



Fair Maps Wisconsin Newsletter

April 17, 2020: Vol. 1, #5



Thank you. And, we're sorry.

Wisconsin has been through so much in such a short time — an ongoing pandemic, a state parks closure, growing unemployment and business closure, and an election on Tuesday, April 7 that has become an international example of bad health policy and hollow democracy.

That said, we are so grateful to all of you for showing up for democracy via early voting and absentee ballot. We're equally grateful — and sorry — that Wisconsin voters endured hail, hardship and health risks to preserve our rights and to vote for what's fair: Representative, transparent government.

Every Fair Maps referendum on the ballot, 25 at last count, passed with 70% of the vote or more. In many communities, it achieved 80% support. This was a victory for organizing and for grassroots power.

As we look ahead, the fight for fair, honest government continues. Thanks for being in that fight with us.

-- Sachin Chheda, Chair, WI Fair Maps Coalition

Fair Maps Meetings Pivot to New Virtual Reality

Phase 1 of the Campaign for Fair Maps ended with the catastrophic election fiasco last week. It's clear that the results were not what was expected. It's also evident that those who would like to keep their power through rigged maps plan to create more confusion for the next elections. Now, more than ever, we must continue to organize ourselves to demand nonpartisan redistricting.

Please join the Fair Maps Team Meeting in your area. Contact [Carlene](#) or [Holly](#) to get Zoom meeting information.

- **Sunday, April 19**, 6:00-7:00 PM; **2nd CD** Fair Maps Meeting
- **Tuesday, April 21**, 3:00-4:00 PM; **Midstate Fair** Maps Team Meeting
- **Tuesday, April 21**, 5:00-6:00 PM; **1st CD** Fair Maps Team Meeting
- **Tuesday, April 21**, 7:00-8:00 PM; **7th CD East/Central** Fair Maps Team Meeting
- **Wednesday, April 22**, 6:30-8:00 PM; **Jefferson County** Fair Maps Coalition Meeting
- **Thursday, April 23**, 6:30-7:30 PM; **3rd CD** Fair Maps Team Meeting
- **Saturday, April 25**, 11:00 AM-12:00 PM; **7th CD West** Fair Maps Team Meeting
- **Monday, April 27**, 6:30-8:00 PM; **8th CD** Fair Maps Team Meeting (RSVP to [Penny](#))



Online WiLD Training

Interested in developing your Fair Maps Team leadership and organizational skills? There will be an 8-week online training from May 4 through June 29 on leadership, organizing, and action presented by [Wisconsin Leadership Development Project \(WiLD Project\) Fair Maps training](#). Learn more about the program design, meeting logistics and how to register by going to <https://wildproj.org/event/wild-academy-online-course/>.

Application deadline is Friday, April 24th at 5:00 p.m.

April 15, 2020

Wisconsin Voices A Call for Accountability

<https://wisconsinvoices.org/post-april-7th-statement/>

Gerrymandered maps are the reason people were forced to choose between their health and their vote

Last week, Wisconsin Voices and our partners urged elected officials, including the Wisconsin legislature, Governor Evers, the Wisconsin Supreme Court and the Wisconsin Election Commission, to do the right thing and protect all Wisconsinites by postponing the April 7th election. Instead, when the governor moved to postpone the election, we witnessed the Republican Legislative leadership, Rep. Vos and Sen. Fitzgerald, appeal the decision directly to the Supreme Court of the United States. In blatant disregard for public health and protected from accountability by heavily gerrymandered electoral maps, they pushed through a disenfranchising election. They failed all of us when they chose to let the election proceed, endangering the lives of thousands of Wisconsinites and their families and communities and ensuring that tens of thousands of us were denied the right to vote because they feared for their lives.

All of us who live in Wisconsin should at the very least have the right to expect those we elect to protect our lives and our constitutional right to vote. This week our electeds failed at both of these fundamental responsibilities. They failed to exercise leadership in a crisis. They failed to put the rights of voters above partisan politics. They especially failed to protect people of color who are most disenfranchised in this country. The black communities in Milwaukee are the most impacted by this virus and those were the very communities who waited in lines for hours, exposing themselves to COVID-19 in order to exercise their right to vote. Tens of thousands of other voters requested absentee ballots, at the direction of the elections commission, that never arrived in time for them to vote. Officials failed voters and failed to provide the necessary resources for clerks to carry out their jobs in this environment.

It is clearer than ever that one of the main causes of this catastrophic failure of our democracy on Tuesday is that politicians act in total disregard for the lives of the people who elect them, without fear of accountability or loss of power. Here's why: in 2011, these same politicians drew lines for electoral maps to protect themselves from ever facing any consequences for their actions or inactions. A remedy to this MUST include ensuring those who refuse to agree to support a fair nonpartisan process for creating electoral maps lose their jobs. Rigged maps = rigged elections. It's time to fix the system that helped create the catastrophic election mess we experienced last week.

