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LEGISLATIVE ACTION ALERT

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The U.S. Supreme Court and the federal district court in PA both declined requests from Republicans to block the new district map from going into effect for the PA May 15 primary

"For anyone who cares about democracy, for anyone who cares that every voter's voice should be heard, this is a great day," said Mimi McKenzie, legal director of the Philadelphia-based Public Interest Law Center, which represented the Democratic voters who brought the initial suit that prompted the redrawing of the congressional map.

Even top Republicans in the state House and Senate seemed resigned to the idea that it was the end of the road. "I'm sure we'll review options, but I think we're accepting the decision," said Senate Majority Leader Jake Corman, R-Centre, who filed the U.S. District Court challenge along with others. "[We] don't like it, but that's life and we move on."

In a one-sentence filing, the U.S. Supreme Court declined late Monday afternoon to intervene in the case. The justices did not offer an explanation for their decision, which was made unanimously.

The Federal three-panel Judges, said the issues raised in the case were "of high importance to our republican form of government" and they understood the GOP's frustration. "But frustration, even frustration emanating from arduous time constraints placed on the legislative process, does not accord the plaintiffs a right to relief," they wrote. The three

judges — Chief U.S. District Judge Christopher C. Conner for the Middle District of

Pennsylvania, Judge Kent A. Jordan of the 3rd Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals and District Judge Jerome B. Simandle for the District of New Jersey — **all were appointed by Republican presidents** and confirmed with bipartisan Senate support.

Resignation or glee — depending on political affiliation — appeared to set in at the state Capitol.

State House Speaker Mike Turzai, R-Bradford Woods, one of two legislative leaders who appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, said in a statement that he still believes the state high court overstepped its bounds when it imposed the new map last month. "Nonetheless, we respect the decision of the U.S. Supreme Court and are prepared to move on to other issues of importance to the people of Pennsylvania," he said.

Gov. Tom Wolf, a Democrat, applauded the courts' decisions. "The people of Pennsylvania are tired of gerrymandering, and the new map corrects past mistakes that created unfair congressional districts and attempted to diminish the impact of citizens' votes," he said in a statement.

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<http://www.post-gazette.com/news/politics-state/2018/03/19/Pennsylvania-congressional-district-map-upheld-gerrymandering-federal-judges-dismiss-Republican-lawsuit/stories/20180319012>