



For Immediate Release
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Hansen Seeking Sponsors for Redistricting Reform Bill
Bill would restore fairness and competition to legislative elections

(Madison)—State Senator Dave Hansen (D-Green Bay) announced today that he is seeking sponsors for legislation to create a non-partisan redistricting process. Seeking sponsors marks the next step toward introduction of the bill.

Hansen has been a long-time advocate of redistricting reform that would take the responsibility out of the hands of legislators and political parties and place it with the non-partisan Legislative Reference Bureau.

“Allowing politicians to draw district boundaries makes it too easy for the majority party to gerrymander the maps to their long-term advantage,” said Hansen. “And when parties engage in that behavior it is the voters and the people who are hurt because they are no longer able to check extreme behavior by the majority party.”

In 2011 Republican leaders and staff worked in secret outside the Capitol to draw district lines designed to lock in their legislative majorities for ten years or more. As a result, in the 2012 election Republicans took over 61% of the seats in the State Assembly despite winning less than 49% of the vote.

“Gerrymandering as we are seeing it practiced is a form of cheating,” said Hansen. “Neither political party should be able to lock in their power by creating an unfair advantage in drawing district lines.”

A federal court ruled the Republican maps are unconstitutional and confirmed that they were drawn by the Republicans in 2011 to help them lock in their control of the State Senate and Assembly.

“They drew the maps in secret outside the Capitol for the purpose of ensuring that they would keep control of the Legislature despite the wishes of Wisconsin voters--essentially making Wisconsin a one-party state.”

Hansen said making the change is important regardless of how the Supreme Court decides the case.

“Ultimately, the current system needs to be replaced regardless of how the U.S. Supreme Court rules because no one who looks at the evidence objectively is disputing that the maps drawn by Republican leaders are unfair to the voters. If competition is a good thing in other aspects of society then it is good for our political system. And that’s what we want, fair and competitive elections.”