud of the Latino districts created under the county’s newly approved legislative map. Districts 12 and 14 will ensure that Milwaukee’s South Side Hispanic community is represented by their representative of choice,” said Supervisor Ortiz-Velez. “This map will solidify the voice of our community on the County Board for the next decade and respect the Voting Rights Act. I am proud to have voted for a map that finally addresses the injustices forced upon this community during the 2011 redistricting process.”

The Board of Supervisors approved an [amended version](#) of a map recommended by the IRC on a 10-7 vote Friday evening. The county’s 19 municipalities will now adjust their ward lines using the tentatively approved map. SEWRPC will assist multiple municipalities in this process.

Members of the IRC and SEWRPC Executive Director Kevin Muhs acknowledged multiple times that because the county’s Latino population resides overwhelmingly in an area bordered on the north by the Milwaukee River, east by I-43/94, west by 70th Street, and south by Layton Avenue, creating more than two Latino districts could dilute the Latino vote.

IRC Chair Judge Jean DiMotto [wrote](#), “We did look at the possibility of three [Latino] districts, but this would have significantly diluted the voting power of the Hispanic/Latinx population in two of the three proposed districts.”

“Adopting a map that had multiple districts with only slight Latino-majorities would have jeopardized potential Latino candidates and placed us right back where we are today, with only one real Latino-majority district,” added Supervisor Ortiz-Velez. “Public input further confirmed that our community preferred to have two secure districts to elect candidates of our choice and ensure that the Latino vote and voice is not diluted. This new map will provide hope and a path to actionable change for Milwaukee’s Hispanic and Latino community. Our children can finally see multiple leaders who look like them—that is what I call a successful map.”

Under the current supervisory district map, District 8 is the only district where Milwaukee’s South Side Latino community can safely elect a representative from their own community.