

Correct a Cheating System with Fair Maps

Written by Jeff Smith, State Senator District 31

Wednesday, 03 February 2021 11:10 - Last Updated Wednesday, 03 February 2021 11:29

<http://newiproggressive.com/images/stories/S5/vote-47-mb1-s5.jpg>



Why must Wisconsin establish a nonpartisan redistricting process? Right now, the Majority Party faces no consequences for their inaction during a pandemic. Fair maps are needed to correct a system that's been cheating the people of our state for far too long.

MADISON - I can always appreciate a good game of cribbage; sure, there's some friendly competition, but more importantly, it's a chance to catch up with someone and make some memories. But, imagine someone beat you to the end of the board just to find out they cheated the whole game, maybe by moving their pegs a couple extra spots each round or slyly taking a look at your cards. You'd probably be frustrated and distrusting if you play them again, right?

Sorry to say, but you've been cheated, and not just in a game of cards. At a time when every Wisconsinite needs leaders working for them, they have legislators abdicating their responsibilities while COVID-19 wreaks havoc on Wisconsin.

I know some people may always feel cheated by their legislators, but when the state is faced with a health crisis and an economic disaster, it's more important than ever for partisanship to be set aside. Wisconsinites want the Legislature to work together and get things done. Yet, when push came to shove, the same legislators who ignore these pleas don't face any consequences and can keep their jobs.

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The Majority Party hasn't been playing fairly for a while now and it shows. Partisan gerrymandering allows their absence and inaction to go unpunished. Non-partisan redistricting reform will be the tactic to correct these wrongs. It will ensure all Wisconsinites are represented and have equal access to succeed.

Just three weeks ago, the State Senate passed a compromise COVID-19 response bill with near unanimity. The newly appointed Senate Majority Leader actually worked with Governor Evers to deliver a bill that Republicans and Democrats could both agree on. Although some individuals on both ends of the spectrum would say it didn't go far enough, it was considered a ray of hope and something to build on. This compromise showed we really could work together, or so it seemed. Then we saw the bait and switch.



Last week, Assembly Republicans chose to add poison pills to this bipartisan legislation, essentially killing the bill. These provisions were not part of the COVID-19 response legislation that was mutually agreed upon by Democrat Governor Evers and the Republican State Senate. Assembly Republicans' endgame was politically motivated, without any consideration of the fact that we are still in a dire public health and economic crisis.

Last Thursday, Senate Republicans caved into Assembly Speaker Vos' demands and passed this legislation again, but unfortunately included hyper-partisan provisions. After eight months of inaction, Republicans have wasted another four weeks arguing between themselves about how to make this more political.

Politics have also stopped the Majority Party from accepting commonsense health recommendations, like wearing a mask to slow the spread of the virus. Last Tuesday, Senate Republicans passed a resolution to end Wisconsin's emergency health orders and the mask protective order. Assembly Republicans delayed their decision for now, once it became known

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Wisconsin would lose nearly [\\$50 million per month in food assistance](#) if the emergency order was struck down.



When I talk with constituents about Wisconsin's political gridlock, many believe the solution to the problem is to institute term limits. They're sure that placing limits on how long someone serves will solve these problems. My response is always the same: if you truly believe in political compromise, then you must support non-partisan redistricting reform. If you really think term limits are the answer, you must support non-partisan redistricting. Term limits come naturally when voters have real choices.

When we have an independent, nonpartisan redistricting process, your needs are prioritized over the ambitions of political leaders. Fair maps will require legislators to listen to you, rather than their Party leader. Compromise happens when the people matter more than political insiders. Your family matters when politicians collaborate and actually get things done for you.

Nonpartisan redistricting reform will direct our Legislature to work fairly and for the people. No one likes to be cheated and this is the only way we can go to make sure we're not distrustful of Wisconsin's leaders for another decade.