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COMMITTEE  
ON  
WAYS AND MEANS

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-4208

July 18, 2006

Honorable James Sensenbrenner, Jr.  
Chairman, House Committee on the Judiciary  
2138 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Sensenbrenner:

I am deeply disturbed by last month's ruling from the Supreme Court of the United States that, as many of us see it, opens the door for professional partisan politicians to re-redistrict the American people out of the electoral process that was designed by our forefathers to give them a voice.

As you know, I have introduced legislation that would reform the Congressional redistricting process to make elections more competitive, give voters a say in who represents them in Washington, and ease the political polarization that has greatly crippled our work in the House of Representatives.

"The Fairness and Independence in Redistricting Act," HR 2642, would establish independent commissions in each state to draw that state's Congressional district map only once each decade. Our bill has bipartisan and bicameral support; Senator Tim Johnson has introduced identical legislation in the other chamber. We are hopeful both bodies will act promptly on this legislation and that you will convene a hearing on this legislation, especially because it concerns matters I know you have championed in the past.

The legislation we introduced last year is very similar to "The Congressional Districting Reform Act of 1989," HR 1711, which you authored in the 101<sup>st</sup> Congress. As I understand your 1989 legislation, it also calls for a five-member independent commission to draw each state's district map and, like our current legislation, establishes minimum guidelines to ensure each district is drawn fairly.

Knowing that in the past you have shared many of my concerns about how the redistricting process negatively impacts policy decisions, I am hopeful you will hold a hearing on my legislation so we can return the House of Representatives to the voters it was designed to represent. The American people are less interested in partisan politics than they are in our working together to find realistic solutions to the problems facing our country. "The Fairness and Independence in Redistricting Act," which would help ease that polarization, is the perfect place to start this bipartisan approach.

I look forward to your reply and the opportunity to work closely with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,

John Tanner, M.C.

CC: Honorable John Conyers, Ranking Member

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