



Fair Maps Wisconsin Newsletter

June 23, 2020: Vol. 1, #8



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- ## Fair Maps Teams Meet via ZOOM
- Fair Maps Team Meetings in June and July will continue to be held through Zoom. Please contact [Carlene](#) or [Holly](#) if you would like to be added to the Zoom meeting invitation for your region. To connect with the Fair Maps Team in your region, please complete this [Google form](#).
- **1st CD Fair Maps Team** – Tuesday, July 21, at 5:30pm
 - **2nd CD Steering Committee** – Tuesday, June 23, at 9:00am
 - **3rd CD Fair Maps Team** – Thursday, July 9, at 6:30pm
 - **Jefferson County Fair Maps Team** – Wednesday, July 8, at 6:30pm
 - **Midstate Fair Maps Team** – Thursday, July 16, at 4:00pm
 - **Lodi Fair Maps Team** – Tuesday, July 14, at 4:00pm
 - **7th CD East/Central Fair Maps Team** – Tuesday, July 21, at 7:00pm
 - **7th CD West Fair Maps Team** – Thursday, July 9, at 4:00pm
 - **Western WI for Nonpartisan Voting Districts** – Tuesday, July 14 at 9:00am
 - **8th CD Fair Maps Team** – Tuesday, June 30, at 6:00pm

Meet Amy Dummer



Hello, this is Amy Dummer from Holmen, Wisconsin. I started organizing around issues like the healthcare and agriculture and quickly realized that that work is dependent on fixing fundamental problems such as gerrymandering, voter

suppression, and money in politics.

In the spring of 2017 several of us in the La Crosse area planned a speaker panel and were fortunate to have Sachin Chheda and Jeff Smith join us. The event was standing room only. People were inspired and wanted change. From there we started organizing around county resolutions and referendums to educate ourselves about gerrymandering and nonpartisan redistricting.

Since then we've talked with many people in rural Wisconsin about how gerrymandering affects the issues they care about - water quality, agriculture, jobs, wages, etc. As poll and referendum results indicate, the people of Wisconsin are listening and they want nonpartisan redistricting.

The Power of Letter Writing

~ Carlene Bechen

TikTok, Instagram, K-Pop Stans and Twitter seem to be the new way to get your message out. But if your message is more than a meme or 140 characters, there's nothing like the old-fashioned letter to the editor. In the last newsletter, I answered an often-asked question regarding the importance of getting nonpartisan redistricting referendums on county and municipal ballots and passing them.

Here's another question, "Do people really read letters to the editor?"

The short answer, "Yes."

But that's not the only reason to write them. According to the [ACLU](#), there are four main reasons for writing letters to the editor:

1. To reach a large audience,
2. They are often monitored by elected officials,
3. Letters can bring up information not addressed in a news article, and
4. To create an impression of widespread support for - or opposition -- to an issue.

In the context of the campaign to end gerrymandering, all four of these reasons matter.

- First, reaching a large audience with compelling reasons for ending gerrymandering is essential. A well-crafted letter can explain the impacts of gerrymandering and provide personal reasons for ending the practice;
- Second, influencing elected officials to support a nonpartisan redistricting process or exposing their opposition holds them accountable;
- Third, news articles rarely give enough information for readers to understand the profoundly negative effects of gerrymandered electoral maps. A clearly drafted letter can inform readers and elevate the issue, and
- Finally, when multiple members of the community voice their concerns in letters to the editor, public support increases as readers see the signatures of their neighbors supporting an end to gerrymandering.

Here's a strategy for finding out whether your legislators and candidates support a nonpartisan redistricting process.

- Email or call their office and ask for a written statement of their position. Be persistent.
- Draft a letter explaining why you care so much about ending gerrymandering. Include a brief personal anecdote.
- State what you learned when you contacted your legislators and candidates for office.
- Submit your letter to local and statewide publications – online and print.
- Post your letter on social media.

Here are a few tips from the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign's *Toolkit for Banning Gerrymandering in Wisconsin*, [Short Guide to Writing Letters to the Editor](#):

1. Keep them short. That means under 200 words.
2. Make one point only, or two at the very most.
3. Do not use screaming words or exclamation points!!! Keep the tone measured.
4. Submit the letter within 24 hours of the offending article (or the article you want to commend).*
5. Cite the article by title and date in your first paragraph.*
6. How to submit: Google the name of your paper and how to submit Letter to the Editor. Typically, this will take you to a form to fill in your name and address, etc, and then a box to paste in your letter, and a "submit" button. Other times, it will give you an email address to send it to.
7. Make sure you are submitting it to the right person: The Letters to the Editor page editor (or the Opinions editor, or the editor in chief). Most websites will give you the correct address.
8. Send an email within 48 hours to ask, politely, whether they are going to run it.
9. Most papers have a once a month rule on letter writers, so obey it.
10. Read your letter out loud before you send it in.

