

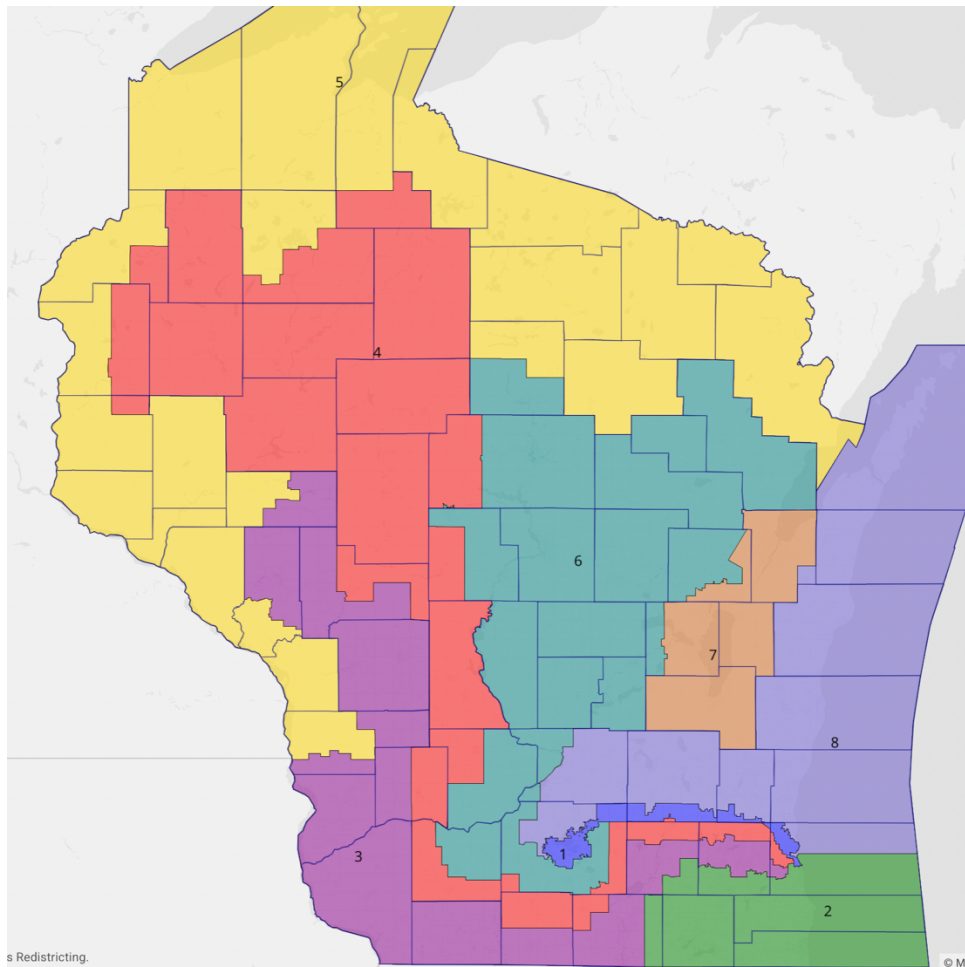
Pushing Back Against Partisan Redistricting

By Don Leake

With its recent decision in *Abbott v. League of United Latin American Citizens*, the US Supreme Court has opened the door wide to **partisan redistricting**. What other conclusion can be made? The Court approved a revised Texas map that sought to add five Republican seats to the House. As concurring Justice Alito remarked, "...it is indisputable—that the impetus for the adoption of the map (like the map subsequently adopted in California) was partisan advantage pure and simple."

