

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
FREDERICK P. KESSLER

WISCONSIN STATE ASSEMBLY

12TH DISTRICT

February 9, 2017

Speaker Robin Vos
Room 211 West
State Capitol

Dear Speaker Vos,

As you know, the federal district court in *Whitford v. Gill* found that Wisconsin's legislative redistricting maps are unconstitutional. The Wisconsin Legislature and Governor Walker have until November 1, 2017 to adopt new maps.

Since 1981, the Legislature has provided technical assistance and computers to both political parties *and the public* in order to submit maps and proposals to the Legislature or the courts. This is because Wisconsin has been transparent in its dealing with this issue.

Yesterday, I was told that you would only consider releasing computers to the Democratic caucus and public after the Supreme Court ruled on this case. This is outrageous. In 2011, Republican legislators drew maps in lawyer's offices in order to prevent public scrutiny. Members were also required to sign secrecy oaths and could only view their own districts – rather than the entirety of the redistricting map.

In this process, four maps were drawn by Republican staffers and private attorneys. Each of these maps were examined using a regression analysis in order to evaluate which one would benefit Republicans more. Your caucus selected a map which would impact Democrats most adversely. It was designed to keep Democrats from ever having more than 39 seats (compared to 60 for Republicans) for the entire decade. You had other options and you ignored them.

The Republicans introduced the redistricting bill on a Thursday, had a public hearing the following Tuesday, voted on the bill that Thursday, the Senate on the following Tuesday, and it was signed by the Governor the next week. In summary, aside from the private meetings with attorneys, the entire process was less than an entire month.


Your announcement to the Democratic leader regarding access to the computers and software makes me suspect that you and other Republicans are again trying to exclude the minority party and the public from participation in the court-ordered redistricting.

This all seems to be aimed at preventing the plaintiffs in *Whitford v. Gill* and other interested citizens from submitting alternative maps which are not designed to be biased against either party.

You must understand that the public will be outraged if Republicans **do not** provide computers to both parties and the public in an effort to provide the court with the maps they have said they want. When you then hire outside legal counsel with no limit on what they can charge Wisconsin taxpayers, you are creating an issue for yourself and your caucus that will be a constant reminder of everything you've done before: millions for an unconstitutional map, secrecy oaths, and now the double-down on keeping those same maps.

I look forward to hearing your response and Democrats receiving the maps and software as we have requested.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frederick P. Kessler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "F".

FREDERICK P. KESSLER

State Representative

12th Assembly District