*These may not apply to your letter.

Slay the Dragon: Reflecting on our very first 'Fair Maps Week'



At the end of May, during our very first Fair Maps Week, **a thousand** Wisconsinites signed up to view *Slay the Dragon* and join a live Panel Discussion on the film to learn more about the ways gerrymandering affects all of us here in Wisconsin. **So many of you took your support steps further**, and participated in our daily actions (listed below) to let the people in your lives know that they should care about putting an end to gerrymandering, too.

Here's how you all showed up:

- Sunday, 5/24 folks from all around the state changed their Facebook Profile Picture by adding our Fair Maps Week Facebook Profile Frame!
- Monday, 5/25 according to Google Analytics, over 125 of you downloaded our virtual [Zoom background](#) to support Fair Maps in your virtual meetings.

- Tuesday, 5/26 over 20 individuals across Wisconsin self-disclosed that they received a link from a friend to view *Slay the Dragon* who hadn't participated in this work before, though we do suspect this number to be much larger. This day had the largest jump in registrations to view *Slay the Dragon* (117 total).
- Wednesday, 5/27 folks contacted their legislators to let them know that nonpartisan redistricting is important to them. We don't have an exact number, but at least 10 of you reached out to let us know you contacted your legislators!
- Thursday, 5/28 over 60 new people [signed up to volunteer and join](#) their local Fair Maps team, and over 50 people took the [Fair Maps Voter Pledge](#).
- Friday, 5/29 folks from all over the state wrote a Letter to the Editor about gerrymandering and nonpartisan redistricting! We don't have an exact number for this either, but at least 7 of you reached out to let us know you sent one to your local publication.
- Saturday, 5/30 over 130 tuned in to our live panel discussion on *Slay the Dragon* with our special guests. Now, there's over [2,500 views on Facebook](#), and [100 on YouTube](#).

Western WI for Nonpartisan Voting Districts

~Jenelle Ludwig Krause

Pierce County GrassRoots Organizing is launching a new project called *Western WI for Nonpartisan Voting Districts*

which will coordinate and amplify efforts in Western WI to bring an end to gerrymandering. Check out our webpage: <https://piercecountygro.org/western-wi-for-nonpartisan-voting-districts/>. The first meeting will be Tuesday, July 14, at 9 AM. To join, please email [Jenelle Ludwig Krause](mailto:Jenelle.Ludwig.Krause).



Stand Up for Fair Maps! Honk for Fair Maps!

Thursday, July 9, from 5 - 7 pm will be the time to lift your signs and honk your horns in Appleton. The Fox Valley contingent of the 8th CD Fair Maps Team, along with the League of Women Voters, is sponsoring the *Stand Up and Honk for Fair Maps* event to raise awareness for the need to end partisan gerrymandering in Wisconsin.

Participants are encouraged to create signs and write messages to Senator Roger Roth expressing that 72% of the people in Wisconsin want Fair Maps! Then wear masks and socially distance themselves along both sides of College Avenue between Superior Street and Walnut Street in downtown Appleton or add their vehicle, with signs ablazing, to the caravan led by the Building Unity Bus, that will travel along the route from 5:00pm until 7:00pm on Thursday, July 9. Make sure to stop by Houdini Plaza, 100 W. College Ave, to drop off your messages for Senator Roth and learn more about nonpartisan redistricting at the 8th CD Fair Maps table.

Look for more information on the 8th CD Fair Maps Facebook page ([Fair Maps WI 8th CD Collective](#)) or email [Penny](#).



A graphic featuring a map of Wisconsin with county names, overlaid with a dark blue brushstroke background. Text reads: "Politicians should need VOTES to win. NOT MAPS. 72% of Wisconsin supports an END to GERRYMANDERING. STAND UP FOR FAIR MAPS! HONK FOR FAIR MAPS! July 9 5PM-7PM".

Building Unity Tour Travels Wisconsin



The schedule for the **Building Unity Tour** is:

- ~~Greater Milwaukee area (5/23-6/20) DONE~~
- North East / Fox Valley area (6/21-7/15)
- Central Wisconsin area (7/16-7/25)
- Far North Eau Claire area (7/26-8/6)
- LaCrosse area (8/7-8/20)
- Richland Center area (8/21-9/3)
- Platteville area (9/4-9/17)
- New Glarus Monroe area (9/18-10/2)
- Deforest Beaver Dam area (10/3-10/16)
- Lake Mills Whitewater area (10/17-11/1)

Check the [schedule](#) for Building Unity Tour stop details, additional stops, and changes. If you would like to help pick a date and time for a virtual gathering in your area, [contact tour organizers](#).

Scott Jensen Tries to “Pre-Rig” Redistricting

~ Matt Rothschild, Wisconsin Democracy Campaign

This is what I call a “pre-rig”: an effort to rig the process even before the maps are redrawn in a rigged way.