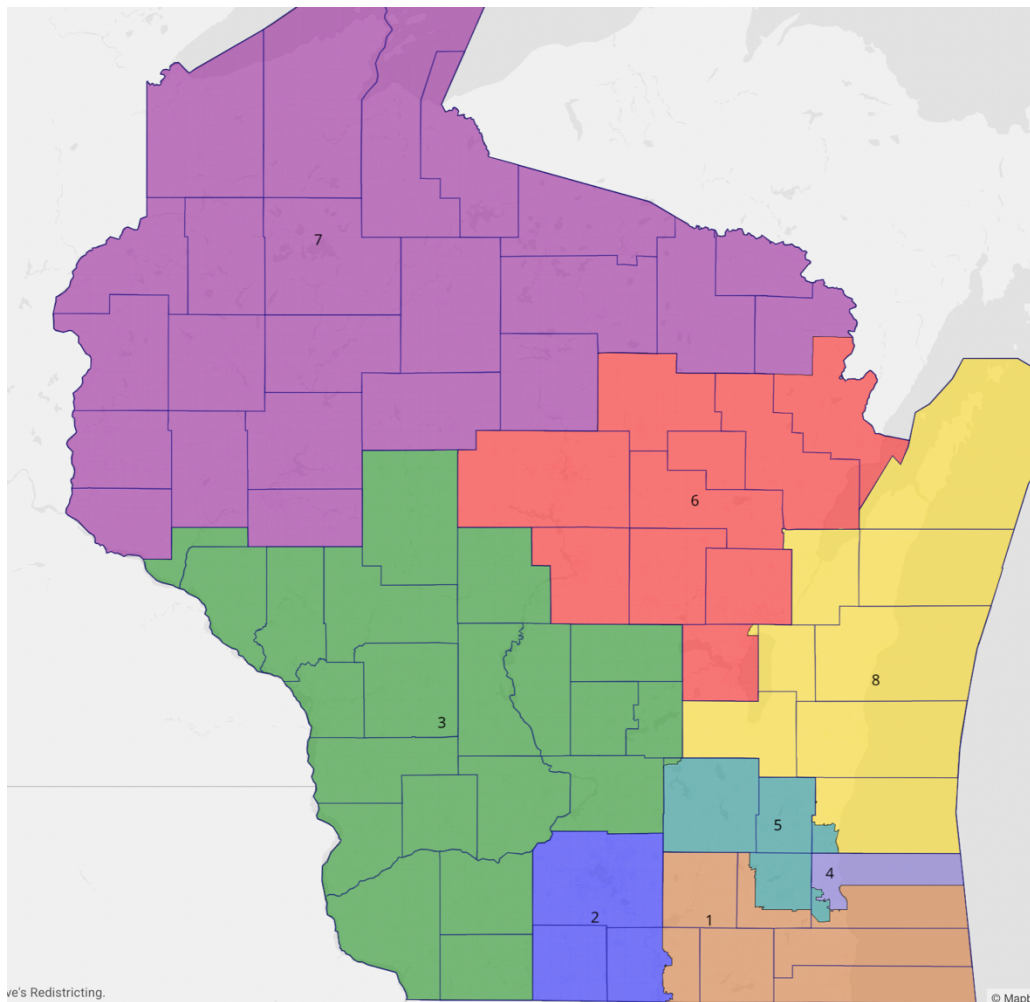
You might be wondering if Wisconsin could somehow follow Texas's lead and adopt a Congressional map with even more Republican leaning districts than the six the current map has. Of course this is an impossibility now, but if the Republicans attain another trifecta in 2026 as they did in 2010, it certainly is in the realm of possibility that they would gerrymander again, this time with the Court's blessing.

Crazy as it seems, here is a 7R – 1D map that the Court would most likely approve.



This remarkable population-balanced map was published on Dave's Redistricting App (DRA) by its creative owner, Asterlan, in September. Political leans determined by a composite of six state elections from 2020 – 2024 show that Districts 2 – 8 have Republican majorities ranging from 53.76% to 54.13% while only District 1 (dark blue sliver between Dane and Milwaukee counties) has a Democratic lean, 81.15%. Incidentally, the overall voting record of the six elections was: 49.84% Democratic, 49.19% Republican, as even as it gets.

A safer and easier goal for a Republican trifecta to shoot for would be a rock solid 6R – 2D map. Here is a very innocent looking one that gives the Dane and Milwaukee County Democrats their due while solidifying Republican control in the rest of the state. This map was also published in September on DRA by owner xandroe.

