



WISCONSIN STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Deb Andraca

23RD ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

BAYSIDE FOX POINT GRAFTON MEQUON THIENSVILLE WHITEFISH BAY

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Representative Andraca's Floor Speech in Opposition to AJR-80

"Any vote for this resolution is a vote against representative democracy"

MADISON, WI -- During the September 28th floor session, Representative Deb Andraca (D-Whitefish Bay) delivered the following remarks on Assembly Joint Resolution 80, which was introduced by Speaker Vos and defines legislative priorities related to redistricting:

"As recently as July 2019, my colleagues across the aisle dismissed the idea of using a resolution like AJR-80, instead of following our established legislative process, to circumvent the Governor and keep their gerrymandered maps. When asked about this possibility, a spokesperson for the Speaker's office called it 'fake news' and claimed that a joint resolution was not even under consideration.

Yet here we are.

When reading the text of this resolution, AJR 80, it is a little like biting into an apple and finding a worm. You think it's a regular apple, then suddenly you're completely disgusted.

The big fat worm in this resolution is item #3. Some of the language aligns with the principles of fair redistricting, but then you get to the part that reveals its true intention. Item #3 requires the new maps to 'Retain as much as possible the core of existing districts...'

Well, if an apple is rotten to the core, the last thing you want to do is to keep it.

By every conceivable measure, Wisconsin's legislative maps are the most gerrymandered in the United States:

- Because of our maps, Wisconsin has been labeled a "Democracy Desert"*
- On the gerrymandering threat index, Wisconsin ranks "extreme"*
- The Electoral Integrity Project at Harvard gives our maps a 23 out of 100, the worst in the nation.*
- The existing Wisconsin legislative maps are SO bad that a panel of Federal judges ruled that the maps violated the First and Fourteenth Amendments*



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*Our current maps created one of, if not THE worst gerrymander in our nation's history. **Make no mistake, ANY vote for this resolution is a vote AGAINST representative democracy.***

Yet here we are.

We are at a crossroads. You are either in favor of transparency and debating the merits of redistricting at a public hearing in full view of our constituents, or you are in favor of this resolution which aims to extend partisan gerrymandering for another ten years. You can't have it both ways.

Often I am asked why there are only three of us in this chamber who have overcome the gerrymander to win election to the Legislature. Were we just amazing candidates? Well, yes. We were. But that's only part of it.

Wisconsin has so few competitive districts by design. When you 'pack' supermajorities into most districts, then "crack" the rest, there simply aren't many districts where a challenger from another party -- no matter how great they are -- even stands a chance. But in all this talk about packing and cracking what's really cracking is our faith in democracy.

And here we are. Now, it's up to us.

My constituents are fed up with popular legislation not even receiving a public hearing because it doesn't serve the majority party's electoral strategy. What are you afraid of? I am here to speak for them and for all the other cracked-to-the-breaking-point, gerrymandered districts -- these people deserve a voice in their government too.

Who are you going to listen to, the voices of your party, or the voices of the people of Wisconsin?

The vote is no."

-end-



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