

# Sen. Ringhand: Support non-partisan redistricting

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In early November, the state legislature is expected to vote on new legislative maps as part of the process known as redistricting. These maps will determine the legislative district boundaries in Wisconsin for the next ten years. Using this process in 2011, Republicans shifted hundreds of thousands of voters to create a partisan advantage in legislative districts throughout the state. Despite Wisconsin being a swing state in statewide elections, the Republican maps locked in a Republican majority in the state legislature for the next decade.

I am a sponsor of Senate Bill 389, legislation to create a non-partisan redistricting commission. I have sponsored this legislation every session since I was first elected to the state legislature. One of main critiques of partisan redistricting is that the party in power can gerrymander the maps to give themselves a distinct advantage before the first votes are even cast. That is the case here in Wisconsin. We are widely viewed as a heavily gerrymandered state.

Today's technology gives map drawers the ability to analyze voting data for every township parcel, municipal ward and city block in Wisconsin. This makes it fairly simple to draw districts that give an advantage to those who draw the maps, even in a 50/50 state like Wisconsin.

In many states, voters have created non-partisan redistricting commissions through statewide referendums and constitutional amendments.

Voters overwhelmingly support non-partisan redistricting because they want to be assured that they are selecting their legislators and not the other way around. Fair elections begin with an even playing field and that's why I believe that Wisconsin should adopt non-partisan redistricting and pass Senate Bill 389.