



MILWAUKEE COUNTY INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE

THE HONORABLE JUDGES

JEAN A. DiMOTTO • CHARLES N. CLEVERT, JR. • JAMES A. GRAMLING, JR.
CHARLES F. KAHN, JR. • FREDERICK P. KESSLER • MARY M. KUHNMUENCH

IRC Transmittal Memo

TO: Chairwoman Marcelia Nicholson
Supervisor Anthony Staskunas
Steve Cady, Policy & Research Director

FROM: Judge Jean DiMotto
Chairwoman, Independent Redistricting Committee

DATE: Friday, September 24, 2021

The Independent Redistricting Committee (IRC) met virtually in 2021 on August 16, August 27, September 3, September 10, September 15, September 17 and September 23. While all seven meetings were open to public comment, two were held in the evening to facilitate public input.

The IRC directed the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) to create redistricted maps according to the following priorities drawn from among redistricting guidelines:

1. Honoring the intent of the Voting Rights Act of 1965,
2. Respecting municipal boundaries;
3. Equalizing the population between districts within +/- four percent;
4. Making the districts as compact as possible.

The first priority was set within the current political atmosphere of laws being passed in many parts of the country that have the effect of curtailing or suppressing voting rights of minority populations. We were also mindful of the Wisconsin redistricting case of Baldus v. Members of the Wis. Gov't Accountability Bd., 849 F.Supp. 2d 840 (E.D. Wis. 2012), particularly Section 3.5: Voting Rights Act Claim of Latinos.

In identifying these four priorities we also relied on the Wisconsin Counties Association's County Decennial Redistricting Handbook for 2021 which instructs counties to begin the redistricting process with a "clean slate" based on §59.10, Wis. Stat. (WCA Handbook, p. 3.)

Since we started with a clean slate, we did not consider the current map of supervisory districts, incumbency or whether a district was viewed as conservative or liberal. This was consonant with the Board's ordinance creating the IRC as an independent entity which we construed as a directive to remain free of politics and guide our decisions on clearly expressed policies and redistricting guidelines.

Lastly, we based the four priorities on the 2020 census data. That data revealed that Milwaukee County is more diverse and more integrated than it was in 2010. Moreover, it is nearly equal in terms of the number of white people and the number of people of color.

Reflecting that, the map that the IRC is recommending has nine districts which are majority white and nine districts that are majority minority. As to the latter, six districts are majority Black, two districts are majority Hispanic/Latinx, and one district is majority-minority with no one minority group predominating.

Because the greatest population growth in the last ten years has been in the Hispanic/Latinx population, we did look at the possibility of three districts, but this would have significantly diluted the voting power of the Hispanic/Latinx population in two of the three proposed districts. Moreover, the Hispanic/Latinx leaders who gave verbal or written input to us strongly favored two majority-minority districts. We also regarded two districts as compliant with the Voting Rights Act as interpreted in the Baldus case whereas three districts probably would not have been.

Municipal boundaries were given as much respect as was allowed given the first and third priorities. All districts have equalized population within +/- four percent deviation. And the districts were drawn as compactly as possible given the three other priorities.

We hope our work, done with the expert technical assistance of SEWRPC, is of service to you.

cc Margaret Daun, Corporation Counsel
Kevin Muhs, Executive Director of SEWRPC
IRC Committee Members