**No Congressional remapping this year likely this year likely maintains GOP edge**

By WisPolitics.com

State legislative lines have been redrawn for 2024 and signed into law by Democrat Gov. Tony Evers.

So, shouldn't congressional lines be redrawn too, given that Republicans hold a 6-2 partisan advantage in the House delegation despite Wisconsin's purple state status?

The short answer from the now-liberal Wisconsin Supreme Court? No. That means that Republicans are likely to hold an advantage after the November elections, even if Democrats manage to flip western Wisconsin's 3rd Congressional District.

The justices earlier this month rejected a request to redraw Wisconsin’s congressional lines ahead of the 2024 elections.

The court didn’t offer an explanation for its decision to deny the petition from a group of Democratic voters that had hoped the justices would redraw the lines after tossing out the legislative maps that were used in the 2022 elections.

Conservative Justice Rebecca Bradley took a shot at her liberal colleagues even though she agreed with their vote against taking the case, arguing they had incentivized “litigants to bring politically
divisive cases” regardless of their legal merit.

“While the court rightfully denies this motion, it likely won’t be long until the new majority flexes its political power again to advance a partisan agenda despite the damage inflicted on the independence and integrity of the court,” Bradley wrote in a concurring opinion that was joined by fellow conservative Annette Ziegler.

The Democratic voters had hoped to build off the state Supreme Court’s December ruling that the legislative maps Republican lawmakers drew were unconstitutional. As part of that decision, the liberal majority ruled the “least change” approach the court had required in drawing new maps ahead of the 2022 elections wasn’t valid. The suit targeting the congressional lines argued that because that standard had been thrown out, there was no justification to keep in place congressional lines based upon the same principle.

But the new petition didn’t allege a constitutional violation with the congressional lines that produced a 6-2 GOP majority in the state’s House delegation after the 2022 elections. Legal observers suggested that would make it difficult to get the justices to take up the case.
What’s more, the challenge to the congressional lines wasn’t filed until mid-January, compressing the window for the court to consider the request with nomination papers set to be circulated starting in mid-April.

By comparison, the challenge to the legislative lines was filed in August.

The suit, filed by the Washington, D.C.-based Elias Law Group, argued the current map “subjects Wisconsin voters to intolerable partisan unfairness” and asked the justices to take into consideration partisan balance if they ordered new maps drawn.

The brief argued the 2011 congressional map “had a marked partisan skew” that ensured Republicans always won five seats and Democrats three. Republicans won a 5-3 advantage under all five elections in which that map was used.

The congressional map put in place in 2011 stemmed from an agreement struck by the then-members of the state’s House delegation. It shored up western Wisconsin’s 3rd CD for then-U.S. Rep. Ron Kind, D-La Crosse, while adding more GOP territory to the 7th CD in northern Wisconsin, which had just been won by Republican Sean Duffy. That was accomplished, in part, by taking Stevens Point out of the 7th CD and moving it into the 3rd.

Republicans approved the map along party lines, and then-GOP Gov. Scott Walker signed it into law.

After the court issued its “least change” directive in 2021, parties submitted proposed congressional maps. Conservative Justice Brian Hagedorn then sided with the court’s three liberals in selecting a proposal from Democratic Gov. Tony Evers.

Republicans sought to have liberal Justice Janet Protasiewicz recuse herself from the case, and she didn’t participate in the ruling. But she wrote in a separate decision that’s because she wasn’t a member of the court when it put the lines in place two years ago, making the motion to recuse moot.

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