

Illinois Redistricting Collaborative 2018 General Assembly Gerrymandering Survey

Candidate Name: Shirley Bell
Name of Candidate Committee: Friends of Shirley Bell
Office Sought/District: State Representative of the 110th District
Party Affiliation: Democratic
Current Occupation: Retired College Professor
Previous Elected Positions Held: None--1st time, grassroots candidate
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Survey Questions:

1. Do you believe we need to end gerrymandering and change the way Illinois draws its legislative and Congressional maps?

Yes Explain: Two major reasons--First, I do believe that voters should be able to choose their representatives rather than politicians choosing their voters. That's what democracy is and when this becomes law I believe that voters will have much more trust in their government and much more confidence in their representation. Second, some districts in Illinois are functionally unmanageable right now. The 15th is one example--33 counties, reaching from Rantoul down to the tip of the state. Even hard-working, dedicated representatives are going to have difficulty providing effective representation for all their constituents simply because the travel time makes listening to them all nearly impossible.

2. Do you support an amendment to the Illinois Constitution to end gerrymandering by changing the redistricting process to create an independent commission tasked with drawing Illinois legislative and Congressional maps?

Yes I strongly support the concept of an Independent commission for the reasons stated above. I do have concerns about how we go about ensuring its independence--as always the devil is in the details.

3. As a member of the General Assembly, would you cosponsor a constitutional amendment for redistricting reform to establish an independent commission to draw the lines? As a member would you vote for HJRCA43/SJRCA26?

As indicated above, I am supportive of these bills, however, before I cosponsor or vote on any bill, I will need to consult with my constituents to learn about their views and concerns so that I can effectively represent them.

4. Do you support changes to the current redistricting process that would allow more time for citizens to provide feedback on proposed legislative maps?

Yes I very strongly support citizen involvement in the redistricting process and the increased time and greater number of public meetings will greatly improve active participation. I also encourage greater advertising of the meetings so that everyone has the opportunity to voice their views.

5. Do you support changes to the current redistricting process that would provide resources for citizens and community organizations to analyze proposed legislative maps?

Yes As suggested by my answer in 4, we need to increase public participation in the process and this includes using technology and advertising to make the proposed maps available for study and providing easy access to them.

6. Do you support prison gerrymandering reform bill HB205, which requires the Secretary of State to prepare redistricting data to reflect the incarcerated persons at their residential address, rather than the address of the facility in which the person is incarcerated?

Yes The large majority of people who are incarcerated return to civilian life and most before the ten years before a census will again be conducted. Clearly, then, using the institutional address artificially inflates the number of residents in districts that have a prison.

7. Would you support additional redistricting reform measures for county, municipal, and special units of government?

This requires further study and more specificity. What types of additional reforms? What problems do these smaller units of government currently face and how do the residents in these districts feel about proposed changes?

8. Do you support instituting the following principles to guide Illinois' next redistricting process? Please circle your position and explain the principles you don't agree with:

I. COMPLY WITH THE U.S. CONSTITUTION

YES And I'm very trouble by the proposal to ask about immigration status in the 2020 census. This does not comply with the U.S. constitution, is not what the census is designed to do, and will artificially lower the actual number of residents in some districts.

II. COMPLY WITH THE FEDERAL AND STATE VOTING RIGHTS ACT.

YES, absolutely.

**III. COMPRISE AND UPHOLD A NON-PARTISANSHIP PROCESS
YES**

**IV. MAXIMIZE VOTER CHOICE, ELECTORAL CANDIDACY AND
COMPETITIVENESS
YES**

**V. RECOGNIZE AND PRESERVE COMMUNITIES OF INTEREST
YES**

**VI. ACCURATELY INCLUDE PERMANENT RESIDENCE OF ALL ILLINOISANS
YES**

**VII. COMPRISE AND UPHOLD A TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE PROCESS
YES**

**VIII. PROVIDE FOR OPEN, FULL, AND MEANINGFUL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
YES**

Any final thoughts or points you would like to make on the subjects of gerrymandering and redistricting reform?

Only that I think this is a very important issue and one that has the potential to strengthen public trust in government and strengthen our democracy by increasing citizen involvement and confidence in their own ability to affect the government of, by, and for the people.

Shirley Bell, Democratic Candidate for State Representative of the 110th District.