

Republicans Call Democrats' Congressional Maps 'Shameful'

by Kevin Bessler

October 19 2021 9:12 AM



SPRINGFIELD – Republicans are once again frustrated with the Democratic congressional boundary maps released on Friday, with one calling it shameful, partisan gerrymandering.

Illinois Democrats unveiled the first draft of proposed congressional boundaries, with 17 districts after the state lost a seat due to population loss. The existing congressional delegation is made up of 13 Democrats and five Republicans.

“This proposal is an excellent first draft that amplifies diverse voices and gives every person in our state a say in government,” said state Rep. Elizabeth Hernandez, D-Cicero, chairperson of the House Redistricting Committee.

Several districts wind through various parts of the state on thin strips of land. That includes the 13th district, which runs from Champaign to the north to Belleville in the south, making its way westward and including several downstate cities along the way.



“Some of the shapes and how they were able to fit some of the urban areas together seems a bit wild,” said Ryan Tolley, policy director with the nonpartisan nonprofit organization Change Illinois.

The 13th district is currently represented by Republican Congressman Rodney Davis, who has expressed interest in running for governor and has said the decision would depend on how Illinois Democrats would alter his district.

“This proposed map, along with this entire redistricting process, is a complete joke,” Davis said in a statement. “It’s clear Governor Pritzker and the Democrats will stoop to any low if it means they can keep their corrupt system going.”

The map would put Adam Kinzinger, a Republican, and Democrat Marie Newman into the same district, which is known to be a Democratic stronghold.



The map also pits Republican Mary Miller against four-term GOP Rep. Darin LaHood in a heavily Republican district.

Despite calls from Latino voting rights groups for a second Latino-majority district, the plan keeps only one, something University of Illinois-Springfield political science professor Kent Redfield said could be a problem.

“I assume if the Democrats can pass this and that Pritzker will sign it, the only legal problem involves Hispanic representation,” Redfield said.

Democrats have a supermajority in Illinois and can dictate the new map without any Republican input. That was evident earlier this year with the adoption of new state legislative boundaries.

Illinois Republican Party Chairman Don Tracy said the maps would take choices away from voters.

“Illinois Democrats, led by Gov. J.B. Pritzker, have made it clear that they are willing to disenfranchise Illinois voters and break repeated campaign promises to do the bidding of Nancy Pelosi and DC power brokers,” he said. “No one has done more to degrade the Democratic process here in Illinois and add to the issue of hyper-polarization of elected representatives than J.B. Pritzker.”

House Republican Leader Jim Durkin, R-Western Springs, said the maps were partisan.

“In another insult to Illinois voters, Democrats drew more partisan maps to benefit their incumbent politicians and protect Nancy Pelosi’s failing majority,” he said in a statement.

The congressional maps will be one of the top agenda items when lawmakers return to Springfield this week.