

# **Officials Object To Bill Passed By General Assembly That Would Change Judicial Boundaries and Create Three Sub-Circuits**

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EDWARDSVILLE — Officials are objecting to a bill recently passed by the General Assembly that would change judicial district boundaries and create three sub-circuits for Madison County.

County board member Mike Walters of Godfrey and chairman of the judiciary committee criticized the bill.

“It’s a sad day when the legislature overrides the voters’ will,” Walters said. “As Madison County moves more red, the state legislature decides to change our judicial boundaries.”

Walters said the legislation was pushed through Wednesday night by both the Senate and House to create new judicial “sub-circuits” in Madison, Sangamon and DuPage counties.

“What these three counties have in common is that they are all Republican counties,” Walters said.

Currently, circuit judges up for election are on ballots in all parts of the county. The legislation creates three sub-circuits - one along the river from Alton south, a second from Edwardsville south to Collinsville, and a third from Godfrey east to take in the eastern part of the county.

No longer will a circuit judge be elected on a county-wide ballot.

“Until recent years,” Prenzler said, “All county circuit judges were Democrats.”

Democrat proponents of the legislation claim their purpose is to create more diversity on the Madison County bench.

“The way they gerrymandered this map will not create more diversity among judges,” Walters said. “Also, neither the Circuit Clerk nor any judges were contacted for their input. This is clearly a way for state legislators to gerrymander districts where they want to take control.”

Prenzler said this process reminds him of what the General Assembly did to the Metro East Sanitary District.

“When I was elected County Board Chairman in 2016, I appointed three of the five members of the MESD board,” Prenzler said. “But the General Assembly couldn’t allow a Republican to appoint the majority. They took one appointment away from the county and gave it to the City of Granite City, to put the board back into the hands of Democrats.”

Also, before Prenzler’s election as Chairman, Madison County had two appointments on the Bi-State board, and St. Clair County had three. After Prenzler was elected, the

General Assembly took one seat away from Madison County, leaving Madison County with one and St. Clair with four.

“Fairness is important, especially with courts of law,” said Walters. “And this isn’t fair.”