

Resolution 2021R-024

By Director O'Halloran

1. WHEREAS, Gerrymandering is a practice by which a dominant political party within a legislative body — such as a state legislature, a city council, or a local school board — attempts to divide the electorate under that body's jurisdiction into districts in such a way as to give that party an electoral majority in a large number of districts while concentrating the voting strength of the opposition in as few districts as possible; and
2. WHEREAS, Gerrymandering has a long, sad history in national, state, politics as a tool to be employed by whatever political party may be in the majority to perpetuate and to expand its political fortunes; and
3. WHEREAS, Gerrymandering undermines American democracy by weighting elections in favor of one party, thereby stifling voters' voices and causing voters to question if their ballots really matter; and
4. WHEREAS, Wisconsin's electoral districts have been redrawn without public input, resulting in heavily gerrymandered districts; and
5. WHEREAS, Funding for public schools in Wisconsin has stagnated under the districts as currently drawn — particularly funding for special education services in Wisconsin, which was described as the worst in the nation during testimony given by national experts before the Blue Ribbon Commission on School Funding, a bipartisan group of state legislators and school district administrators; and
6. WHEREAS, Efforts to redress this lack of sufficient funding on behalf our students have been hampered by the effects of partisan gerrymandering; and
7. WHEREAS, Organizations and citizens throughout the country and across the state have joined in the call for "fair maps," a reform in redistricting; and
8. WHEREAS, Voters in 55 of 72 counties and in dozens of municipalities, representing 80% of Wisconsin's population, have passed referenda or resolutions in support of fair district mapping; and
9. WHEREAS, These referenda passed with a 3-1 margin on average; and
10. WHEREAS, The next round of Wisconsin's legislative redistricting is scheduled to take place during the 2021-23 legislative session; now, therefore be it
11. RESOLVED, That the Milwaukee Board of School Directors join with community groups in demanding that voters be empowered to choose their representatives, rather than representatives choosing their voters; and be it
12. FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Milwaukee Board of School Directors call upon the state legislature to redraw the districts in 2021 in an open and transparent manner that allow the public to engage meaningfully in and to help shape the process; and be it
13. FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Milwaukee Board of School Directors implore the state legislature to embrace democratic principles by welcoming the participation of its members who are independents as well as Democrats and Republicans and by taking into serious consideration the demographic and geographic diversity of the state; and be it

14. FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Milwaukee Board of School Directors direct the Office of Board Governance to send this resolution to the Governor, to the People's Maps Commission, to the Speaker of the State Assembly, and to the President of the State Senate.

January 27, 2021