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## ACLU OF OHIO, LWV-OHIO, AND APRI LAUNCH LEGAL CHALLENGE OVER OHIO PARTISAN GERRYMANDERING

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COLUMBUS, Ohio – The ACLU of Ohio, the American Civil Liberties Union, and Covington & Burling LLP filed a lawsuit today in Ohio Supreme Court challenging Ohio’s newly drawn maps for state House and Senate districts that give extreme and unfair advantage to the Republican Party.

The lawsuit was brought on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Ohio, the Ohio chapter of the A. Philip Randolph Institute, and several individuals. This is the first litigation in the country

challenging a passed statewide map this cycle.

The Ohio Redistricting Commission – which is dominated by Republicans – approved the maps last week in a 5-2 party-line vote, disrespecting the letter and spirit of the constitutional reforms passed overwhelmingly by Ohio voters in 2015. The maps lock in Republican veto-proof supermajorities in both chambers of the Ohio General Assembly.

“If you want a clear lesson in partisan gerrymandering, this is it. This is a brazen abuse of power by the political party that is in control. Talk about the fox guarding the henhouse,” said **Alora Thomas-Lundborg, senior staff attorney with the ACLU’s Voting Rights Project**. “Redistricting should not be a one-sided, rigged political process. Voters should pick their politicians. Politicians should not pick their voters.”

New maps are drawn from a once-in-a-decade redistricting process that determines the allocation of political power and representation at every level of government across the country for the next 10 years.

According to the lawsuit, over the past decade, Republicans have received between 46.2% and 59.7% of the statewide vote. But the enacted map draws 67% of the House districts and 69% of the Senate districts to favor Republicans, assuring Republican veto-proof supermajorities in both chambers.

“This extreme partisan gerrymander is a flagrant violation of the Ohio Constitution. Several majority members of the Redistricting Commission candidly admitted as much, even as they voted to enact this manipulative scheme. The blatant defiance of the reforms that were overwhelmingly passed by Ohio voters just six years ago is not only a violation of law, but is also a slap in the face to the people of this state. We are going to this state’s highest court to ensure that

Ohio voters are able to have a voice in their government,” said **Freda Levenson, legal director of the ACLU of Ohio.**

According to the lawsuit, “This brazen manipulation of district lines for extreme partisan advantage doubly dishonors the voters of this state: by adopting a map that utterly fails to correspond with voters’ preferences as manifested by the vote share of the two major parties’ candidates over the past decade; and by openly defying a constitutional amendment adopted overwhelmingly by Ohio voters just six years ago, which sought to put an end to precisely this kind of extreme partisan gerrymandering.”

“The recently adopted Ohio Senate and Ohio House legislative maps disrespect voters and the Ohio Constitution. Ohioans demonstrated their support for fair, responsive legislative districts overwhelmingly at the ballot box in 2015 and recently through robust participation in the Ohio Redistricting Commission's rushed and chaotic process. After decades of working to end partisan gerrymandering in the Buckeye State, the League of Women Voters of Ohio asks the Ohio Supreme Court to defend the rights of everyday Ohioans to have legislative districts that serve and represent them rather be rigged to favor the short-sighted and selfish interests of political parties and candidates,” said **Jen Miller, president of the League of Women Voters of Ohio.**

“The gerrymandered map that was enacted disproportionately affects minority voters and minority communities and prevents people of color from having a meaningful impact in Ohio politics,” said **Andre Washington, president of the Ohio A. Philip Randolph Institute.**

“The enacted map is a gross violation of the Ohio Constitution,” said **Robert Fram of Covington & Burling.** “The Ohio Constitution requires that the partisan balance of House and Senate districts correspond closely to the statewide preferences of the voters of Ohio. This is an illegal map, plain and simple.”

The case is *League of Women Voters of Ohio v. Ohio Redistricting Commission*.

**PRESS BRIEFING TODAY 3:30 p.m. ET:** Lawyers and plaintiffs in this case will offer brief remarks on today's lawsuit, followed by a question-and-answer period for media.

Watch at <https://aclu.zoom.us/j/81096251402>  
(<https://aclu.zoom.us/j/81096251402>).

The complaint can be read below.