



General Assembly

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Republicans, concerned citizens file lawsuit to invalidate 2011 Legislative Map

Claims that map violates the U.S. Constitution, the Illinois Constitution and the Federal Voting Rights Act of 1965

Illinois House and Senate Republican Leaders Tom Cross, Christine Radogno and numerous concerned citizens filed a federal lawsuit in the Northern District of Illinois today to invalidate the 2011 General Assembly redistricting map in an effort to redraw legislative districts to protect the most sacred right in a democratic society – the right to vote.

“The Democrats passed a map this session that we believe is in direct violation of the Federal Voting Rights Act and some of our most basic rights under the constitution,” said Leader Cross. “They should be ashamed of themselves. We are optimistic that the court will agree with us and will help give our residents a Fair Map that accurately reflects our population, especially our growing Latino population.”

“As we now go to court to protect the voting rights of all citizens, I think it is important to remember how easily this could have been avoided,” Radogno said. “The majority party denied Illinois citizens the opportunity to vote for a constitutional amendment that would have taken the redistricting process out of the hands of politicians and given it to an independent body. Had that occurred, I am confident a fair map that meets the requirements of the federal voting rights act would have been adopted. Instead, Illinois citizens must turn to the courts to protect their right to have their votes count.”

The lawsuit has been filed against the State Board of Elections. Specifically the suit makes the following allegations against the map passed by Democratic majorities and signed by the Governor:

- The map violates the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965 because African Americans and Latinos have not been provided a “fair opportunity” to participate in the political process.
- The process by which the map was approved violates the Illinois Constitution because the map was not made available to the public or the legislature for a sufficient amount of time for review.
- The map violates the 1st Amendment to the United States Constitution because it dilutes the voting power of Republican voters throughout the state
- The map violates the compactness requirement of the Illinois Constitution and is less compact than the previous map and the Fair Map put forward as an alternative.

In the coming months, if the plaintiffs are successful, the court could direct the General Assembly to redraw the district boundaries of all or parts of the state within a specific deadline; it could direct a “Special Master” to redraw the lines; or it could direct a Legislative Redistricting Commission, as provided by our Constitution, to draw the boundaries with equal appointments made by the four legislative leaders. If the Commission cannot agree, a tiebreaker’s name would be drawn from a hat.

“For years, we have pushed for redistricting reform that would have created a Fair Map, only to be blocked by the Democrats,” added Cross and Radogno. “It is disappointing that the Democrats passed and signed a map that violates federal law and the constitution. We must stand up for the residents of our state and fight for a Fair Map that will be in place for the next decade.”