

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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### Statehouse ignoring calls for better redistricting plan

Are Republicans opposed to a citizens' redistricting commission to end gerrymandering, which is the process of redrawing district lines to give an advantage to one party over another? House Bill 1014, a bill before the House Elections and Apportionment Committee chaired by Rep. Milo Smith, would have a citizen non-partisan group draw district lines. Smith was loath to even call a committee hearing on this bill, but one was hurriedly called for Feb.15, likely in response to pressure from voters.

What happened in this committee hearing was shameful. HUNDREDS of Hoosiers showed up at the Statehouse to support HB1014. After a hearing of over 90 minutes Smith refused to take a vote. "That refusal was shameful and cowardly," writes Sheila Kennedy. Hoosiers deserve to know who on the committee supported the bill and who didn't. Smith effectively killed the bill, unless enough pressure can be put on him and Speaker Brian Bosma to call a special meeting early next week to take a vote.

An article in the Washington Post by Brian Klaas asserts, "If there is one silver bullet that could fix American democracy, it's getting rid of gerrymandering." Polls confirm, he says, that an overwhelming majority of all Americans oppose gerrymandering.

In 2016, local officials of both parties on the city councils of Lafayette and West Lafayette and the Tippecanoe County commissioners voted unanimously for a proposition by the League of Women Voters of Greater Lafayette in support of citizens redistricting. Also in 2016 the League hosted a statewide meeting of organizations interested in promoting citizens redistricting in their areas. Many of those groups were able to get their local officials to support citizens redistricting.

Smith ignored the work of the coalition on Indiana redistricting reform, the recommendation of the interim Study Committee, and the support of Rep. Jerry Torr. As Kennedy remarked, "If we needed a reminder of why 'safe seats' are so pernicious — how they allow 'elected' lawmakers to ignore the public will — we got it yesterday."

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