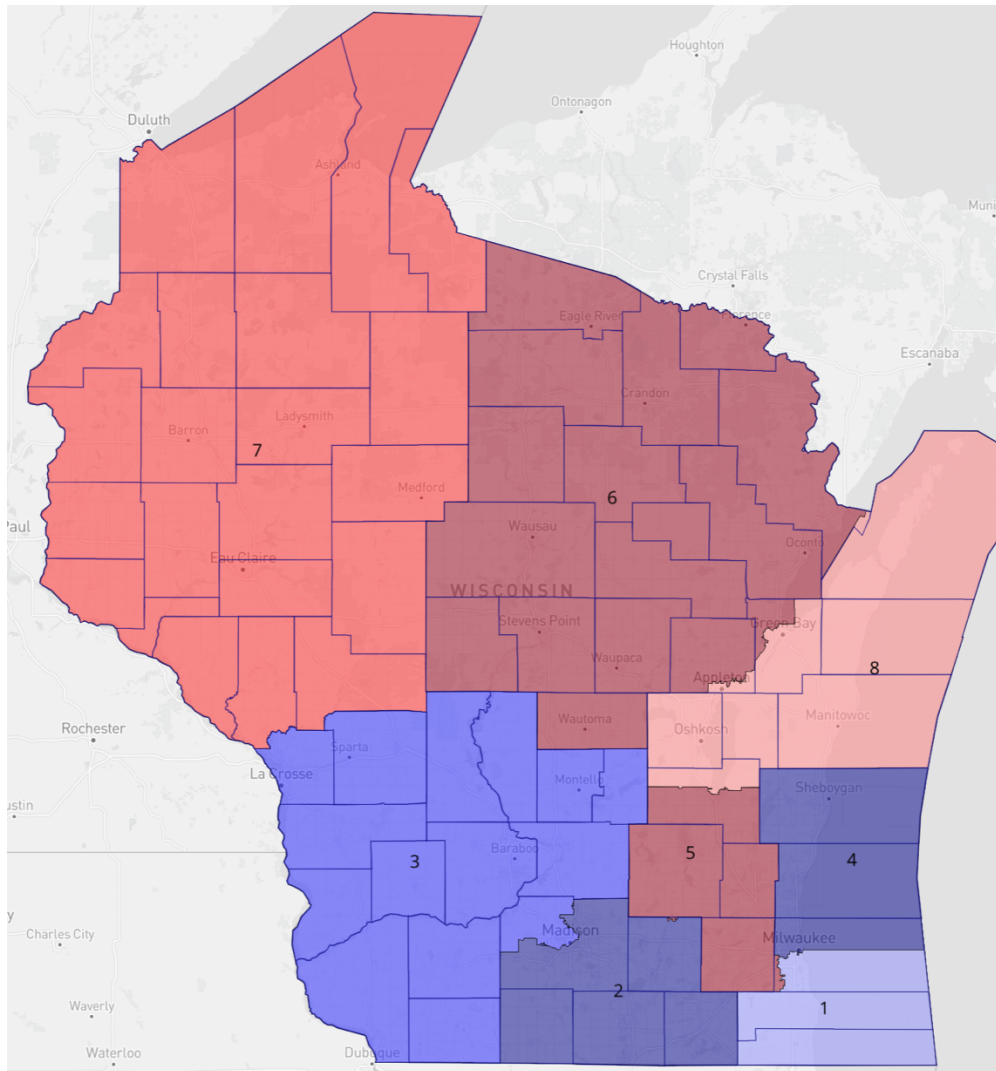


Districts 1, 3, and 5 – 8 have Republican leans ranging from 54.38% to 58.89% while Districts 2 and 4 have Democratic leans of 72.29% and 76.31% respectively.

Wisconsin doesn't have to be like Texas (or California, Missouri, Ohio, and North Carolina). We can provide other states with shining examples of fairness through

nonpartisan redistricting; adopting maps that reflect to the utmost the recent political slant of the state and don't try to advantage one party over another. For purple Wisconsin, as the voting record of the past four years shows, that means that the eight Congressional districts should be equally divided in various shades of red and blue.

Here is the partisan lean (using the same six state composite voting record as before) of one such map, published on DRA back in December 2023 by owner NoldleVotarist.



Note how evenly the Democratic and Republican leaning districts are balanced, each party having two districts with very strong leans ($> 60\%$), one district with a weaker lean (between 55% and 60%), and one district with a slight lean ($< 55\%$). Many other nonpartisan WI Congressional maps have been published on DRA.

One thing we citizens can do to counter partisan gerrymandering is to continue to give models of how politically neutral maps CAN be drawn, thus shaming the political parties, if that is possible, into changing the way they approach redistricting. Fortunately, apps

like DRA provide mappers a free platform to construct, analyze, and publish redistricting maps which the public can easily access with just a few keystrokes. When the results of the 2030 Census are in, maps like the last one above will provide an excellent start to the rebalancing exercise.