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Promote the Vote, coalition partners urge redistricting commission to consider equitable maps

NAACP, League of Women Voters of Michigan, ACCESS, Detroit Action among groups pushing for fair maps

LANSING — **Promote the Vote**, a coalition of pro-voter organizations and voting rights advocates, today urged the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission to consider the Congressional, Michigan House and Michigan Senate maps Promote the Vote submitted last week, which are fair and equitable for all Michiganders — not just the party in power.

The organization held a virtual press conference and was joined by coalition partners, including the Michigan NAACP, League of Women Voters of Michigan, Detroit Action, and ACCESS.

"I want to thank our coalition partners for joining me today and urging the redistricting commission to seriously consider our maps, which drastically improve fairness metrics, respect minority communities and ensure the will of Michigan voters is respected," said **Micheal Davis Jr.**, Promote the Vote redistricting campaign director. "Many of the maps the commission has produced so far look similar to maps we've had in the past, when politicians were in charge. Our maps, which drew feedback from residents from across the state, don't favor one political party over another and puts the voters in charge of picking who represents them, not the other way around."

Promote the Vote utilized the same data and adhered to the same criteria required by the Michigan Constitution to create its maps. The maps were first released to the public two weeks ago and underwent a round of public comment before they formally submitted to the commission on Thursday.

"Organizations in the Promote the Vote coalition share a rich history and deep investment in protecting the rights of voters. When it comes to upholding the Voting Rights Act, no organizations' roots run deeper than those of the NAACP," said **Yvonne White**, president of the Michigan NAACP. "Promote the Vote showed you can responsibly draw two congressional Voting Rights Act seats in Detroit, preserving much needed voice and impact for those communities."

"Every voter in Michigan, regardless of their political affiliation, deserves to have their vote counted and their voice heard," said **Susan Smith**, vice president of the

League of Women Voters of Michigan. "Our legislative maps have been gerrymandered for decades to protect whichever political party was in charge, which silenced hundreds of thousands of voters. Promote the Vote's maps eliminate partisan bias while adhering to important map drawing criteria required by our constitution and are a great building block for fair and equitable elections for the next decade."

"Promote the Vote plans put 86% of Michigan's prisoner capacity in either an overpopulated Senate district, an overpopulated House district, or both. What that means is that non-prisoner residents in those districts in which prisons are located are not given outsized political power in Lansing because they can vote in those districts and the prisoners cannot," said **Branden Snyder**, Co-executive director, Detroit Action. "We did our best to address prison gerrymandering while still ensuring all of those districts were within the constitutional population limits. Promote the Vote's fair and equitable maps reflect our coalition's empathy and attention to the larger issues that our district lines will ultimately affect."

"Because our Middle Eastern-North African (MENA) population is considered 'white' in the census, we are in a position where we must choose between prioritizing the MENA community or prioritizing the historically underrepresented Black population in Detroit. That is an impossible decision to impose on already marginalized communities," said **Rima Meroueh**, director of the National Network for Arab American Communities (NNAAC), an institution of ACCESS. "Therefore, we will support our partners for fair representation and unpacking of black communities. And we will continue to work to make the vibrant Arab American and MENA communities, which have been deemed invisible by the law, visible and whole."

Promote the Vote's nonpartisan mapping advisory committee worked to ensure there are no wasted votes in its proposed maps, and addressed partisan gerrymandering by starting from scratch, scrutinizing the data and adhering to the prioritized criteria required by the state constitution.

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