

The Honorable Justices of the Wisconsin Supreme Court
c/o Clerk of the Supreme Court
PO Box 1688
Madison, WI 53701

RE: Petition 20-03

Dear Honorable Justices:

My name is Beth Sampson Bauer. I am a proud born and raised Wisconsinite, as well as a historically independent voter who lives in the WOW county of Ozaukee. However, I am now speaking out as part of the majority of voters in the state who have been disenfranchised. My district has become so gerrymandered that my vote no longer counts, except for statewide votes. I am writing to oppose Petition 20-03 submitted by the Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty (WILL) regarding the process for hearing legal challenges to open and transparent redistricting. I have been an active participant in creating a non-partisan website called "Community Candidates" which supports open transparent communication between the candidates where all the voters in the Ozaukee districts can participate and see candidates' answers to their questions and concerns. We are strong advocates for open, transparent, participatory government where every voter's voice is equally represented. We believe that gerrymandering as stated by SCOTUS, is "highly partisan by any measure" and "incompatible with democratic principles," although it may be legal. We support independent, nonpartisan redistricting regardless of which parties are in power.

There is no way to sugar-coat the helpless and dejected feeling of disenfranchisement as a part of the majority of the states' voters, who have voted Democratic in the last two state-wide elections, but are significantly underrepresented in non-statewide positions due to embedded partisan districting maps. We are living through a pandemic, a period of social unrest and major elections during both. We have seen the inaction of the Republican legislature and the conflict with our Democratic governor who oversteps his authority, as well as a Supreme Court that has constantly been brought in to make the decisions for the residents, rather than their elected representatives. As such, we see it as a very "activist" and "partisan" court, which takes a position on legislative issues rather than declining a case and making our elected legislative bodies do their jobs and work together. The court's decisions are doing the legislating. Therefore, we feel disenfranchised by every level of government as well as creating an unfortunate distrust in the Supreme Court itself. Any new rules that will further distance the citizens from their right to speak and be fairly represented or decrease our opportunities for transparency in the representation process will further erode our confidence in the Supreme Court.

Therefore, I oppose this petition for the following reasons:

- 1) I see no reason to change the current rules in a way that would shorten the process or opportunities to establish a record and transparency of the evidence and arguments for Wisconsin citizens' representation in their government.
- 2) I am concerned that hearings about voter redistricting will be focused on the two political parties where we have already seen gerrymandering by both parties, depending on which is in power, rather than concern for fair representation of the voters themselves. In addition, I am very concerned that there may not be allowance for the voters themselves to speak or non-profit public interest groups. It appears to be extremely partisan with a lack of concern for fairness and opportunity for all concerned.
- 3) It is confusing with a lack of direction for the voters to see the rules that will be followed in determining our representation. The rules should be fair, laid out, transparent and abided. Our representation in our government is the hallmark of our democracy. Rules should not be determined by the court at the time, but by the voters.

Thank you for your consideration,

Beth Sampson Bauer
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