

Office of the Governor
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March 9, 2022

VIA HAND DELIVERY

Honorable Clay J. Schexnayder
Speaker of the House
Louisiana House of Representatives
Post Office Box 94062
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804-9062

RE: House Bill 14 of the 2022 First Extraordinary Session

Dear Speaker Schexnayder:

Please be advised that, pursuant to Art. III, Section 18(A) of the Louisiana Constitution, House Bill 14 of the First Extraordinary Session of 2022 will become law without my signature.

This bill is the Legislature's effort to reapportion the Louisiana House of Representatives. In passing this map, the Legislature rejected several alternative proposals that would have reflected a fairer representation of the population demographics of the state. It is clear that the primary rationale behind the creation and passage of this map was to protect incumbents and to preserve the current party split in the House of Representatives.

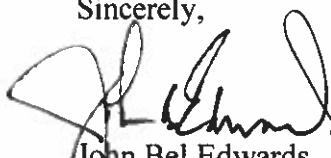
Like with the congressional maps, it is my firm belief that this map for the Louisiana House of Representatives violates Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and further is not in line with the principle of fundamental fairness that should have driven this process. Nevertheless, while I have vetoed the congressional maps and asked the Legislature to continue its work to send a congressional map to me that is fair and complies with current law, this map for the Louisiana House of Representatives will become law without my signature. Over the last six years, every single bill passed by the Legislature that has become law has done so through my signature. These maps reapportioning the Louisiana House and Senate will be the first two bills in 18 legislative sessions to become law without my signature. This decision, however, was not made lightly. The districts created by the Legislature clearly do not reflect the demographic makeup of the state and specifically do not allow for enough majority minority districts when Black Louisianans make up 31.2% of the state's voting age population. It is a simple fact that too many Black voters are denied the opportunity to elect a candidate of their choice to the Louisiana House of Representatives.

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After thoughtful consideration, I simply cannot sign the bill because I do not support the district map for the House of Representatives created by the Legislature.

Unlike the congressional maps, however, I will allow this bill to become law without my signature because I am not confident that the Legislature would reach any different result if it were to be given the chance to revisit this map in the upcoming session. There will be many important topics to debate over the next few months and Legislators should be able to focus on these important issues without the concern that any decisions or votes they make will have an impact on the way their districts would look for the 2023 elections. Furthermore, given the certainty that the legislative maps will be challenged in court, this action allows for those challenges to proceed now with the expectation that the litigation may be resolved well before the 2023 legislative elections.

Sincerely,



John Bel Edwards
Governor

cc: Honorable Patrick Page Cortez
Louisiana Senate President