Jensen wants the Wisconsin Supreme Court to make a rule change announcing that they have jurisdiction over any redistricting lawsuit because he knows that in 2021 the composition of the court will be 4-3 in favor of the conservatives. He doesn't want to take any chances in federal court or the lower level.

Scott Jensen, the disgraced former Speaker of the Assembly, is still acting as a battering ram for Wisconsin Republicans.

On June 3rd, he filed a [request](#) with the Wisconsin Supreme Court for new rules on

redistricting, rules that would require that any legal challenges over the redistricting process next year would go straight up to the Wisconsin Supreme Court. They would not go to federal court, and they would not begin at the circuit court level.

Jensen, who pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor ethics charge in 2010 for his part in the so-called Caucus Scandal of 2002, has remained an extremely powerful player in Republican politics, despite being stripped of his ability to ever run for office again.

His day job is as a lobbyist for Betsy Devos's American Federation for Children, which aims to destroy our public education system by siphoning public money into private schools. With Jensen's advice, the group has spent more than \$7 million over the past 10 years to help elect Republican officials in Wisconsin.

Now Jensen is trying to maximize the chances that Speaker Robin Vos and the other Republicans in the Legislature can get away with gerrymandering again in 2021, just as they did, grotesquely, in 2011.

It's likely that Vos and company will rig the district maps next summer, once the new Census data is delivered. And it's likely that Gov. Tony Evers will

veto their maps. In circumstances like that, when the Legislature and the governor can't come to an agreement, the map ends up in court.

Jensen wants to make sure that the map lands in the right court for Republicans. And that's the Wisconsin Supreme Court.

What Jensen doesn't get, though, is that the people of Wisconsin are sick and tired of this kind of manipulative monkey business.

And we're sick and tired of gerrymandering, too.

Already, 51 county boards have passed resolutions urging the

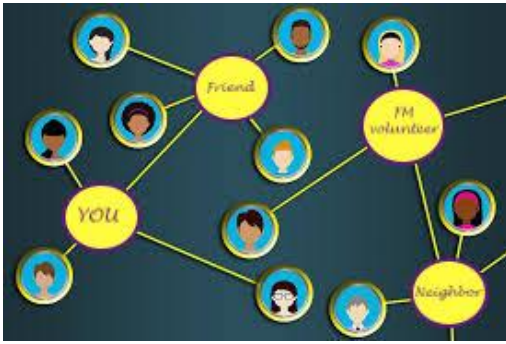
Legislature to pass a law to ban gerrymandering and give us nonpartisan redistricting, and 17 counties have passed non-binding referendums by overwhelming margins to do the same. A Marquette Law School poll last year revealed that 72 percent of Wisconsinites want nonpartisan redistricting, and that includes 63 percent of Republicans and 76 percent of Independents.

So Jensen can keep playing his sneaky power games, but that's only going to further enrage the Wisconsin citizenry, adding to the surging momentum at the grassroots to ban gerrymandering, once and for all.



If you want to join this exciting movement for nonpartisan redistricting, here are three easy things you can do:

1. Ask candidates where they stand on this issue.
2. Vote only for candidates who vow to vote for a bill to ban gerrymandering.
3. Get involved with organizers in your community on this issue by contacting Fair Maps Coordinator Carlene Bechen at carlene@wisconsinvoices.org.



Ongoing Relational Organizing Trainings

Mark your calendar for the 3rd Wednesday of each month for the **Introduction to Relational Organizing Training** with Cass Bowers from Organizing Empowerment Project and Carlene Bechen. This training explains and demonstrates how relational organizing works and introduces participants to the Empower App.

- To register for Introduction to Relational Organizing, click here: <https://forms.gle/7arTpTquUeLPMv1h6>
- Please download the app before the training: <https://getempower.com/fairmaps>

Relational Organizer Session 1 Training is the next step. This training walks fair maps organizers through how to use the Empower App to apply the soft skills we use in conversations with friends and family and adapt them to the digital space. It happens every Wednesday at 1:00pm. Here's the link to register: <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/uZUqdOChrzgokiWXnRfyAp87KVjq8x1Fww>

Relational Organizing has shown to increase voter turnout by 13.2%, much higher than phoning or canvassing. This training will focus on how to have conversations with family, friends and neighbors with whom you have a relationship, but with whom you don't normally talk about politics.

Most people take action because they can, because they care and because they are asked. It's time to ask.

Other News and Resources

- **'This is a war': Republicans ramp up bid to control election maps for next decade:** <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/jun/22/republican-dark-money-groups-2020-election>

- **FiveThirtyEight's *The Atlas of Redistricting*** –

This site includes a set of alternative congressional maps for the entire country—view state by state or nationwide. Each map has a different goal: One is designed to encourage competitive elections, while another seeks to maximize the number of majority-minority districts showing how changes to district boundaries could radically alter the partisan and racial makeup of the U.S. House: <https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/redistricting-maps/wisconsin/>

