
From: Juliet Lau [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, January 4, 2022 3:30 PM
To: House & Governmental Affairs
Cc: Juliet Laughlin
Subject: UNO redistricting comment

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Dear Chairwoman Sharon Hewitt, Chairman John Stefanski, and the House and Governmental Affairs Committee,

Thank you for all the time you have been putting into this Road Show process.

My name is Juliet Eun Laughlin, and my husband and I have lived in the French Quarter for 14 years. I have been a property manager for 14 years, I am a homeowner, a wife, mother, and grandmother. I also volunteer on a regular basis in my community, and attend many neighborhood events.

I am a constituent of Rep. Troy Carter in CD2. Congressional District 2 looks like this:



It stretches from north of Baton Rouge, down to Orleans Parish, across the Mississippi River, and winds north again to Lake Saint Catherine. Redistricting rules have population *as well as* "communities of interest" requirements. My district falls woefully short on the second criteria; *however*, it was found compliant with voter representation guidelines by the Obama Justice Department, so I accept the boundaries. I have attached below a lawsuit currently in Maryland for abuse of redistricting laws. It is an example of the importance of following the law. "Politicians shouldn't get to pick their voters."

Based upon the very small change in our state's population I believe our Congressional district boundaries do not need major changes. Please keep the boundaries as they are. Boundaries are supposed to be redrawn *only* if the Census shows a greater than 5% change. Only two districts meet that criteria -- and only by 5.2% in CD6, 6.2% in CD4.

Gerrymandering based upon race was declared illegal by the SCOTUS in their 1993

decision, ***Shaw vs Reno***. It also hurts voter confidence at a time when voter confidence is at an all-time low. The Cook Partisan Voting Index shows that our districts already are extremely balanced according to party. There is only 14-25% more Republicans or Democrats in each of the six districts, not a huge difference. Please keep our boundaries intact. It is fair to all voting groups.

Thank you, and God bless,

Juliet Laughlin
New Orleans, Louisiana

DECEMBER 21, 2021 | JUDICIAL WATCH

Judicial Watch Sues Maryland for Gerrymandered Congressional Districts – Voters Challenge Unconstitutional Plan

(Washington, DC) – Judicial Watch announced today that it filed a lawsuit on behalf of 12 registered Maryland voters who object to Maryland’s 2021 congressional redistricting plan on the grounds that it diminishes their rights to participate in elections for the U.S. Congress on an equal basis with other Maryland voters, in violation of the Maryland Constitution ([*Parrott et al. v Lamone et al.*](#) (No. 8683397)). The lawsuit details:

Maryland’s recent history of partisan gerrymandering is no secret. [its 2011] congressional district map...remains one of the most notorious partisan gerrymanders in U.S. history. A federal district judge openly doubted that it could provide “fair and effective representation for all citizens.” Another called it “absurd” to suggest “that there is a community of interest” in a district described as a “Rorschach-like eyesore.” [A federal appeals court] famously described the same district as “a broken-winged pterodactyl, lying prostrate across the center of the state.”

The lawsuit relates that a bipartisan commission recommended a map to Maryland Governor Larry Hogan on November 5 that he approved, but the legislature passed a different proposal in a straight party-line vote. On December 9, 2021, Hogan vetoed this proposal, and, the same day, the state legislature overrode his veto on another party-line vote.

Judicial Watch’s suit points out that the new map “is similar to the gerrymandered map that was the subject of universal abuse ten years ago as the worst gerrymander in the

country.” The lawsuit details how the map distorts district lines, deviates from and crosses existing political boundaries, and fractures and divides communities of interest:

Maryland’s Plan splits Anne Arundel County into three congressional districts. The middle of Anne Arundel County is ... connected to the Eastern Shore’s First Congressional District. The two areas are held together solely via the Chesapeake Bay Bridge.... Baltimore is divided among three congressional districts.... Montgomery County is divided among four congressional districts.... A roughly 20-mile trip north on the Baltimore-Washington Parkway from Cheverly, Maryland, a DC suburb, to Jessup, Maryland, an area outside [BWI] Airport, would cross congressional boundaries six times and lead a traveler through five different congressional districts.

The lawsuit highlights how Maryland’s Fifth District features an “umbilical cord” designed to include Democratic voters in College Park to “counterbalance” the more Republican voters in the southern part of the state. And the Sixth Congressional District connects Garrett County, “the westernmost rural county which borders Pennsylvania and West Virginia,” with Potomac, Maryland, a wealthy DC suburb:

As a federal court commented about the Sixth District in 2011, which made a similar linkage between these populations, it brings together voters “who have an interest in farming, mining, tourism, paper production, and the hunting of bears ... with voters who abhor the hunting of bears and do not know what a coal mine or paper mill even looks like.” These two groups have “different climate[s], root for different sports teams, and read different newspapers.”

Outside experts agree that the plan is flawed, with the nonpartisan Princeton Gerrymandering Project giving it a grade of “F” for fairness and geographic compactness. In 2020, Republicans accounted for approximately 35% of Maryland’s Congressional votes, but they’re unlikely to win even a single seat under this plan. This outcome wouldn’t be possible without political gerrymandering.

Judicial Watch argues that the plan violates Article 7 of the Maryland Declaration of Rights, which guarantees voters the right to “free and frequent” elections and the “right of

suffrage.” Article 7 has been held to be “even more protective of rights of political participation than the provisions of the federal Constitution.”

Additionally, the plan violates Article III, Section 4 of the Maryland Constitution, which provides, “Each legislative district shall consist of adjoining territory, be compact in form, and of substantially equal population. Due regard shall be given to natural boundaries and the boundaries of political subdivisions.”

“Unfortunately, Democrats in the legislature went beyond politics into abuse of power in setting up Maryland’s gerrymandered congressional maps,” stated Judicial Watch President Tom Fitton. “This lawsuit seeks to protect the rights of all voters and citizens. Simply put: politicians shouldn’t get to pick their voters.”

In June 2015, Judicial Watch filed a [lawsuit](#) challenging the constitutionality of Maryland’s gerrymandered congressional district map in federal court. The lawsuit was filed on behalf of voters in each of Maryland’s congressional districts—including Maryland Delegate Neil Parrott, who is also the lead plaintiff in this new state-court lawsuit. In December 2016, Judicial Watch filed a [brief](#) in the U.S. Supreme Court in response to Maryland’s attempt to retain the gerrymandered voter districting plan.

Judicial Watch is being assisted by William J. Holtzinger, Esq., of Frederick, Maryland.

https://www.judicialwatch.org/jw-sues-md-gerrymandering/?utm_source=deployer&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=tipsheet&utm_term=members