

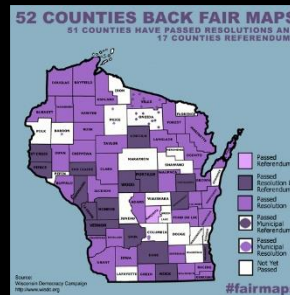


**WISCONSIN
DESERVES
FAIR MAPS**

fairmapswi.com

Fair Maps Wisconsin Newsletter

July 2020: Vol. 1, #10



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Fair Maps Teams Meet via ZOOM

Fair Maps Team Meetings in 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 – Tues., August 18, at 5:30pm
- 2nd CD Steering Committee – Mon., August 3, at 9:00am
- 3rd CD Fair Maps Team – Thurs., August 20, at 6:30pm
- Jefferson County Fair Maps Team – Wed., August 12, at 6:30pm
- Midstate Fair Maps Team – Thurs., August 20, at 4:00pm
- Columbia County/Lodi Fair Maps Team – Tues., July 28, at 4:00pm
- Ozaukee & Washington County Fair Maps Team – Wed., July 29, at 3:00pm
- Waukesha County Fair Maps Team – Tues., July 28, at 1:00pm
- 7th CD East/Central Fair Maps Team – Tues., August 18, at 7:00pm
- 7th CD West Fair Maps Team – Thurs., August 13, at 4:00pm
- Western WI for Nonpartisan Voting Districts – Tues., August 11, at 9:00am
- 8th CD Fair Maps Team – Tues., July 28, at 6:30pm

Meet Michael Nichols

Hello! My name is Michael Nichols. I am a class of 2020 graduate at Barron High School. I was first made aware of gerrymandering and its effect on our



government fairly recently. It was this January when I really began to feel the need to fight for Fair Maps. This was also when Carlene Bechen contacted me after I filled out a volunteer interest survey. I was hesitant at first, but I knew that I needed to do my part to fight for this cause.

Since then, my involvement has grown. I remember my first meeting; I attended just hoping to learn more about various ways people are fighting for Fair Maps, but I left as a member of various subcommittees. This was unexpected, but it was only my first step. Since then, I worked with Carlene and many other Fair Maps supporters on raising awareness.

In June, I made the decision to take a resolution to my local city council. I was very hesitant to do this because this was my first time taking any sort of formal action in government. Despite this, I got myself put on the agenda, and started making calls to people who could help me achieve success. I had the city attorney review a resolution to get it prepared for

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(Michael Nichols continued)



the meeting, I found a council member who supports the Fair Maps movement, and I worked with a great group of people from throughout the state to help me be fully confident and ready to handle anything that may happen at the meeting.

July 14 came, and it was the day of the meeting. After a month of preparation, the night had finally come. I showed up to the meeting with a handful of community members showing their support. Although I had come into the meeting unsure of what the outcome would be, I noticed that as I spoke, each council member could see my passion and agreed with the cause. Finally, the council voted. I got goosebumps as every council member voted “yes” to passing the resolution.

Now, I am onto the next phase: educating the public and making sure the citizens of Barron vote “YES!” to the referendum that will be on their November 3rd ballot. I am so thankful to have joined this organization, and I will continue to fight for this cause. I hope my story inspires others to fight in their own communities.

Apply for the People’s Maps Commission **TODAY!**

This is the last week to apply for the People’s Maps Commission. The deadline for applications to be received is this **Friday, July 31, 2020**. Applications will be evaluated by a panel of retired judges: Janine Geske, Joseph Troy and Paul Higginbotham. Monthly hearings are set to begin in September 2020 and will run through April 2021. For more information about the People’s Maps Commission or to apply to become a member of the commission, visit govstatus.egov.com/peoplesmaps.



The People’s Maps Commission Application Information

Eligibility criteria to join The People’s Maps Commission includes that a person:

- Be 18 years of age or older;
- A Wisconsin resident;
- May not be:
 - Registered as a lobbyist in the last 5 years;
 - A declared candidate for a local, state, or federal elected office;
 - A state public official as defined by Wis. Stat. § 19.42(14);
 - A local public official as defined by Wis. Stat. § 19.42(7x);
 - An officer or member of the governing body of a local, state, or national political party.

Applications must be notarized and received by July 31, 2020. Information about how to get a document notarized and how to use a remote notary is [available here](#). Applicants may email their application to PeoplesMaps@wisconsin.gov or mail it to Office of Governor Evers, ATTN: People’s Maps Commission Application, PO Box 7863, Madison WI 53707.

Where the People's Maps Commission Fits In

~ Matt Rothschild, Executive Director, Wisconsin Democracy Campaign

While the Wisconsin Fair Maps Coalition is thrilled that Gov. Evers is moving forward with the People's Maps Commission, we all need to recognize where the Commission fits in with our overall campaign to ban gerrymandering in Wisconsin and to finally get independent, nonpartisan redistricting here.

The People's Maps Commission is a public education and awareness tool. Starting this fall, the Commission will be holding hearings in all eight Congressional districts, getting input from the citizenry about how they'd like to see fair maps drawn. That's a good thing: Transparency and participation are crucial for our democracy. We're hoping you'll be able to attend the hearing in your area.

Once the Census data is handed over to the state, the People's Maps Commission will draw its own maps in an independent and nonpartisan way, so we'll all be able to see what that actually looks like.

But the Commission doesn't have any power. It can't force Speaker Robin Vos and the Legislature to adopt these maps, and Vos has made no secret of his desire to draw the maps his way – the rigged way.

Yes, we'll be able to use the maps drawn by the Commission to illustrate just how far afield from fairness the new Vos maps are.

