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Oregon News

[Oregon Republicans sue to block Democrats' redistricting plan](#)

The Hill

Four Oregon Republicans on Monday filed suit in state court to block a redistricting plan that would lock in a Democratic advantage for the next decade, alleging the new map violates state law.

The lawsuit, filed by a former secretary of state, two former legislators and a onetime mayor of a small town on the Columbia River, says the new maps run afoul of a state law that bars partisan considerations from the redistricting process and run counter to state constitutional provisions meant to protect voters.

The Democratic-controlled legislature muscled through the new maps last month, after House Speaker Tina Kotek (D) created a special committee specifically to draw congressional district lines. Gov. Kate Brown (D) signed the measure hours after it passed the legislature.

The congressional map divides the city of Portland between three districts that stretch like tentacles west, east and south, giving those districts major infusions of Democratic voters. Two of those Portland-based districts cross the Cascade Mountains, in one case connecting voters in Portland with those in Bend, a growing liberal enclave in the heart of the ruby-red high desert. The new maps are likely to give Democrats control of five of Oregon's six congressional districts. "The result of this highly partisan process is a clear, egregious partisan gerrymander, as has been widely acknowledged both in Oregon and across the country," the lawsuit says. If the maps are allowed to survive, "Oregon's Constitutional and statutory prohibitions against partisan gerrymandering are effectively meaningless."

To achieve the partisan split that gives Democrats an advantage, the new maps split 13 counties between multiple congressional districts, three times more than the map passed a decade ago. It divides more than twice as many Census tracts between multiple districts.

The Republican litigants also point out that the map could be a specific advantage for Rep. Andrea Salinas (D), a member of the committee that drew the congressional maps. Salinas has told fellow lawmakers she will run for the newly created 6th District, which Oregon won after growing substantially in the last decade and which is based in the Willamette Valley.

"Gerrymandering is cheating. Oregon Democrats want a map that protects incumbents and silences the voices of Oregonians," state House Minority Leader Christine Drazan (R) said in a statement. "This challenge is an opportunity for the courts to fix the political gerrymandering and create maps that truly represent Oregon."

For the minority in an inherently partisan process, the courts offer a no-lose venue, observers say. "The Democrats have no incentive not to challenge any Republican-passed map, and the Republicans have no incentive not to challenge the Democrat-passed map," said Jason Torchinsky, an election law expert and general counsel at the National Republican Redistricting Trust. "The incentive is, whoever feels like they're on the losing side should sue."

[Former Oregon Secretary of State Bev Clarno files suit to challenge Dems' congressional redistricting map](#)

OPB

Former Oregon Secretary of State Bev Clarno and three other Oregon Republicans have filed a challenge to new congressional districts recently passed by state lawmakers, arguing the plan amounts to blatant partisan gerrymandering that is unconstitutional and contrary to state law.

The suit, filed Monday in Marion County Circuit Court, is the first such attempt to alter the six-district map that Democrats pushed through during a contentious special legislative session last month.

That session nearly ended in a Republican walkout after House Speaker Tina Kotek, D-Portland, reneged on a deal to grant the GOP an equal say in new congressional and legislative maps. Instead, Republican lawmakers showed up on the last possible day and allowed Democrats to pass a map that could lead to Democratic control of five of the state's now-six seats in Congress. Oregon picked up an additional U.S. House seat because of population gains recorded by the recent U.S. Census.

"The result of this highly partisan process is a clear, egregious partisan gerrymander, as has been widely acknowledged both in Oregon and across the country," the lawsuit reads. Later it notes: "Democrats are projected to win five of the six of Oregon's congressional seats in a typical year, results that are not even arguably justified by the Democrats' overall political support in this State or the political geography of the State."

[Republicans sue to block Democrats' 'obvious, extreme, partisan gerrymander' of Oregon congressional districts](#)

The Oregonian

Four Republican former elected officials asked a court Monday to invalidate what they say is an "obvious, extreme, partisan gerrymander" of Oregon's congressional district map. The quartet filed their suit exactly two weeks after Oregon's House and Senate, on strict party-line votes, approved a map creating Oregon's new sixth congressional district and reshaping the other five in a way that is all but guaranteed to give Democrats five of the six seats. That 83% ratio far exceeds the 56% share of the votes Oregonians cast for Democrat Joe Biden in the 2020 presidential election.

The map splits two to three times as many counties, census tracts and even tiny block groups into different congressional districts than the map lawmakers created the last time they redrew districts to reflect new census figures, in 2011, the suit says.

And the four Republicans take particular issue with the redrawn version of the 5th District, now held by U.S. Rep. Kurt Schrader, an Oregon City Democrat. As drawn by Democrats, it will extend from a small swath of outer southeast Portland all the way to Bend.

Democratic lawmakers "knew and privately discussed with members of their own party on the House Redistricting Committee that the proposed map was obviously politically gerrymandered in the Democrats' favor," the suit claims, without citing evidence of such discussions.

