

2018 Gerrymandering Survey Response

Candidate Name: Ammie Kessem

Full Name of Campaign Committee: Friends of Ammie Kessem

Office Sought/District: House District 19

Party Affiliation: Republican

Candidate Current Occupation: Sergeant of Police

Previous Elected Positions Held: None

Campaign Contact Person: Myself

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2018 Gerrymandering Survey Questions:

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

Yes because the current system benefits the incumbent and until we have term limits, this is an unfair process.

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

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

As a member, would you vote for HJRCA43/SJRCA26?

Yes because it is a bipartisan reform

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

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

Yes but not special interest groups and lobbyists.

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 but I do not support incarcerated individuals having a right to vote while they are incarcerated. That said, if they are allowed to vote (per current law) it should be in an absentee ballot listed to their registered home address per their voter registration records.

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

Yes

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 cannot circle it but section VI. Is what is most important to me.

I. COMPLY WITH THE U.S. CONSTITUTION

The process must be in accordance with the requirements of the U.S. Constitution. All persons -- regardless of age, citizenship, immigration status, ability, or eligibility to vote -- should be accurately counted through the Census. In accordance with the U.S. Constitution, districts should be populated equally, as nearly as is practicable.

No. I believe the maps should be based on registered voters and those records only, not the Census data.

II. COMPLY WITH FEDERAL AND STATE VOTING RIGHTS ACT

The process must emphasize representation and be fully compliant with both the federal Voting Rights Act (VRA) and all state voting rights laws, including the Illinois Voting Rights Act. The letter and the spirit of the VRA should be reflected in redistricting to protect the rights of voters of color. To advance these foundational goals, redistricting decision-makers should exercise their latitude under the law to create majority-minority, coalition, and influence districts.

No, I base my decisions on every human being created as equal and respect all people regardless of the above factors that are protected by our constitution. To put it in easy terms, I consider myself to be “color-blind” and race, color or ethnicity should never be a basis for an accurate map.

III. COMPRISE AND UPHOLD A NON-PARTISANSHIP PROCESS

The process should be independent of partisan political considerations. Mapmaking must include provisions and resources ensuring independence from political parties and legislative leaders. The process must include diverse decision-makers who reflect a broad range of viewpoints and who prioritize people and communities. Mapping consultants and software contracts, paid for

with public resources, should be awarded on merit rather than partisan affiliation.

Yes

IV. MAXIMIZE VOTER CHOICE, ELECTORAL CANDIDACY AND COMPETITIVENESS

The process should result in maximizing voter choice, encouraging electoral candidacy, and enhancing electoral competitiveness.

Yes

V. RECOGNIZE AND PRESERVE COMMUNITIES OF INTEREST

The process should give consideration to true communities of interest. To the extent possible, but secondary to the protection of voting rights, populations with common social, ethnic or economic interests, and/or shared political and geographic boundaries should have unified representation.

Yes

VI. ACCURATELY INCLUDE PERMANENT RESIDENCE OF ALL ILLINOISANS

The process must accurately represent the permanent residence of all Illinoisans. All persons residing away from their permanent residence, such as students, incarcerated individuals, and missionaries, should be counted at their home address regardless of Census counting rules. The Census should be encouraged to expand its exceptions to the usual residence rule to include incarcerated individuals, as well as students, missionaries, and overseas Americans.

Yes but this process must only be open to registered voters with their voting addresses as their registered address.

VII. COMPRISE AND UPHOLD A TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE PROCESS

The process must be transparent and accountable. Meetings of decision-makers and their legal, political, and mapping consultants must be open and accessible to the public to the greatest extent possible. The criteria used to draw maps must be objective, clear and justifiable, and districts must be drawn to offer voter choice. Communications related to the redistricting process should be subject to the Open Meetings Act and the Freedom of Information Act. Clear conflict-of-interest rules must be adopted and applied.

Yes but it must not be controlled by special interest groups.

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

The process must allow for meaningful public participation and have the confidence of the public. Opportunities for public education and engagement must be provided, including opportunities to offer comment and amend draft maps. Redistricting bodies must provide data, tools, and ways for the public to have direct input into and impact on the specific plans under consideration.

Yes but it must not be controlled by special interest groups.