

Monday, May 18, 2020

To: Governor J.B. Pritzker
Senate President Don Harmon
Senate GOP Leader Bill Brady
House Speaker Michael Madigan
House GOP Leader Jim Durkin

As we live through these uncertain times, we are grateful for the work each of your offices are doing during these unprecedented times to keep us safe. This pandemic reaffirms for us that leadership matters. It underscores the important role state government plays in the day-to-day lives of millions of Illinoisans across the state. They are counting on you.

Despite all the uncertainty we are facing, there are some things that remain constant:

- Overwhelming public support for fair maps has withstood the test of time, for more than a decade, and its popularity transcends party lines.
- Over the course of a decade, since the 2009 Illinois Reform Commission recommended that the state shift control of the redistricting process to an independent group, more and more states -- red and blue alike -- continue to remove or scale back the role that sitting lawmakers have in redistricting.
- Illinois' redistricting process has not worked well at all in past decades, in many instances leaving control of our redistricting process to a coin toss, giving one party the power to unilaterally gerrymander.

We understand the current pandemic has shifted priorities. However, years of inaction has resulted in a lack of substantial public debate about gerrymandering and redistricting, a foundational issue upon which our democracy is built.

Today, you can make a pledge to the 75 percent of Illinoisans and the people in the 34 Illinois organizations who support Fair Maps that when the Legislature reconvenes, an effort is undertaken to make meaningful legislative reforms to improve our redistricting before the next remap. The Census Bureau's request to Congress to delay sending census data to states until July 31st, 2021 could force a partisan back-up commission to control the next remap, without input from one of the major political parties or the Governor's office. We believe you all will agree that is far from the ideal way to have maps drawn and we hope you will work with us on improvements soon that boost equity, transparency and independence in the process.

We are asking each of you to work with us. Together, let's send a message to the overwhelming majority of Illinoisans who support fair maps that we will make every effort to respond to their long-held desire for an independent redistricting process.

People are looking for certainty; for a reason to have more faith in their elected officials and to believe their voices are being heard. Let's give them some hope in these troubling times.

Sincerely,

The Illinois Redistricting Collaborative

Adlai Stevenson Center on Democracy

AARP

Asian Americans Advancing Justice

Better Government Association

BPI

Campaign Legal Center

CHANGE Illinois

Chicago Coalition for the Homeless

Chicago Urban League

Chicago Votes

Citizens Advocacy Center

Common Cause IL

John Howard Association

Latino Policy Forum

NWSOFA

Reform for Illinois

Illinois Chamber of Commerce

Illinois Farm Bureau

Illinois PIRG

League of Women Voters Illinois

Metropolitan Planning Council

Mujeres Latinas en Accion

NAACP Chicago South Side Branch

The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) North Shore

Princeton Gerrymandering Project

The Redistricting Network

Represent.Us - Illinois

A Safe Haven

Small Business Advocacy Council

Union League Club

Unite America - Chicago Chapter

United Nations Association of Greater Chicago

Workers Center for Racial Justice