



THE CAMPAIGN FOR FAIR & INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING

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STATEMENT

## **ReShapeNY CALLS FOR IMPARTIAL REDISTRICTING PROCESS BEFORE 2012 MAPS ARE FINALIZED**

### **Redistricting Reform Must be Top Reform Priority as Legislature Returns to Albany**

Legislators Must Finally Honor Commitments to Voters to Regain Public Trust

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[ReShapeNY](#), a statewide campaign to achieve redistricting reform, calls on legislators to honor their commitments to reform the redistricting process before 2012 legislative districts are finalized.

With legislators now returning to Albany for the people's business, ReShapeNY reminds them of their promise to voters to enact redistricting reform for 2012 through the creation of a fair and impartial process led by an independent panel and using detailed criteria. During the 2010 campaign and the legislative session in 2011, Governor Cuomo and [184 of 212 of the members of the State Legislature supported reforming the process](#). Governor Cuomo has further pledged to veto lines drawn under the current system by the Legislative Task Force on Demographic Research and Reapportionment (LATFOR).

While there is no longer time to put in place the type of independent process proposed by Governor Cuomo in his 2011 program bill and by others, such as Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, Senator Michael Gianaris, Senator David Valesky, and Assemblymember Hakeem Jeffries in their respective bills, there is still enough time to establish a new and impartial process for finalizing 2012 district maps. A new, impartial process is essential. The status quo approach --- simply adopting maps drawn by LATFOR --- will not gain the public's trust, and will trigger a veto by the governor. LATFOR

is controlled by the majority party in each house of the Legislature, is not impartial, and is biased towards maintaining the power of these majorities.

While open to how an impartial process for drawing the 2012 district lines is achieved, ReShapeNY believes that it must include the application of a clear and objective set of criteria for drawing district lines and a public explanation as to how and why each individual district was drawn.

Redistricting reform in 2012 must additionally include establishing substantial change to the process for future redistricting in 2021 and beyond. These reforms for the future should include significant improvements to the process, both codified in statute and through the first passage of a strong constitutional amendment this year, with the statute serving as a backstop should second passage of a constitutional amendment by the next Legislature not occur. This approach will permanently end partisan gerrymandering through creation of an impartial process with an independent commission and detailed objective criteria – the hallmarks of the Governor’s program bill.

ReShapeNY still expects the creation of an impartial process for 2012 that will instill public trust and result in fair lines for all New Yorkers, and urges Governor Cuomo and the Legislature to work together to resolve the impasse on redistricting. Redistricting reform must become an immediate top priority for the state, as LATFOR may release draft plans as soon as this week. Further necessitating the need for immediate action is the reality that the state’s primary date will be earlier than in recent years as a result of a federal court order implementing the MOVE Act.

ReShapeNY urges legislators to put in place immediately an impartial process and honor their commitments for redistricting reform. Support for independent redistricting is at an all time high - 79% of voters support independent redistricting according to a [December 2011 Quinnipiac poll](#). It is past time for legislators to acknowledge this support and change the process. Without doing so, reform of Albany will remain incomplete in the eyes of New Yorkers, as the Legislature’s drawing of its own lines is widely recognized by the public as a conflict of interest that can not longer be tolerated.

*The ReShapeNY campaign is led by Citizens Union, the League of Women Voters/NYS and the New York Public Interest Research Group, and is supported by [32 additional organizations representing a diverse group of stakeholders](#), including citizen groups, business leaders, and advocacy organizations working in a wide range of issue areas, to bring about reform in the gridlocked state capitol by engaging, educating, and mobilizing the public to demand change. For more information about the campaign, visit <http://www.reshapeny.org>.*