The four Republicans who filed suit Monday are former state lawmaker and former appointed Secretary of State Bev Clarno, former House Speaker Larry Campbell, former House Republican Leader Gary Wilhelms and former Mayor of The Dalles James Wilcox.

An Oregonian/OregonLive analysis found the map Democrats enacted creates three super-safe Democratic seats, one super-safe Republican seat, one seat that tilts in Democrats' favor and one seat that is a virtual 50-50 tie in terms of how its voters have sided in key Republican-Democratic match-ups since 2015.

Rep. Andrea Salinas, a Lake Oswego Democrat who took the lead in pushing the new congressional map through the House, has since told fellow lawmakers she plans to run for Congress in the newly drawn 6th District, The Oregonian/OregonLive reported last week. House Republican Leader Christine Drazan of Canby was quick to lend her support: "Gerrymandering is cheating," she said in a statement. "Oregon Democrats want a map that protects incumbents and silences the voices of Oregonians. This challenge is an opportunity for the courts to fix the political gerrymandering and create maps that truly represent Oregon."

[Four former Oregon GOP officials sue to toss Democrats' redrawn U.S. House districts map](#) *KTVZ*

Four Republican former elected officials, including Redmond resident and former secretary of state Bev Clarno, filed suit Monday against current Secretary of State Shemia Fagan, seeking to throw out Democrats' U.S. House redistricting map, which they called an "obvious, extreme, partisan gerrymander."

The Oregon Legislature recently approved new congressional and legislative districts in the once-a-decade redistricting process based on new census data on population growth and shifts.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reported the lines redrawn to make room for a new, sixth U.S. House district seat were all but guaranteed to give Democrats five of the six seats (they now have four of the five). That 83% ratio far exceeds the 56% share of the Oregon vote for Democrat Joe Biden in the 2020 presidential election.

The lawsuit, filed in Marion County Circuit Court, claims the map splits two to three times as many counties and census tracts, even small block groups into different congressional districts than the last time lawmakers redrew districts a decade ago.

The lawsuit asks the court to redraw the districts before the 2022 election cycle begins. Under a new system lawmakers enacted in 2013, a five-judge panel appointed by the Oregon Supreme Court's chief justice will hear the case and, if they agree with Republicans' challenges, redraw the lines, the newspaper said.

Along with Clarno, also a former lawmaker and House speaker, the others who joined in the suit are former House speaker Larry Campbell, former House Republican leader Gary Wilhelms and former The Dalles mayor James Wilcox.

Clarno issued a statement that said: "Oregon Democrats broke their word to their fellow legislators and then broke the law. Oregon law has very clear protections against partisan gerrymandering that our legislature chose to violate. My hope is that the judges reviewing this case will uphold the law, say no to gerrymandering, and say yes to the fair representation Oregonians deserve."

House Republican Leader Christine Drazan (R-Canby) also issued a statement on the lawsuit. "Gerrymandering is cheating," she said. "Oregon Democrats want a map that protects incumbents and silences the voices of Oregonians. This challenge is an opportunity for the courts to fix the political gerrymandering and create maps that truly represent Oregon."

[Republicans File Challenge to Oregon's Redistricting of Congressional Map](#) *Willamette Week*

Republicans have filed a legal challenge to the new congressional redistricting map that followed Oregon gaining a seat in the 2020 census.

The petition to the Oregon Supreme Court—filed by former Secretary of State Bev Clarno, former Republican House leader Gary Wilhelms (R-Klamath Falls) and onetime House

former Republican House leader Gary Wynn (R-Minnesota), and Oregon House Speaker Larry Campbell (R-Eugene), among others—argues that Democrats, who hold supermajorities in the state Legislature, drew a map that does not give state Republicans sufficient representation.

“The result of this highly partisan process is a clear, egregious partisan gerrymander, as has been widely acknowledged both in Oregon and across the country,” the petition states.

“Under the Democrats’ gerrymandered map, enacted as SB 881-A, the Democrats are projected to win five of the six congressional seats in Oregon in a typical year.”

The petition, among other evidence, cites the last-minute maneuver by House Speaker Tina Kotek (D-Portland), in which she reversed her previous agreement for a balanced redistricting committee containing an equal number of Republicans and Democrats. In the week before the map was approved, Kotek created a new committee with one more Democrat than Republican that resulted in a map approved on party lines; that’s further evidence the map should not stand, the petition argues.

Democrats have said the maps they passed are fair and legal. But a court challenge from Republicans was widely expected. It’s not clear yet whether there will be a separate legal challenge of the new maps for state legislative districts.

[Kaiser Permanente workers in California, Oregon authorize strike](#)

Seattle Times (Washington Post)

More than 24,000 nurses and other health-care workers at Kaiser Permanente authorized a strike, their unions announced Monday, threatening to walk out over pay and working conditions while the coronavirus pandemic continues to strain hospitals and clinics.