The truth is that if any of us had allowed a disaster like the one last Tuesday to occur on our jobs, we would be fired. It is time that the voters of Wisconsin make sure that legislators here understand that they are beholden to us and that we expect better. We have the chance to do that in November.

Every seat in the State Assembly and half of the seats in the State Senate will be on the ballot in November. Ask those running for re-election and the candidates challenging them where they stand on nonpartisan redistricting. We must make sure those responsible for endangering both our lives and our right to vote are held accountable.

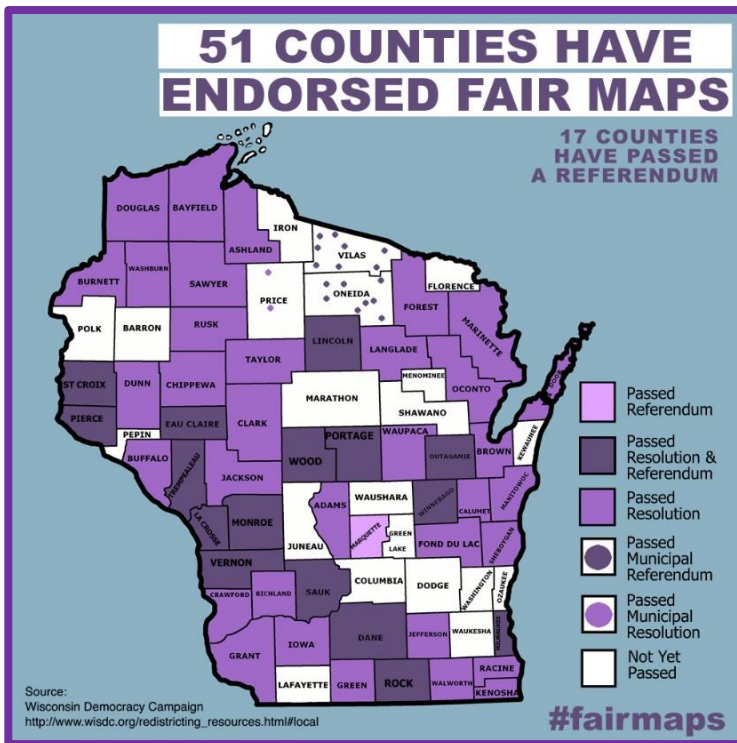
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You Can't Disenfranchise Everyone

The Legislature's cavalier attitude toward their constituent's health and safety during the Spring election was unconscionable. Emboldened by gerrymandered district lines, the leaders in the Legislature did not govern with the wellbeing of their constituents in mind. Instead, they sought political advantage.

Now, after the election, we are turning our attention to the remaining 2020 elections. All reports from the nation's top medical experts predict that the risk from COVID-19 will not have been mitigated. Safe elections in August and November will again be ones where the preponderance of voters cast their ballots using an absentee ballot or other

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absentee ballot or other early voting strategies. We will work to educate voters on how best to do this and will advocate for clerks around the state to provide all registered voters an absentee ballot request.

Additionally, LWVWI will continue to press for legislation that ensures Wisconsin draws fair and representative district maps in early 2021. Clearly, voters in Wisconsin are speaking out to demand representation. Referenda questions on April ballots in nine Counties seeking Fair Maps all passed with support of between 72% and 81% of voters. Over 50 counties have now passed board resolutions demanding fair and transparently drawn districts in 2021. LWVWI will continue to defend our democracy and ensure that it is the voters who choose their representatives, not the elected officials choosing their voters.

--Debra Cronmiller, Executive Director, LWVWI

News and Resources

- [All Referendums Pass to Ban Gerrymandering, Overturn Citizens United, from Wisconsin Democracy Campaign](#) – “The people spoke, loud and clear, in Wisconsin’s election: They are sick and tired of elected officials rigging the maps to stay in power, and they are sick and tired of big money and dark money in our politics. Every advisory referendum on the ballot in Wisconsin to ban gerrymandering and to amend the U.S. Constitution to overturn *Citizens United* passed overwhelmingly....”
- [Fixing Bugs in Democracy, A Virtual Town Hall Series \(Princeton Gerrymandering Project audio recording\)](#): This episode of the virtual town hall series on problems in our democracy and how to fix them is with Professor Sam Wang and Professor Julian Zelizer as they talk with **Katie Fahey**, who launched a movement to change redistricting in Michigan. The focus: how to organize everywhere – even in today’s unusual conditions.
- [Slay the Dragon](#) by Magnolia Pictures – End gerrymander or democracy dies, We can stop it. Now on demand – support theatres or watch at home. **There will be more information regarding Wisconsin participation in the Slay the Dragon Impact Campaign shared in team meetings next week.**
- [Wisconsinites have fallen victim to gerrymandering](#), LTE in *Wausau Pilot and Review*
- [Wisconsin Fair Maps Coalition website](#)—www.fairmapswi.com