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LEGISLATIVE ACTION ALERT



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Pa. court to decide whether to hear partisan gerrymandering suit similar to case before U.S. Supreme Court

By Lindsay Lazarski, WHY?

An article posted online by Keystone Crossroads © states that Tom Rentschler, an attorney and former high school teacher, has lived in Berks County for most of his life and that over time he and other voters in Berks County have lost their voice.

The article goes on to say, that in June, Rentschler became one of 18 plaintiffs in a lawsuit filed by the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania in state Commonwealth Court challenging the 2011 congressional map and claiming Pennsylvania lawmakers violated the state constitution when they created it. The court will decide whether to hear the case or delay proceedings until after the U.S. Supreme Court decides a federal challenge out of Wisconsin.

The lawsuit claims the map Pennsylvania lawmakers created is a partisan gerrymander that violates the equal protection clause of the state's constitution. Republicans are accused of intentionally drawing district boundaries that pack as many Democrats in as few districts as possible and then disperse the

remainder over as many districts as possible. The effect, ultimately, diluting Democrats' votes.

In the last three elections for U.S. House of Representatives, Republicans won 13 of Pennsylvania's 18 seats, even though registered Democrats outnumber registered Republicans by more than 800,000 voters state-wide.

National models for identifying gerrymandering have [found Pennsylvania to be among the worst offenders](#) in the United States. According to the article, leaders in the Pennsylvania General Assembly, still controlled by Republicans, have asked the court to stay all proceedings until the U.S. Supreme Court issues a decision in *Gill v. Whitford*, a similar case out of Wisconsin. Commonwealth Court is scheduled to consider Pennsylvania Republicans' request for stay Oct. 4 — one day after oral arguments for the *Gill* case begin before the U.S. Supreme Court. The U.S. Supreme Court ruling would have national ramifications — but isn't expected until June 2018.

To view complete article go to: <http://crossroads.newsworks.org/keystone-crossroads/item/106803-pa-court-to-decide-whether-to-hear-partisan-gerrymandering-suit-similar-to-case-before-us-supreme-court>