

Testimony on latest proposed congressional maps

Andy Douglas

to redistrictingcommittee,

Committee Members and Staff --

I must strongly object to the latest proposed maps which would pit Rep. Newman and Rep. Casten against one another in the same district. They are two of our strongest progressive voices in Congress and two of the strongest champions of the President's Build Back Better agenda, in particular the legislation's absolutely paramount climate provisions. Losing either of them in the House would be a great blow not only to Illinois but to federal policy overall.

I understand the criticisms you have received for drawing maps that may be seen to protect Democratic control of the House. Like the vast majority of Democrats, I believe the US needs strong protections against partisan and racial gerrymandering. However, Republicans do not believe this -- not a single one voted for such protections in Congress, and if they retake control they will only entrench GOP-favored gerrymandering. Republican control will also jeopardize countless other policies vital to preserving democracy and the habitability of the planet, among other urgent needs.

In the absence of federal redistricting laws, Republicans will continue to commit far harsher gerrymandering in states they control and to use that unjust power to far more harmful ends. Therefore, in the absence of federal redistricting laws, I urge you not to unilaterally disarm: Keeping control of Congress matters more than assuaging calls for "bipartisanship," especially when many of those voices are speaking in bad faith.

Draw maps that keep our Democratic delegation in Congress as strong as possible --

including keeping Rep. Casten and Rep. Newman in separate districts where both may continue to serve at the pleasure of their constituents. This is necessary to preserve and strengthen our democracy, including by establishing national standards for redistricting, and to protect our nation against the authoritarianism of the GOP.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Andy Douglas (he/him; she/her; they/them)