

Map chaos

New districts will have multiple legislators in the same district, including Stroebel and Knodl

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OZAUKEE COUNTY — Fair maps in Wisconsin have been the subject of discussion for years, and more deliberately in the past several months.

“With the outcome fine (of the legislative map design), which it appears it is, he would run. And I would retire.”

—State Sen. Dan Knodl
Discussing his now sharing a district with State Sen. Duey Stroebel

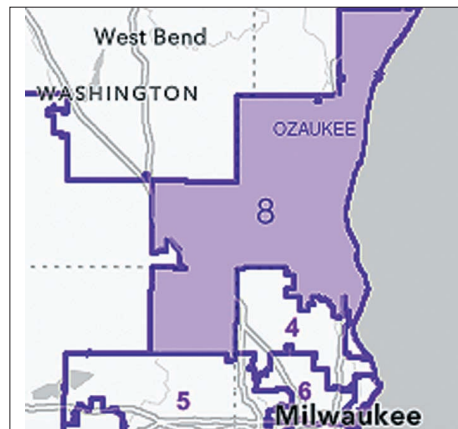
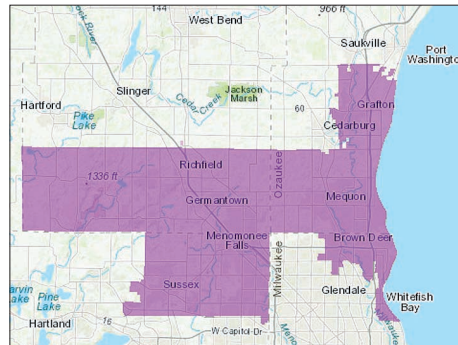
But the swiftness with which new Assembly and Senate districts were made into law Monday morning had many people caught off guard. At least one city clerk said she assumed any vote on the maps that Gov. Tony Evers proposed in January would be appealed. But few expect any successful appeal.

The maps were approved by the Legislature last week, with most Republicans voting for the Democratic governor’s bill and a majority of Democrats voting against it.

“This is the best of the terrible maps,” said State Sen. Duey Stroebel, R-Cedarburg. “The others are even worse. Frankly we had no choice.”

Making his vote even more complicated is the fact Stroebel’s home has been in the 20th Senate District for years, and will now be in District 8, currently represented by Dan Knodl, R- Germantown.

See **MAPS**, PAGE 5A



Maps courtesy of the Wisconsin Legislature

Top, is the previous boundaries for Senate District 8. **Below** is the new district, part of a new statewide map signed into law by Gov. Tony Evers Monday.

Maps

From Page 1A

Stroebel said the top boundary of District 8 was moved just to the north of his property line.

The District 8 seat is up for election this fall.

Stroebel and Knodl said they have talked, and Knodl decided it was best to retire and let Stroebel pursue the seat in the election.

"With the final outcome (of the legislative map design), which it appears it is, he would run. And I would retire," Knodl said Monday.

Knodl also promised to campaign for Republican candidates in the fall.

"I will be the senator for the year," he said. "I will not be disappearing anytime."

Both he and Stroebel pointed out that there were many, many more situations like this for Republicans across the state than Democrats. Stroebel said that 29 incumbent Republicans are pitted against each other in 15 different districts, while only four Democrats were paired.

They said that those who no longer live in the district they once represented will have to run in their new district — or move to their old one.

There are major changes in the Assembly districts across the state, as well, including in Ozaukee County. Democrat Deb. Andraca, D-Whitefish Bay, will keep most of her District 23 intact.

For State Reps. Rob Brooks, R-Saukville, and Paul Melotik, R-Grafton, their districts have been moved far from their homes.

District 60 had gone as far north as the Ozaukee-Sheboygan counties line and south to Pioneer Road, and included Saukville, Newburg, part of the city of Cedarburg and part of Washington County.

The new Highway 60 is moved north to Fond du lac.

Assembly District 24 will shift west to an area now represented by Janel Brandtjen, R-Menomonee Falls.

Melotik said it was important to get something approved so voters knew what their maps would be.

"None of it is favorable to Republicans," he said.

In a press release Monday morning, Evers said the maps will undo more than a decade of Wisconsin being the most "gerrymandered" states in the country. The term refers to the party in power in the Legislature redrawing political districts following the U.S. Census to pack them with voters who would provide their party an election victory. Many have argued that the Republicans have maintained a

firm majority in the state Senate and Legislature because of the way they have drawn the districts.

Many have called for an independent commission to draw those lines, which is why many Democrats opposed the governor's maps.

"I will always try to do the right thing for our state. Wisconsinites want fair maps, and Wisconsinites deserve fair maps. So, today, I'm enacting fair maps for the great state of Wisconsin," Gov. Evers said. "When I promised I wanted fair maps — not maps that are better for one party or another — I damn well meant it. Wisconsin is not a red state or a blue state—we're a purple state, and I believe our maps should reflect that basic fact."

The Wisconsin Supreme Court previously ruled Wisconsin's legislative maps were unconstitutional, leaving no legislative maps in place for the 2024 election. Gov. Evers' maps enacted today will take effect immediately after publication and will be in place for the fall elections, providing certainty for candidates and campaigns preparing to circulate nomination papers this spring.

Andraca said in a statement Monday that after a decade of living under one of the country's most notorious Republican gerrymanders, Wisconsin will finally hold elections with new voting maps.

"All candidates should be able to win elections based on their message, not their map. For far too long Republicans have hidden behind their gerrymander and ignored the will of the people, refusing to vote or hold public hearings on popular issues such as gun safety, Medicaid expansion and increased funding for public schools," Andraca said. "Wisconsinites finally have an opportunity to be heard and to elect candidates who will enact policies that will move our state forward."

Andraca said that the state will never be free of partisan gerrymandering until a nonpartisan redistricting process is created.



Maps courtesy of the Wisconsin Legislature

Above is the previous boundaries for Senate District 20. **Below** is the new outline for the district, long represented by Ducey Stroebel.

