

Electoral Redistricting Battles Rage Across the United States

Federal judicial panel has approved new borders in Michigan while struggles continue in other states

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A controversial redistricting map drawn up in 2021 by a supposed independent commission resulted in the domination of the Michigan State Legislative seats and Gubernatorial office by the Democratic Party after the 2022 elections.

This shift in the fortunes of the Democrats was the first time they have been in complete control of the state government in four decades.

The idea behind the independent commission was the result of a petition campaign and state-wide referendum in 2018 to change the way districts are drawn.

The idea was to place an impartial body over the process taking it away from the incumbent political officials in Lansing, the state capitol.

However, a number of African American voters filed suit against the redistricting commission saying that the new map diluted the overall electoral power of their communities. The claims of the African American voters were upheld by a federal court decision in December which ordered yet another redrawing of districts. These newly drawn districts are scheduled to be in place for the upcoming November state legislative elections in Michigan.

[In a March 27 article published](#) by the Associated Press it says:

"The original lawsuit contesting the Detroit-area seats was filed by a group of Black residents who argued that the map diluted their voting power.

The group had similarly opposed the newly submitted map, saying it favors incumbents elected under the previous map and doesn't include enough majority-black districts. The three-judge panel disagreed in its approval of the map and pointed to the fact that the new 'plan created three majority-black districts, whereas before there were none.

Federal law provides us no basis to reject the Commission's remedial House plan,' the panel wrote in an 11-page decision released Wednesday. Six state Senate districts will still need to be redrawn by a later deadline due to senators' terms not expiring until 2026."

At present the State Legislature is deadlocked between Democrats and Republicans due to the abandonment of two seats by politicians who were elected to municipal offices. With 2024 being a presidential election year, Democrats are anticipating that they will be able to secure a slim majority in the State House.

Other Factors Which Could Reduce Voter Participation in Michigan and Other States

Nonetheless, discontent over the handling of several issues may place these assumptions in question. There is widespread dissatisfaction over the Democratic President Joe Biden's handling of the genocidal onslaught in the Gaza Strip in Palestine. During the Democratic primary in Michigan 101,000 people cast their vote as "uncommitted" as a means of expressing their rejection of the White House position on the Palestinian question.

Also, despite the campaign talking points asserting that the economy is performing to the benefit of the majority of the population, many working people are suffering as a result of the rising prices for gasoline, heating, electricity, water, food, clothing, rents and mortgage rates. The federal minimum wage has not been increased by Congress since 2009, some fifteen years ago. At present the federal minimum wage stands at a grand total of \$7.25.

Any increase in salaries for most working class people has been gained through protest actions, strikes and the demand for labor within certain sectors of the economy.

The increase in the federal minimum wage in 2009 took place amid the worst capitalist downturn since the Great Depression.

Millions of working families lost their homes after the collapse of the real estate markets stemming directly from the mad drive for megaprofits by the banks and other financial institutions during the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Another major issue for African Americans is the failed promises by Biden when he was running for president in 2020 to pass legislation aimed at reforming the police services.

The George Floyd rebellions of that year was one of the motivating factors for the large turnout among African Americans and other oppressed communities aimed at removing former President Donald Trump from the White House.

The campaign pledge by Biden to pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Act never materialized. This act was designed to counter the monumental restriction placed on access to the ballot in the aftermath of the Shelby v. Holder Supreme Court of 2013 decision which struck down the enforcement provisions of the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

Wisconsin Supreme Court Rules Against Lawsuit to Redraw Congressional Districts

A recent unanimous decision by the Wisconsin Supreme Court to reject a lawsuit filed by Democratic voters to throw out a Congressional map adopted by Republicans over a decade ago, has placed the outcome of the upcoming 2024 election in doubt. The Wisconsin high court is now composed of a Democratic majority and the decision to change the boundaries of federal districts will maintain a configuration which favors Republican politicians.

[A report published by the Associated Press](#) during early March noted:

“The decision leaves the state’s current congressional district boundaries in place for the November election. The decision not to hear the congressional challenge comes after the court in December ordered new legislative maps, saying the Republican-drawn ones were unconstitutional.

The GOP-controlled Legislature, out of fear that the court would order maps even more unfavorable to Republicans, passed ones drawn by Democratic Gov. Tony Evers. He signed those into law on Feb. 19 and urged the court to take up the congressional map challenge. The Elias Law Group, which filed the congressional challenge on behalf of Democratic voters, said the court’s decision on the legislative maps opened the door to them revisiting the other maps. But the court declined to take up the case. It did not give a reason in the unanimous unsigned order.”

Wisconsin is a key battleground state where the results of the presidential elections in November could be pivotal in deciding who will occupy the White House and the Congress. The state was lost by Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton in 2016 along with others such as Michigan, Pennsylvania and Ohio.

Later in 2020, all of these states went to Biden securing a firm lead for him in the national elections. However, the issues related to the Gaza genocide, police-community relations and the capacity of unions to organize remain unresolved.

[CBS News in a report](#) on the mood of African American voters in Milwaukee and other areas in the state emphasized that:

“President Biden’s winning coalition in 2020 was led by Black voters, particularly in major cities in battleground states. But this time around, there are signs that his support among this bloc of voters has softened. A CBS News poll in late February showed 76% of likely Black voters said they backed his reelection bid, down from 87% who voted for him in 2020. The more than a dozen Black voters and organizers interviewed by CBS News in battleground states have shared a sense of disappointment about the impending rematch of the 2020 presidential election, with worries it will translate to voters staying home in November.”

In combination with restrictions on voting rights for African Americans and other people of color, the lack of enthusiasm for a Biden reelection are the greatest threat to the Democratic Party.

Despite the economic statistics related to unemployment, if the people are not feeling this purported progress, it will not translate into a massive turnout in November for the

presidential, congressional and state legislative contests.

Hopefully, the results of the 2024 elections will prompt a broad-based discussion on the future role of voters from the national oppressed and working class electorate.

Whether Biden or Trump wins the elections in November, the social conditions of the majority within society will not change fundamentally until there is an independent political formation which can speak and act in its own names.

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