

With Us, For Us Redistricting Amendment

Our State. Our Vote. Our Maps.

OVERVIEW

The *With Us, For Us Redistricting Amendment* is about co-creating an inclusive representative democracy where there is greater parity in how Minnesotans experience democracy. It is part of an ongoing grassroots solidarity movement to center policies on people and communities, not political parties, politicians or national/local special interests. It's about co-creating a democracy that is truly of, by, and for the people, and working in partnership with those elected officials who share our values. Those values include centering solutions on people and impacted Minnesotans before party, self, and special interests. In this movement all Minnesotans have a direct say in policy solutions, not just politicians, political parties or national/local special interest.

Power doesn't give up power easily. Not everything labeled "reform" is meaningful reform that serves the interests of people and communities.

The process used to imagine and build what is possible, is as important as what is created. Who is included in defining the reform and who is not matters in co-creating an inclusive, accountable and healthy multi-racial, multi-generational democracy.

With Us, For Us Redistricting Amendment Bill Components & Approach

Not all Minnesotans experience democracy or representation the same way. Impacted communities, stakeholders generally asked for three key things, 1) a solution centering people, 2) moving the needle regardless of whether a proposed constitutional amendment succeeded, and 3) an approach that came from us, impacted Minnesotans, our stakeholders and allies from across the state - not politicians or political party ideas of what was possible.

The level of resources needed to successfully move a constitutional amendment is beyond the reach of most community groups/organizations. Minnesota is not a ballot initiative state. This means any proposed constitutional amendment is squarely in the hands of politicians. If they don't want the change, it will not move. To date, no MN state legislative body has created an independent citizen redistricting commission centering us. Power doesn't like to give up power.

The *With Us, For Us Redistricting Amendment* is the result of an over 5yrs of effort to compile and it reflects shared thoughts, ideas and recommendations from statewide partners, stakeholders, impact communities, legislators from both sides of the aisle and chambers, and Minnesotans like you.

The *With Us, For Us Redistricting Amendment* is a both/and win-win approach centering people and communities first. This bill ensures that if the constitutional amendment fails on the ballot, the citizen-led independent redistricting commission defaults to an advisory commission.



This may not align with what politicians want for campaign talking points, but for us it creates change no matter what. We get to achieve progress and keep pushing for a citizen-led independent commission. It also means that by defaulting to a citizen-led advisory redistricting commission, we:

- Inject greater transparency, accountability, and public participation into the legislative process of drawing our district voting maps;
- Minimize legislators' opportunity to hide behind closed doors without facing public accountability;
- Create a legal structure for a model, process, and redistricting principles that are otherwise not in place to protect our interests in the current legislative process; and
- Provide the court with maps drawn by the citizen-led advisory redistricting commission that draws maps using a model, process and principles least motivate by party interests; and
- Provide the court with guardrails that allow the to focus their review of maps submitted and deciding which aligns best with the redistricting principles established through the creation of the advisory commission.

MODEL

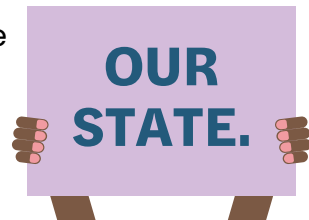
The citizen-led Independent Redistricting Commission in the *With Us, For Us Redistricting Amendment* is rooted in our shared values that Minnesotans can be entrusted with protecting the integrity of the process and their roles as commissioners. We believe in little "d" democracy.

PROCESS

Created from the perspective of constituency needs, and not the desire of politicians to control the outcomes. It maximizes opportunity for transparency, accountability and public participation. It creates opportunity for all Minnesotans in co-creating our district voting maps.

RULES

Drafted and prioritized keeping people-centered without political constraints to the commission to limit the commission's effectiveness.



WHY IT MATTERS - BACKGROUND

In 2018, Common Cause MN convened a solidarity alliance space called the MN Alliance for Democracy in response to the need for a nonpartisan strategic space where grassroots organizations/groups/activists and allies, regardless of partisan affiliation, could come together to bridge differences among us and ensure all Minnesotans experience democracy equitably.

Common Cause MN is both a C3 and a C4, however, we do not endorse political parties or politicians. We believe it is difficult to hold power accountable when we are doorknocking, fundraising, or phonebanking for politicians or political parties.

When we say every Minnesotan deserves a fair say in the policies that affect our everyday lives, we mean just that – all Minnesotans – but right now, how our voting maps have been drawn for at least 6 decades has put that right at risk. In MN, politicians have the power to draw their own electoral maps – a power they could abuse for partisan gain. When politicians can't agree on fair maps, courts can only make minor changes to what's on the table, denying all Minnesotans our right to fair representation. **We've been left with minimum maps for 60 years! Maps that don't see all Minnesotans.**

Since 2018 Common Cause MN has been advocating for a simple solution: drawing our maps through a citizen-led Independent Redistricting Commission. While the *With Us, For Us Redistricting Amendment* leverages best practices and lessons learned from other states, it has been created based on the input and perspective of Minnesotans about what their needs and concern are, and is not a "cookie-cutter" approach based on a state with very different issues and needs.

