

Dear Chairman Aquino and members of the Senate Redistricting Committee,

My name is James Zay and I serve as a County Board Member for DuPage County and Chair of the Redistricting Committee. COVID-19 has thrown many timelines out the door and made us all become more flexible. Sadly, this is not the case when it comes to the decennial census, as there are very hard deadlines and requirements for counties to follow. Since the United States Census Bureau is not making data available until September 30, there is no way for counties to meet the reapportionment deadline of July 1.

Currently, county board chairman and county board executives are required by statute to present their reapportionment plans to county boards for approval by the third Wednesday of May in apportionment years. Unless the U.S. Census Bureau delivers information prior to September 30, county leaders will be unable to meet their statutory requirement to ensure equal representation among all districts. Clearly the General Assembly needs to enact legislation to alter current statutory deadlines for approval of reapportionment maps to align with the delivery of U.S. Census data.

The second major problem with the delay in decennial data is that it makes it nearly impossible for individuals seeking to be on the ballot for the 2022 Primary Elections to know which district they reside in. Currently, candidates can begin circulating petitions to be placed on the ballot in mid-September, which is before data will even be available for reapportionment. I would encourage the Committee to consider whether or not we can move forward with a March 2022 Primary Election based on the absence of Census data.

We appreciate that the Senate is having a dialogue on this issue and would encourage all parties to work together to develop a realistic sensible timeline for the reapportionment of all districts and the 2022 election timelines.

Respectfully,

James Zay

DuPage County Board Member - District 6
Chair, DuPage County Redistricting Committee