

GOVERNOR'S VETO MESSAGE

January 30, 2024

To the Honorable Members of the Assembly:

The following bill, originating in the Assembly, has been vetoed in its entirety, and was returned to its house of origin, together with the objections in writing:

<u>Bill Number</u>	<u>Date of Veto</u>
Assembly Bill 415	January 30, 2024

I am vetoing Assembly Bill 415 in its entirety.

Assembly Bill 415 would redistrict the state's legislative districts.

I am vetoing Assembly Bill 415 in its entirety because I object to maps designed to undemocratically serve the politicians who draft them. The people of Wisconsin deserve fair maps, and this bill is a last-ditch effort aimed at preventing that outcome. The people of Wisconsin have lived under some of the most gerrymandered maps in the country for a decade. Wisconsinites have long deserved maps that are fair, responsive, and reflect the will of the people, and my promise to Wisconsinites has always been and remains that I will not accept anything less.

This bill prioritizes protecting incumbent, gerrymandered legislators by making their future campaigns more convenient for them, not better for the constituents they serve. Moving legislative district lines to ensure Republican-gerrymandered incumbents are better positioned to retain political power does not help root out gerrymandering from our democracy; it further entrenches it.

Wisconsinites want and deserve maps that support a robust, healthy, and deliberative democracy in which elected officials are responsive to their communities and constituents and must work to earn the support and the votes of the people they serve. Assembly Bill 415, in stark contrast, aims to serve the elected officials who voted for those maps. Protecting incumbents is neither what Wisconsin law prioritizes nor requires—and for good reason.

I further object to these maps failing to comply with basic constitutional requirements for legislative districts, a likely consequence of the Wisconsin State Legislature haphazardly amending, advancing, and passing Assembly Bill 415 in less than 24 hours' time.

The results of that rushed process are clear: Assembly Districts 88 and 93, as created by this bill, include non-contiguous territory in violation of our State Constitution. This fact alone renders Assembly

Bill 415's maps noncompliant with core constitutional and legal requirements for legislative districts.

Often, in vetoing a bill, the main solace I can offer Wisconsinites is that a bad policy—in this case, unbalanced, unfair maps designed to protect incumbent legislators—is prevented from becoming law. Today, fair maps deserving of the people of this state are within reach. I submitted fair maps to the Wisconsin Supreme Court to consider in the ongoing redistricting litigation, *Clarke v. Wisconsin Elections Commission*. These fair maps are responsive to the will of the people, avoid partisan bias, increase the number of competitive legislative seats, and meet all legal requirements. I remain as optimistic as ever that Wisconsinites will soon have the fair maps they deserve at long last.

Respectfully submitted,
TONY EVERS
Governor