

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Lawmakers disenfranchise Illinoisans with flawed maps**

CHICAGO--Supermajority lawmakers have approved new state representative and senate districts that undercount tens of thousands of Illinoisans and prioritize incumbent protection over the interests of the people of the state. Lawmakers pushed through passage of the maps with an utter disregard for government transparency and public input.

CHANGE Illinois strongly objects to lawmakers passing new state House and Senate district maps based on insufficient data and we urge Gov. J.B. Pritzker to veto these maps and stand up for counting every Illinoisan and giving them equitable representation for the next 10 years.

Legislators said the maps were drawn using American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year sampling data as their foundation. Based on the 2020 census overall population number for Illinois recently released by the Census Bureau, we know 41,877 people were not accounted for in these maps.

It will be ironic if supermajority lawmakers choose to wait for the full census count before approving a new congressional district map for Illinois.

Despite months of promising an inclusive process driven by community input, lawmakers' actions in the final days removed any uncertainty of their real intent. The drafts of the adopted maps were released Thursday night with hearings scheduled a little more than 14 hours later, giving residents and community groups an impossible timeline to understand and react to what was proposed. Data for the maps were released with even less time.

Lawmakers would not respond to community groups or answer questions until they released the final maps Thursday night. Throughout repeated hearings over the course of most of the remap process, lawmakers ignored and refused to answer urgent questions posed by community advocates and good government groups about:

- the full scope and types of data used
- how maps were devised
- the boundaries
- how many and which majority-minority districts were created

Lawmakers claimed to have reached out to thousands of community groups to engage in the map-drawing process, but the vast majority of the hearings were held during working hours on short notice and were marked by a dramatic lack of public participation.

At the eleventh hour, lawmakers made superficial changes to the maps, claiming they were the result of community engagement, despite far more opposition from groups representing every community in Illinois.

But the foundational issue remains that these maps were drawn without the benefit of complete census data intended for and historically used in Illinois for redistricting. Excluding 41,877 people is the equivalent of excluding populations the size of Calumet City, Moline, or Buffalo Grove.

ACS data collection does not have the benefit of the historic, people-powered effort and state funding that the census did to ensure communities were counted, especially in Black communities. Knowing how important it was to ensure communities were counted accurately, Illinois invested \$47.8 million and worked with 400 community and civil rights organizations to ensure an accurate count to aid lawmakers in drawing fair and accurate maps. Historically, immigrant, Black and other communities of color have benefitted from the efforts of trusted partners reaching out in extensive census efforts to ensure they are counted.

Our state's fastest growing populations, Asian American and Latinx communities, as well as the fastest growing counties of Kendall, Kane, Champaign, and Monroe, also are highly likely to be undercounted in the ACS 5-year estimates.

Using ACS data was not lawmakers only choice. Despite being given advice and options to seek relief from state courts by National Conference of State Legislatures' experts, lawmakers ignored the recommendation.

More than a year ago, the Census Bureau rolled out an adjusted timeline to ensure an accurate count in response to unprecedented challenges. California, Oregon and Michigan sought relief from constitutional redistricting deadlines from their state courts. While Illinois officials had the same option, they chose to proceed with the remap without the census count.

The proponents of these maps like to say they're protecting the rights of people of color. But is drawing maps that are intended to help incumbents win helping people of color who are challengers? How are candidates of color helped by maps designed by, and for, incumbents?

The vote to adopt these maps will disenfranchise tens of thousands of voices for a decade by creating representative maps that do not include them. Again we ask, how is this equity for Illinois?

Everyone should count. Everyone deserves representation. Illinois deserves equitable redistricting.

Rather than disenfranchise Illinoisans, we again urge Gov. J.B. Pritzker to fulfill his repeated pledges to veto any partisan map, but especially one built from an undercount of Illinoisans. The people of Illinois want maps where everyone is represented.