

Gov. Evers: To call Legislature into special session to ban partisan gerrymandering in Wisconsin once and for all

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After enacting bipartisan, fair maps into law for the first time in Wisconsin in over 50 years, governor calls for constitutional amendment banning partisan gerrymandering

MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers tonight, during his 2026 State of the State address, announced he will be signing an executive order calling the Wisconsin State Legislature into a special session later this spring to pass a constitutional amendment banning partisan gerrymandering in Wisconsin.

Gov. Evers has long been an advocate for nonpartisan redistricting, fair maps, and maintaining Wisconsin's fair, safe, and secure elections. In February 2024, Gov. Evers [fulfilled](#) his longstanding campaign promise to the people of Wisconsin to fight for and secure fair legislative maps for the state of Wisconsin, undoing more than a decade of Wisconsinites living under some of the most gerrymandered legislative maps in America. Gov. Evers' effort to secure fair legislative maps marked the first time in over 50 years that Wisconsin has fair legislative maps enacted through the legislative process rather than through the courts.

Relevant excerpts from Gov. Evers' 2026 State of the State address are available below:

"...Wisconsin is as purple as ever, but we've shown we can put politics aside and

work together to get good things done. Compared to all of the chaos, dysfunction, and recklessness in Washington, here in Wisconsin, we've worked to lead by example. And a big part of that is the fact that, today, lawmakers are elected under the fair maps I signed into law. But here's the problem, Wisconsin: new maps are redrawn every ten years. While we have fair maps today, we still don't have a nonpartisan redistricting process in place. That means there's no guarantee Wisconsinites will still have fair maps after the next U.S. Census.

"Wisconsinites and Americans across our country have watched the President of the United States of America pressure Republican Legislatures into adopting new maps that will benefit him. And, as a result, Democratic Legislatures have been put in the unthinkable position of having to respond by trying to restore balance to our elections. Well, very few people in this country know what it means to live under some of the most politically gerrymandered maps in America. But Wisconsinites do—and they know because they lived it. And we aren't going back.

"I know people here disagree sometimes. Politics could get in the way of creating a nonpartisan redistricting commission that everyone can support. But there's one thing that we should all be able to agree on, which is that politics should stay out of redistricting from start to finish. So, tonight, I'm announcing that I'll be calling a special session of the Legislature this spring to take up a constitutional amendment to ban partisan gerrymandering once and for all in Wisconsin.

"And let me be clear: I won't hesitate to bring the Legislature into special session later this year in August. Or September. Or October. Heck, I'm old enough to remember when the Legislature was willing to meet in December!

"Folks, Wisconsin has fair, safe, and secure elections. We must continue to fight every effort by any politician to interfere with or make it harder for eligible Wisconsinites to cast their ballots. A big part of the reason we have fair, safe, and secure elections is because of the amazing election officials and poll workers across our state. So, next time you cast your ballot—and I hope you did so today—thank the folks who're making it happen.... "

The new fair legislative maps enacted by Gov. Evers two years ago are responsive to the will of the people, avoid partisan bias, and increase the number of competitive legislative seats. These maps were previously [submitted by the governor to the Wisconsin Supreme Court](#) for their consideration in redistricting litigation in *Clarke v. Wisconsin Elections Commission*. Gov. Evers' maps, as

submitted to the Court, were passed by the Republican-controlled Wisconsin State Legislature with bipartisan support and enacted by the governor as [2023 Wisconsin Act 94](#).

The governor's announcement tonight comes as Wisconsinites and Americans have, for months, watched President Donald J. Trump and the Trump Administration [pressure](#) Republican Legislatures into adopting new gerrymandered, partisan congressional maps to retain current Republican majorities in the U.S. Congress. As a result, Democratic Legislatures across the country have been forced to [respond](#) in an attempt to restore balance to national elections.

In addition to signing fair maps in February 2024, at the time, Gov. Evers also [renewed his pledge](#) to continue working to pass fair, independent, and nonpartisan redistricting in Wisconsin in order to guarantee that fair maps will always be the outcome when the state redistricts after each federal census, an effort the governor is continuing in earnest today. The governor has previously opposed efforts by Republican lawmakers to pass a nonpartisan redistricting plan that would have [required Legislature-picked and Legislature-approved map drawers](#). The governor has been clear that he prefers a nonpartisan redistricting option that does not allow legislators or Legislature-controlled entities to be involved in drawing legislative districts due to the obvious conflict.

While Wisconsin currently has fair legislative maps for the first time in generations, thanks to Gov. Evers, the state does not currently have a nonpartisan redistricting process in place that will be utilized after the next U.S. Census when reapportionment is conducted. The governor, who has announced he plans to retire at the end of 2026, will no longer be in office when the state's next redistricting process is conducted. This means the next maps passed and enacted by a future Wisconsin State Legislature and governor could restore a partisan gerrymander for either political party—a potential Gov. Evers' constitutional amendment aims to prevent.

Republican lawmakers have repeatedly sought to use the constitutional amendment process to circumvent the governor's broad constitutional veto power (constitutional amendments cannot be vetoed) in addition to helping generate motivation and turnout for conservative candidates on the ballot in Wisconsin. In the last month, for example, Republicans have [added two constitutional amendments to the upcoming November ballot](#) and could still add [yet another constitutional amendment](#) to Wisconsinites' ballots.

Gov. Evers has repeatedly called for the Wisconsin State Legislature to allow Wisconsinites the same opportunity to amend the state's constitution without having to receive the Legislature's approval. Wisconsin's Republican-controlled Legislature has, for years, refused to take up policies and initiatives supported by an overwhelming majority of Wisconsinites, including efforts to codify abortion protections like those afforded under *Roe v. Wade*, increases to school funding, gun safety measures like universal background checks and "red flag" laws, among many other issues.

Republicans, who just added two constitutional amendments to the upcoming November ballot and could still add yet another constitutional amendment to Wisconsinites' ballots relating to restricting the governor's veto powers, have repeatedly refused, instead insisting that only the Legislature should have the power to amend the state's constitution.

Republicans have frequently ignored Gov. Evers' special session calls, often gaveling out of the sessions in seconds without any consideration, deliberation, or debate. However, the governor tonight signaled he will call the Legislature back into session later this fall if the constitutional amendment does not pass this spring. In Wisconsin, constitutional amendments must be taken up in two consecutive legislative sessions in order to be placed on the ballot for voter approval.

A copy of the constitutional amendment and executive order, as well as details about the date of the special session, will be available after the governor executes the order next week.