

Candidate Name: Jillian Rose Bernas

Office Sought/District: State Representative/56th Illinois House District

Party Affiliation: Republican

Candidate Current Occupation: International Relations Manager

Previous Elected Positions Held: Current Trustee on the Schaumburg Township District Library Board

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1. Do you believe we need to end gerrymandering and change the way Illinois draws its legislative and Congressional maps?
Yes, in the State of Illinois current maps are drawn by ruling class politicians to maintain legislative power by concentrating and dispersing votes in certain districts to ensure the outcomes of elections. Illinois voters should be given the opportunity to elect their representatives. Currently, politicians are selecting their voters.
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, although an independent commission tasked with drawing Illinois' maps may never be completely removed from partisan influence, at least it will be a step away from the majority party in the state determining the maps to support their own reelection efforts.
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? As a member, would you vote for HJRCA43/SJRCA26?
Yes, I would cosponsor and vote for HJRCA43, although I would like to study the legislation more to understand how the 17th member is appointed if no legislative map is confirmed by the August 1 deadline. I would not want this 17th member to have the power that the Speaker of the House currently has in determining the maps. Additionally, the commissioner role should not be compensated.
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, as long as allowing for more time does not add undue financial burden to the process.

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, it seems reasonable to give interested public parties a mechanism for reviewing proposed maps as well as a means for submitting their own maps. This mechanism should not impose a large financial burden on the state. In the past, redistricting information has been communicated online which can serve as a low cost option.

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, counting prisoners at the address of the facility in which the person is incarcerated gives inaccurate census counts that result in unjust political power in the area in which the facility is located.

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

Yes, given that the creation of these commissions does not cause financial burden on taxpayers and that commissioners are not compensated.

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

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.

Yes

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.

Yes

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

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

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