

**MAYOR**  
Keith Pekau

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August 30, 2021

Members of the Illinois House and Senate:

It has been said that in Illinois, elected representatives pick their voters instead of the other way around. This is true anywhere that politicians draw redistricting maps, especially if one party has a heavy upper hand; no matter the party.

Every ten years, Illinois lawmakers - without substantial public input or the use of an independent commission - have the power to redraw their own state legislative districts and protect their seats against challengers.

This gerrymandering process results in legislators purposefully creating unfair districts that benefit political aspirations and harm our democracy. Gerrymandering predetermines outcomes, increases polarization, and produces uncompetitive elections, career politicians, and governmental deadlock, all because politicians have little to no reason to fear the consequences of being thrown out of office. Illinois is a leading example of the harm that gerrymandering does to our democracy. Gerrymandering is not a Democrat or Republican issue — gerrymandering is a democracy issue.

Elections should represent the will of the people, not politicians. We need maps that are drawn to truly represent the best interests of people across the state and allow them to meaningfully participate in our democracy. We need to empower communities to elect candidates of their choosing.

To do this, Illinoisans deserve a truly transparent and equitable mapping process. Unfortunately, since the start of the redistricting process on March 17, 2021, what we have witnessed thus far does not bode well for a transparent and equitable process.

A decade ago, during the last redistricting, voters in Orland Park were disenfranchised through the use of gerrymandering. Orland Park is a municipality located in southwestern Cook County in northeastern Illinois. Orland Park is a part of the Chicago metropolitan area and has an estimated population of 58,000.

As one of the south suburban Cook County's largest municipalities, it is important that Orland Park's representation in the Illinois General Assembly be unified in the smallest amount of legislative districts as possible. This allows the citizens of Orland Park to elect

representatives that more directly reflect our community's interests and concerns. It is important that district lines be compact, contiguous, and impartial to political party.

The redistricting map a decade ago divided the Village of Orland Park into three Senate and four House Districts. The map circulated yesterday, continues to divide Orland Park into three Senate Districts and three House Districts. Instead of the current this map, any future district lines should closely align with the municipal boundaries of the Village of Orland Park instead of the proposed non-contiguous and non-compact configuration.

Before Illinois lawmakers can recover voters' record-low trust in their political leadership, they must first recover voters' trust in the legitimacy of the districts they're elected to represent.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keith Pekau". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "K" and a long, sweeping tail.

Keith Pekau  
Mayor, Orland Park