Workers in California and Oregon endorsed the work stoppage by an overwhelming margin in the weekend vote as they pressed Kaiser to end its two-tiered wage and benefits system, which pays newer employees less than more tenured colleagues and offers them fewer health protections. They also want 4 percent raises for the next three years and a commitment to hire more nurses to relieve staffing shortages.

More than 50,000 Kaiser workers nationwide are making similar demands in contracts that will soon expire, and union leaders say more strike authorization drives could materialize in Colorado, Georgia, Hawaii, Maryland, Virginia, Washington state and D.C.

[Governors of Oregon, Washington hold fast on vaccine deadline despite worker exodus concerns](#)

OPB

The days are quickly ticking down to next Monday’s deadline when most Oregon and Washington teachers, health care workers and public employees need to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

Especially in more conservative swaths of the Pacific Northwest, elected officials remain fearful of a “mass exodus” of firefighters and health care professionals. They are trying different avenues to get governors Brown and Inslee to back off the vaccination deadline.

But there are no signs the governors are open to delays.

Spokane County Sheriff Ozzie Knezovich took to the department’s YouTube channel the other day to deliver a 13-minute monologue directed at Washington Governor Jay Inslee.

“At the height of the pandemic, does it really make sense to terminate our health care workers, our firefighters, our EMS personnel?” Knezovich said.

Knezovich said he is vaccinated against COVID-19 and encourages others to get the shot. But the

sheriff said he can't stomach dismissals of hard-to-replace emergency responders who refuse the vaccine.

"If you know what the potential outcome is, do we really play this game of chicken?" Knezovich continued. "I don't think so. So, once again I'm asking Gov. Inslee to please back away from these mandates."

County commissions in a bunch of mostly rural counties across Oregon have the same burr in their saddles, but are taking a slightly different approach to get the attention of their governor. At least eight counties have preemptively declared a local "state of emergency."

[Oregon passes 4,000 COVID-19-related deaths](#)

OPB

It took just two months for the number of deaths related to COVID-19 in Oregon to grow from 3,000 to 4,000 after the Oregon Health Authority reported 20 more deaths over the weekend.

OHA Director Patrick Allen said in a statement: "These two milestones tell the story of how swiftly and severely the delta variant has moved through our communities."

He added that many the latest deaths were preventable, as vaccines are widely available throughout the state.

"The vaccines are our best protection against serious illness and death from this virus," Allen said. "My message to Oregonians today is simple: The delta variant has changed everything. Please, get vaccinated as soon as you can."

Last Thursday, the OHA reported a record-high 59 deaths in its daily report on coronavirus in the state.

[State Rep. Bill Post to resign at the end of November](#)

Keizertimes

After announcing in late September that he had moved to Nevada, Republican state Rep. Bill Post told the Keizertimes Monday night that he would be resigning from his position as the House District 25 representative effective Nov. 30.

"After further discussions with an elections attorney and talking it over with my wife, it appears that the best action I can take for my district and my family is to resign before my term is over and give my successor a chance to serve during the 2022 Short Legislative Session," Post said in a draft of a press release sent to the Keizertimes.

Post has been a resident of Keizer since 1994 and has served as state representative for Keizer, St. Paul and Newberg since 2014. While Post had announced in early September that he would not be seeking re-election, his current term wasn't set to officially expire until January 2023.

[State Rep. Bill Post to resign with 15 months left in his term](#)

KGW

After announcing in late September that he had moved to Nevada, Republican state Rep. Bill Post told the Keizertimes Monday night that he would resign from his position as the House District 25 representative effective Nov. 30.

"After further discussions with an elections attorney and talking it over with my wife, it appears that the best action I can take for my district and my family is to resign before my term is over and give my successor a chance to serve during the 2022 short legislative

session,” Post said in a draft of a press release sent to the Keizertimes.

[Republican legislator Bill Post, who moved to Nevada, will resign effective Nov. 30](#)

The Oregonian

On your desk calendar, it might list the second Monday in October as Columbus Day. But this year, Oregon lawmakers voted to make Oregon the 11th state to officially change the holiday going forward to Indigenous Peoples' Day. While the state recognizes it, the day has never been an official holiday with days off, although federally it does mean there's no mail service on this day.

[State Rep. Bill Post to resign at the end of November](#)

Salem Reporter (Keziertimes)

Post said that it was his intent “to be open with my constituents about my move out of state and the steps I’d be taking to continue to fulfill my duties.”

When asked if his decision to move to Nevada would have been different had he known the residency laws, Post said, “I don't know because I just had all intentions and purposes to do what I did based on the information that I had. So I don't know, that would just be too much speculation.”

Republican Precinct Committee Persons of District 25 will now be tasked with nominating between three to five Republican candidates to fill Post’s position for the next 15 months. The board of commissioners in Yamhill and Marion counties, both partially represented by state District 25, will then interview the candidates and vote to appoint Post’s replacement. A replacement would need to be selected within 30 days of the vacancy.

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