



CHANGE Illinois testimony on second congressional map draft

October 25, 2021

CHANGE Illinois Action Fund Testimony

To: House Redistricting Committee

From: CHANGE Illinois Action Fund

Thank you, Chair Hernandez and committee members, for providing our organization with the opportunity to come before you to weigh in on the second draft congressional map. My name is Ryan Tolley and I am the Policy Director for the CHANGE Illinois Action Fund and CHANGE Illinois.

We remain highly concerned about the lack of transparency and public engagement during the congressional mapping process. Again, the redistricting process in Illinois is seemingly designed to reduce the public's ability to participate.

The second draft map was released on Saturday afternoon along with a press release that mentioned hearings without informing people of when and where those hearings would take place. It wasn't until Monday, October 25th at 11:49 AM that our organization received an email notice from House staff that a time and location were set for today's hearing. Public notice for the hearing was not given out until 3:56 PM on the same day as the email notification. The schedule for the hearings could have been easily set and published back when the veto session was announced months ago. Instead, the public has been left in the dark and had little opportunity to weigh in on the second draft. At the time of submitting this testimony, we still have no details about when or where the Senate hearing will take place.

The second draft increased its partisan leanings while reducing the competitiveness and compactness of Illinois congressional districts. According to the [Princeton Gerrymandering Project's \(PGP\) analysis](#) the second draft scored worse than the first, receiving an F in all three of the categories that PGP analyzed. Several of the districts remain so sprawling, covering hundreds of miles, that it will make interaction between constituents and their member of Congress challenging to say the least.

Further, there is not a single competitive congressional district in the second proposal. The second draft makes major changes to create additional assurances that districts 6, 14, and 17 would no longer be competitive, solidifying Democratic control of those districts while maintaining the strong probability that Democrats would be elected in 14 districts and Republicans in 3 districts.

Predetermining winners and losers in every single district is undemocratic and leaves all voters without choices, undermining the very elections that allow voters to hold officials accountable. We urge this committee to remove personal and partisan interest from this mapping process and center the process



around community input. In order to truly have free and fair elections, as guaranteed by our state's constitution, we cannot eliminate voters' choices for partisan gain.

While it is not ideal to delay congressional mapping any further, the process needs to be reformed from top to bottom to become one that truly celebrates the diversity of the state and prioritizes input from communities across the state. We must put community interest above partisan interests.

Given that lawmakers already have pushed back the primary election for the 2022 election, there's still time to engage the public in a meaningful way. Fortunately, there is no constitutional or statutory deadline that dictates a map must be done by the end of veto session. Lawmakers will need, and should take, more than just a few days to meaningfully engage Illinoisans and build a process that is truly about doing what is best for the voters and residents of Illinois.

Thank you,

Ryan Tolley
Policy Director
CHANGE Illinois Action Fund