

# Fair Elections Project

## Wisconsin



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## Plaintiffs call for new maps for Wisconsin legislative districts

**MADISON**—Wisconsin citizens who recently won a federal trial, resulting in Wisconsin’s legislative district maps being ruled unconstitutional for being an illegal partisan gerrymander, today asked the U.S. District Court to redraw those maps in advance of the next round of state legislative elections.

“The court’s verdict last month was clear – Wisconsin’s legislative maps are unconstitutional, and the GOP majority violated the rights of Wisconsin’s citizens when they adopted the map,” said Sachin Chheda, Director of the Fair Election Project, which organized and launched the lawsuit. “Today the plaintiffs formally asked that the maps be replaced, so we can have free and fair elections in the state of Wisconsin. The citizens of Wisconsin should have a chance to elect a government which represents us.”

The ruling a month ago in *Whitford v. Gill* came after a May 2016 trial. A majority of the federal three-judge panel overseeing the case granted victory to 12 Wisconsin Democrats who filed suit more than a year ago. This ruling represents the first time a map has been overturned by a federal court for being a political gerrymander.

In a separate filing, the State of Wisconsin (which lost the trial) today asked for any further action in the District Court to be put on hold until their U.S. Supreme Court appeal is heard and decided. The State is asking for the high court to overturn the trial court’s decision and to allow the Legislature to redraw maps after the Supreme Court process is concluded. The citizen plaintiffs, in contrast, note that precedent suggests that the redrawing process should take place *during* the appeal, rather than after, in order to ensure maps are in place in a timely manner. The plaintiffs also asked the court to draw the maps themselves, rather than allow another biased effort by a legislative majority that has already been shown to violate the law.

“Every Wisconsin citizen deserves the right to have their vote count,” said Sen. Dale Schultz, a former Republican Majority Leader of the Wisconsin State Senate, who co-chairs the Fair Elections Project. “The plaintiffs won at trial, they won twice earlier in the process when the state tried to short-circuit this case, and now they are likely to win at the Supreme Court.”

“What happened in Wisconsin in 2011 was an egregious violation of our state’s moral values,” said Sen. Tim Cullen, a former Democratic Majority Leader of the Wisconsin State Senate, who serves as the other co-chair. “Instead of voters choosing their elected officials, the Republican majority in Wisconsin decided they would entrench themselves in power despite the views of voters. The court has said clearly that will not stand.”

Originally filed in July 2015, the lawsuit demanded district maps for the state Legislature be thrown out, calling the line-drawing process “secretive” and “partisan,” and the maps unconstitutional for overly advantaging one party. The lawsuit fulfills a call issued by the U.S. Supreme Court in previous cases for a standard to measure how much partisan gerrymandering is allowable, and shows how Wisconsin’s map is far outside acceptable redistricting norms.

The plaintiffs are represented by an all-star team of attorneys, including Peter Earle and Doug Poland as co-lead trial counsel, Prof. Nicholas Stephanopoulos of the University of Chicago Law School, Michele Odorizzi of Mayer Brown, and a team from the Campaign Legal Center, including Gerry Hebert and Ruth Greenwood.

More information about the lawsuit and campaign can be found at the Wisconsin Fair Elections website at [fairelectionsproject.org](http://fairelectionsproject.org), or on Facebook and Twitter using [@WIFairElections](https://www.facebook.com/WIFairElections).

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