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Brew Pubs around Wisconsin Kickoff 'Fair Maps Beer Week'

MADISON — The Wisconsin Fair Maps Coalition announced today a collaboration with brew pubs across the state kicking off 'Fair Maps Beer Week', a campaign effort to educate voters about gerrymandering, by holding multiple outdoor events on Sept. 19 & Sept. 20.

Collaborating breweries include Captain Pabst Pilot House in Milwaukee, McFleshman's Brewing Co. in Appleton, Brewery Nonic and Zymurgy Brewing Co. in Menomonie and Hop & Barrel Brewing in Hudson (Sept. 19) and Delta Beer Lab in Madison (Sept. 20). Social distancing and safety precautions will take place at each event.

"Wisconsin deserves fair maps. This collaboration is elevating the issue of gerrymandering and educating voters in a novel way," said Holly Bland, deputy director of the Fair Elections Project. "We believe that it's important for Wisconsinites to understand the impacts of rigged maps and want to expand the conversation to those who might not understand the impact gerrymandering has on our communities."

Gerrymandering is when a political party in power redraws the boundaries of voting districts after the federal Census in ways to give the ruling party a further advantage. It rigs the political game in favor of one-party rule. It decreases competition. It muffles the voices of citizens who are in the minority. It deprives Wisconsinites of equal representation. And it leads to hyper-partisanship.

"Democracy requires representative government," said (Pio) Tim Piotrowski, owner of Delta Beer Lab. "When elected officials choose their constituents — not allowing the constituents to choose their representatives — democracy suffers innumerable harms, and citizens lose faith in the system."

"There is a huge groundswell of support for banning gerrymandering in Wisconsin," said Carlene Bechen, the Fair Maps Organizer for Wisconsin Voices and the Wisconsin Fair Maps Coalition. "Activists in every corner of the state and of all different political affiliations have been working hard to get this issue on the ballot. They just want a level playing field, and they're sick and tired of having their voting districts chopped up to favor one party or another."

Having a fair independent nonpartisan way to do redistricting is overwhelmingly popular among Wisconsinites. A Marquette Law School poll in early 2019 found that 72 percent of Wisconsinites wanted to ban gerrymandering. That included 63 percent of Republicans and 76 percent of Independents. Resolutions have been passed by 54 county boards and voters in 17 counties have voted overwhelmingly in favor of referendums asking the State Legislature to pass nonpartisan redistricting legislation to create a process similar to the one they use in Iowa. And there are currently 11 more on the November 2020 ballot.

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The Wisconsin Fair Maps Coalition is composed of organizational leaders from member groups working to fight partisan gerrymandering and to promote independent redistricting. The Coalition's current work focuses on supporting proposed legislation to make the redistricting process in Wisconsin independent, educating the public about the consequences of rigged maps and partisan gerrymandering, and insisting the legislature redraw the maps in 2021, following the Census, in an open and transparent manner.

To learn more about the Wisconsin Fair Maps Coalition, visit www.fairmapswi.com, or @WIFairMapsCoalition on Facebook, and @WIFairMapsCo on Twitter and Instagram.