

Gov. Evers' Remarks on Fair Maps for Wisconsin

Written by GOV Press Wisconsin
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MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers today delivered remarks in the Governor's Conference Room at the Wisconsin State Capitol regarding his decision to enact fair legislative maps for the state of Wisconsin.

The governor's address to the people of Wisconsin is available to watch [here](#) and [here](#).

Below are Gov. Evers' remarks as prepared for delivery:

Good morning. Thank you for being here.

Folks, it is a new day in Wisconsin, and today is a beautiful day for democracy.



Wisconsin, of the 1,869 days I've been proud to serve as your governor, few have been as consequential as this one. This is an important day—an historic day—for our state and for every person who calls Wisconsin home. Today is a day that, I believe, will define our state's future. But before I get there, Wisconsinites, I want to begin today with our history.

In 2009, on the eve of the 2010 U.S. Census, Democrats had unified control of the executive

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branch and majorities in both houses of the Wisconsin State Legislature. Heading into the 2010 elections, that Democrat trifecta was faced with a choice: secure fairness for posterity or wait and hold out for the possibility of retaining power for another decade. □

And we know how that story ended. In 2010, Republicans swept control of the executive branch and both houses of the Legislature, giving Republicans control over the map-drawing process that went on to define our state for a generation. Republicans set up shop behind closed doors with high-paid attorneys, made their Republican members sign secrecy pledges, and used new technology and algorithms to draw some of the most undemocratic, gerrymandered legislative maps in the United States of America.

And we know how that story ended, too. Republicans who gerrymandered themselves into safe seats have done irreparable damage to our state's traditions, our institutions, and our basic functions of government over the last decade. We've seen them sow more division, obstruct basic government functions, and ignore the will of the people by refusing to even consider basic, commonsense policies that should easily earn bipartisan support.

When I ran for this office in 2018, I promised I'd never stop working to right that wrong—to fight for an independent, nonpartisan redistricting process, to secure fair maps for Wisconsin, and, if faced with a similar choice for which Wisconsinites have spent a decade paying dearly, to have the courage to do what is right when that time came. And that is the choice before me today.

In December, the Wisconsin Supreme Court struck down Republicans' most recent gerrymandered maps, ruling that they were unconstitutional and that no further elections could be conducted under those maps. Wisconsin currently has no legislative maps in place for the 2024 election. The Court said it would accept maps for them to consider and that they'd hire nonpartisan, independent experts to review the maps that were submitted. □

And here's what those experts said. Importantly, the experts concluded maps submitted by Republicans in the Legislature and their right-wing allies were both, and I quote, "partisan gerrymanders." So, in other words, just more of the same. On the other hand, the experts reviewed the other four maps, one submitted by me as well as three others, and concluded, and I quote, "The four other submitted plans are similar on most criteria." They are "nearly indistinguishable," they said.

Last month, Republicans took up another set of gerrymandered maps to protect Republican-gerrymandered incumbents, passed them, and sent them to my desk. I kept my promise and vetoed them like I said I would. Then, last week, Republicans passed the maps I submitted to the Wisconsin Supreme Court, and those are the exact maps before me today—they're my maps, nothing more, nothing less.

To me, the decision to enact these maps boils down to this: I made a promise to the people of Wisconsin that I would always try to do the right thing. And keeping that promise, to me, matters most even if members of my own party disagree with me. □

Folks, that's what having fair maps means—it means elected officials actually have to listen

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and do what is best, not for their own political party, but for the people who elect them. People, state, and country should come before politics and party—or at least they always have and always will for me. □

I'm Tony Evers, and I will always try to do the right thing for our state. Wisconsinites want fair maps, and Wisconsinites deserve fair maps. So, today, Wisconsinites, I'm enacting fair maps for the great state of Wisconsin.

This will be the first time in over 50 years that Wisconsin will have fair legislative maps enacted through the legislative process rather than through the courts. These maps will take effect immediately after publication and will be in place for the fall elections, providing certainty for candidates and campaigns that are gearing up to circulate nomination papers this spring. I will also be asking the Wisconsin Supreme Court to clarify that these maps will be in place for any special elections that occur between now and the fall.

My maps that I'm signing today are fair, responsive, and reflect the will of the people. And this is so important, Wisconsin, so I want to explain what that means. □

First, these maps are fair. We're aiming to make sure each party has a fair shake at winning the Legislature. Under these maps, it's more likely that each party will win a majority of legislative seats when they earn a majority of your votes. That's common sense.

Second, these maps are responsive. Under these maps, we'll see more competitive, contested races by making it more likely that legislative districts will flip from one party's control to another when voters' preferences change. Every vote matters. And that's good for democracy.

Finally, these maps reflect the will of the people. Under these maps, the people will be able to elect Republican majorities or Democratic majorities or even a split Legislature if they want. But the most important part is Wisconsinites decide. That's how elections should work.

Wisconsin, when I promised I wanted fair maps—not maps that are better for one party or another, including my own—I damn well meant it. Wisconsin is not a red state or a blue state—we're a purple state, and I believe our maps should reflect that basic fact.

I believe, as I've often said, that the people should get to choose their elected officials, not the other way around. And under the maps I'm signing today, I am making good on that promise. □

This is a great day for Wisconsin, and there is much to celebrate. And we're not going to stop here. I—and we—are going to continue our fight for a fair, independent, and nonpartisan redistricting process for Wisconsin. If the people of Wisconsin vote to send Democratic majorities to Madison this November, I'll tell you right now: one of the first orders of business in our first 100 days together will be enacting a fair, independent, and nonpartisan redistricting system in Wisconsin.

Today is a victory, not for me or any political party, but for our state and for the people of Wisconsin, who've spent a decade demanding more and demanding better of us as elected

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officials, including many of the people here behind me today. Thank you.

Now, let's sign some fair maps for Wisconsin.