

Reps. Hesselbein, Spreitzer, Andraca, Smith: Introduce fair maps constitutional amendment

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MADISON – Representatives Dianne Hesselbein (D – Middleton), Mark Spreitzer (D – Beloit), and Deb Andraca (D – Whitefish Bay) and Senator Jeff Smith (D – Brunswick) circulated new legislation today advocating for a Fair Maps Constitutional Amendment in Wisconsin.

“For years, our political system has been plagued by unacceptable gerrymandering,” said Rep. Hesselbein. **“Every ten years, elected leaders in Wisconsin draw district boundaries that essentially ensure they will be reelected. The party in control manipulates the district lines to benefit themselves and cripple their opponents – and evolving technology has made the drawing of partisan districts even more extreme.”**

Earlier this session, Legislative Democrats introduced Assembly Bill 395 and Senate Bill 389, legislation designed to create a non-partisan redistricting system in Wisconsin similar to the successful “Iowa Model.” LRBs 4235 and 4601 would adopt that redistricting process in the form of a constitutional amendment.

“I am proud to join with my Democratic colleagues to introduce this legislation,” said Rep. Spreitzer. **“The Iowa model works. Even as Wisconsin’s maps are being decided in court due to partisan stalemate over gerrymandering, our neighbor Iowa has already adopted maps on a bipartisan basis using the process we are proposing. It is past time for fair maps in Wisconsin.”**

“Wisconsin voters want fair maps,” said Rep. Andraca. **“They are tired of**

wasting taxpayer dollars on lawsuits designed to keep one party in power, and they want maps that reflect the will of the people, not a political party. It's up to us, as elected representatives, to have the courage to establish a fair, independent redistricting process so that all candidates win on their message, not their gerrymandered maps."

Constitutional amendments require adoption by two successive legislatures and ratification by the people of Wisconsin before becoming effective. The legislation introduced today would be the first consideration by the legislature of the constitutional amendment.

Wisconsin citizens are tired of gerrymandering. A recent Marquette poll showed that 63% of people in Wisconsin think redistricting should be handled in a non-partisan fashion. 54 county boards have passed resolutions urging the legislature to adopt nonpartisan redistricting, with 17 passing county-wide referendums. The people of Wisconsin demand fair maps, and the legislature must take action.

"Wisconsinites overwhelmingly support a non-partisan redistricting process, but the gerrymandered Majority continues to stall on reform," concluded Sen. Smith. "This bill is necessary to give Wisconsinites an opportunity to have their voices heard and restore the reality behind 'the will of the people is the law of the land.'"