

MORE THAN 400,000 ILLINOISANS HAVE SIGNED PETITIONS TO TAKE POLITICS OUT OF LEGISLATIVE REDISTRICTING

Independent Maps

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Independent Maps More Than Two-Thirds of Way to 600,000 Signature Goal

CHICAGO – More than 400,000 Illinoisans have signed petitions to put the Independent Map Amendment on the November 2016 ballot.

These petition signers want to give voters a choice between an independent commission drawing state legislative maps in a fair and transparent manner and the current system where politicians draw the maps to maximize partisan advantage and protect incumbents.

The non-partisan Independent Maps coalition announced Tuesday that it has collected 402,109 signatures and is now more than two-thirds of the way to its goal of collecting 600,000 signatures.

“Just like in Ohio where on November 3rd a redistricting reform initiative passed 71-29 percent, Illinoisans are clamoring for change in the way state legislative maps are drawn,” said Dennis FitzSimons, Chair of Independent Maps. “After seeing 60 percent of state legislative races go uncontested in November 2014 because of slanted maps drawn to discourage competition and protect incumbents, voters want to fix a rigged system.”

The Independent Map Amendment would create a non-partisan independent commission responsible for drawing state legislative districts. The commission-drawn maps would be required to protect the voting rights of racial and ethnic minorities, and the maps would be drawn without regard to incumbency or partisanship.

“Illinois voters want the same kind of opportunity as Ohio voters had to enact redistricting reform and give them a voice in the process,” said Cynthia Canary, Executive Director of Independent Maps. “All over America, there is frustration with the absence of fair legislative maps. California and

Arizona demonstrated how to reform the process through the power of citizen initiatives, and reform campaigns are catching fire in Maryland, Michigan, Pennsylvania and elsewhere.

“In Illinois, voters are fed up with the current system that has politicians drawing district boundaries – a clear conflict of interest,” Canary said. “That kind of political redistricting discourages people from becoming candidates, and the lack of competition discourages people from voting.”

“Volunteers throughout Illinois have been busy collecting signatures since our May 1 campaign kick-off,” FitzSimons said. “Many of them were involved in the 2010 and 2014 reform campaigns that fell short, but they have redoubled their efforts and recruited even more volunteers.

“We reached the 400,000 mark about five months earlier than the 2014 campaign, and we will continue collecting signatures until it is time to deliver our petitions to the State Board of Elections next May,” he said. “To put an amendment before voters, the Illinois Constitution requires a minimum of 290,216 valid signatures, and our goal is to collect more than twice that number as insurance against petition challenges by the entrenched interests who oppose reform.”

Petitions can be downloaded at www.MapAmendment.org. Completed petitions can be mailed back to Independent Maps (71 South Wacker Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60606 or delivered to the League of Women Voters of Illinois.)*

The Independent Map Amendment has diverse support throughout Illinois, and supporters include AARP Illinois, Common Cause Illinois, the Illinois Farm Bureau, IPIRG, the Latino Policy Forum, and the Illinois League of Women Voters.

For a list of supporters and to volunteer for the campaign, please visit <http://www.MapAmendment.org>.

**LWVIL edit*