But we'll still need to pressure everyone in the Legislature not to vote for the rigged Vos maps.

Here are three ways we marshal that pressure:

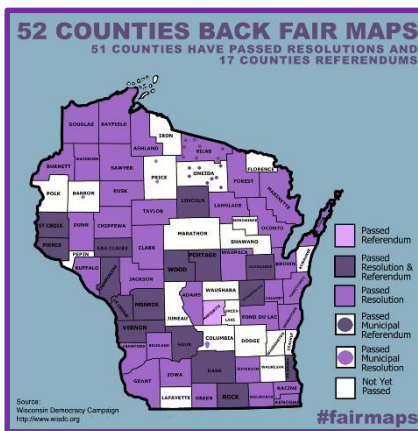
--by keep passing fair maps referendums and resolutions in county after county, demonstrating to candidates and elected officials that their constituents feel very strongly about this issue.

--by urging candidates to pledge not to vote for rigged maps and instead to vote for independent, nonpartisan redistricting like they have in Iowa. And letting voters know where they stand on this issue through letters to the editor and social media.

--by signing the voter pledge that says we won't vote for any candidate who isn't in favor of changing the law to give us independent, nonpartisan redistricting.

In short, the People's Maps Commission isn't a cure-all. But it is part of the massive public organizing effort under way to build sufficient pressure so that whoever is elected to the Legislature, they won't vote for rigged maps.

Instead, they'll do what their constituents want: They'll pass a law that finally bans gerrymandering in Wisconsin.



Updated Counties Map

The map of counties endorsing Fair Maps has been updated (7/27/20) to include a resolution passed by City of Barron in Barron County, and is posted to the [End Gerrymandering Toolkit](#) on the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign's website.

Gerrymandering Dilutes Voters' Voices

Farmers Union invites rural, urban voters to bridge the divide and fight for fair maps



For the last six years, Wisconsin Farmers Union members at our annual convention have voted to end gerrymandering and replace it with nonpartisan redistricting. WFU is developing voter education materials, organizing at the state and local levels, and collaborating with like-minded organizations to move the dial towards real democracy. Recently, we launched a video, [*Fighting for Democracy: Fair Maps in Wisconsin*](#) and held a virtual town hall with over 150 attendees. In turn, those participants have committed to holding candidate and elected official's feet to the fire, getting them to **pledge** their support for nonpartisan redistricting.

Some people wonder why a family farm organization cares about an issue like fair maps. It's because we recognize that no matter one's political persuasion, casting a ballot that counts is as American as it gets. Unfortunately, in the state of Wisconsin, your vote is shaped by the party in power. In 2016, a federal court ruled that Wisconsin voters are disenfranchised; their votes are diluted because of the way the maps have been drawn and this is a constitutional violation.

Gerrymandering fuels partisan politics, enabling elected officials to close their doors and ears to many of their constituents and rest comfortably term after term, knowing their seat is secured. When people lose faith in their ability to petition the government

through voting and their representatives have no incentive to listen, people either disengage from the democratic process or resort to more radical ways to be heard.

Recently, I moved from Menomonie to Chippewa Falls. Like much of Wisconsin, voting district lines here are zig zags and squiggles, not following any sort of natural or recognizable boundary. When I asked my town clerk what assembly district I was in, she wasn't sure either. She had a map in her office to try and help residents, but she couldn't tell me with certainty because of the confounding maps. She noted voters around here are terribly confused, showing up at familiar town halls only to be told that they were in the wrong district. I treasure citizen engagement in the political process. Election maps should organize, clarify and direct citizens to exercise their right to vote and call on their representatives. Instead in Wisconsin they are rigged to confuse, diminish, and manipulate the electorate and protect the party in power.

Wisconsin Farmers Union members want fair maps and they are willing to phone friends and relatives, hold house parties, canvass, and convince their neighbors that democracy is worth the fight. Join us to end this toxic, partisan gridlock and empower the people!

Julie Keown-Bomar is the Executive Director of Wisconsin Farmers Union, a member-driven organization committed to enhancing the quality of life for family farmers, rural communities, and all people through educational opportunities, cooperative endeavors, and civic engagement. Learn more about WFU's work at <https://www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/fairmaps>.

Downloadable PDF Handouts and Brochures

The Wisconsin Democracy Campaign's *Toolkit for Banning Gerrymandering* is a treasure trove of resources for anyone wanting to learn about this issue and/or advocate for nonpartisan redistricting. The resources are being updated regularly and feature handouts, presentations, sample letters and resolutions, videos and more.



Attached here are downloadable handouts that can be used by teams to educate voters, candidates and legislators and for information when writing letters or talking with friends.

[End Gerrymandering in Wisconsin](#) four-page handout by Dr. Anthony Phillips of Appleton (7/27/20)

[Fair Maps: Representation for All](#) brochure (or [one-page handout](#)) by League of Women Voters of Wisconsin (July 2020)

[Gerrymandering in Wisconsin 101](#) handout by Wis. Fair Maps Coalition (July 2020)

Go here for additional [education and outreach materials](#).

Other News and Resources

- [City \[of Barron\] Voters will see referendum question on Nov. 3 ballot](#)
- [Columbia County committee denies redistricting referendum, public speaks out against decision](#)
- [This Time Wisconsin Deserves Fair Maps](#)
- [How Congress can stop gerrymandering: Deny seats to states that do it.](#)

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) DONE~~
- ~~Central Wisconsin area (7/16-7/25) DONE~~
- 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](#).

Request Your Absentee Ballot

Go to myvote.wi.gov to request an absentee ballot for the August 11 Primary and the November 3 General Election. It's fast and easy. Do it today!

