



January 3, 2022

Submitted via Email

Dear Commissioners,

We are writing to express our disappointment with the results of today's public meeting in which you cast five votes each along partisan lines for separate sets of Congressional and legislative maps. The failure of the Commission to collaboratively use the input from public comments and hearings across the State to develop a single set of maps constitutes an abdication of your responsibility as Commissioners.

When New Yorkers voted to approve the Independent Redistricting Commission in 2014, they did so with the hope and expectation that it would act independently of the incumbent legislature and curtail extreme partisan gerrymandering. Today's failure of the Commission to set aside partisanship and collaborate comes at the expense of New York State residents. This is not inevitable deadlock; it is a dereliction of duty.

Thousands of New Yorkers have participated in the 2021 redistricting process with the belief that their testimonies, comments, and proposed maps would contribute to a united set of maps produced by an Independent Commission. New Yorkers were counting on you in this first-time process to approve one set of maps to be sent to the legislature. Unfortunately, that did not happen.

The next stage of the process will be the legislature voting on implementing legislation for at least one of the submitted plans, without amendment. If either house fails to approve the legislation or the Governor vetoes, then you will be asked to submit a second set of plans. Only if that second plan fails to win approval is the legislature allowed to introduce amendments, which will need to comply with all constitutional standards including the ban on partisan gerrymandering put in by the voters in 2014.

If it is necessary for you to submit an additional plan to the legislature, we hope you will act collaboratively in the best interest of all the voters of this state by submitting a single plan.

Sincerely,

Laura Ladd Bierman
Executive Director
League of Women Voters of New York
State

John Kaehny
Executive Director
Reinvent Albany

Betsy Gotbaum
Executive Director
Citizens Union of the City of New York