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LEGISLATIVE ACTION ALERT

The Detroit News

Federal court: Michigan political maps illegally rigged to 'historical proportions'



Jonathan Oosting, The Detroit April 25, 2019

Detroit — Michigan must redraw legislative and congressional districts for the 2020 election because current maps drawn by Republicans represent a political gerrymander “of historical proportions,” a three-judge federal panel ruled Thursday.

The blockbuster ruling — which a legislative leader said Republicans will appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court — requires Michigan to conduct special state Senate elections for certain seats next year, cutting in half the four-year terms that current lawmakers are now serving.

The “predominate purpose” of the redistricting plan approved by the Michigan Legislature in 2011 “was to subordinate the interests of Democratic voters and entrench Republicans in power,” said the unanimous decision written by U.S. Circuit Judge Eric Clay, an appointee of Democratic President Bill Clinton.

“Therefore, the enacted plan constitutes a durable partisan gerrymander” that violates the First and 14th Amendment rights of plaintiff voters, the court ruled. The panel is giving the Republican-led House and Senate until Aug. 1 to redraw the maps and get them signed into law by Democratic Gov. Gretchen

Whitmer. The judges said they want all the parties and processes used in the redistricting process to be made public, including any alternative plans that the Legislature rejects.

If state officials do not finalize new maps by then, the federal court would draw new boundaries itself and could appoint a special master to do so.

But a pending decision from the High Court involving two other states may make Thursday's Michigan ruling moot.

The lawsuit was filed on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Michigan and some aggrieved Democrats. The complaint was eventually narrowed down to target 34 of the state's 162 congressional and legislative districts that would need to be redrawn, along with any bordering districts they impact.

Read entire article at:

<https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/politics/2019/04/25/michigan-gerrymandering/3576663002/>