



Walker should veto redistricting, work with Risser on better plan

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Gov. Scott Walker has launched what some are referring to as a "charm offensive."

With the approach of recall elections that could cost his Republican Party control of the state Senate, Walker is reportedly attempting to alter his image as a rigid partisan.

The governor has even used some recent media appearances to suggest that he is enthusiastic about working with Democrats.

Fair enough.

Here's a place to begin: The governor can and should veto the hyper-partisan plan for redistricting Wisconsin legislative seats that was drawn up and hastily passed by his legislative allies.

"The Republican redistricting plans are very polarized and extremely partisan," explains the senior member of the Legislature, state Sen. Fred Risser. "They cut up communities of interest and unnecessarily limit the competitiveness of many districts."

Risser, a Madison Democrat who has frequently worked with Republicans on redistricting issues in the past, argues: "Because the Republicans wanted this plan signed into law before the recall elections, the public was given almost no opportunity for input on a matter that is being rammed through the Legislature in 10 days and will affect every citizen of the state for next 10 years."

That's a bad approach, and it's a bad message to send to Wisconsin.

Walker should veto the bill and sit down with Risser to discuss how a fair and responsible map could be drawn.

Both Walker and Risser know the state. They know the Legislature. And they know what a good map would look like.

The two of them could work it out in a couple of hours — perhaps with an assist from the old masters of redistricting, state Rep. Fred Kessler, D-Milwaukee, and state Sen. Mike Ellis, R-Neenah.

Redistricting is not hard, and it does not have to be expensive — despite the wild spending by the Fitzgerald brothers (Senate Majority Leader Scott and Assembly Speaker Jeff), who have abused the process at massive expense to the taxpayers of Wisconsin.

If Walker wants to begin to undo the damage, he can begin right here, right now, on the critical issue of redistricting.

If not, then voters should use the state Senate recall elections to begin stripping the governor of power by establishing a legislative check and balance on what the founders decried as "elected despotism."

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