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COMMITTEE
ON
WAYS AND MEANS

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

July 18, 2006

TO EASE POLARIZATION: GIVE CONGRESS BACK TO THE PEOPLE

Co-Sponsor the "Fairness and Independence in Redistricting Act"

"Regular Americans are more aware now than ever about what happens in Washington, D.C. But if their votes don't influence who makes it there to determine policy, then what use is this newfound knowledge?"

-- Juliet Eilperin in her 2006 book *Fight Club Politics: How Partisanship Is Poisoning the House of Representatives*

Dear Colleague:

The framers of our Constitution envisioned the House of Representatives as the only federal body elected directly by the people and representing each citizen's direct interest. But now, after decades of bitter partisanship, the voters have very little say in who represents them in Washington. Our work here is crippled by deep polarization, unwavering extremism and a strong aversion to bipartisan cooperation.

As you know, the Supreme Court ruled last month that the current practices of gerrymandering, re-districting and electoral hijacking are acceptable. Many of us disagree. We hope you will join us and the American people in calling for systemic change to give control of the House of Representatives back to the citizens it was designed to represent.

We hope you will support the bipartisan, bicameral legislation we introduced to fix our nation's redistricting system. HR 2642/S 2350 would establish bipartisan commissions in each state to draw its redistricting map only once every ten years, following the release of census data. Dozens of newspaper editorial boards, including *The New York Times* and *Roll Call*, feel this approach is the right solution, which has also been endorsed by FairVote, Common Cause, Public Citizen and the National Taxpayers Union.

To co-sponsor our legislation and help restore the House of Representatives to the representative body our forefathers intended, or to get more information, please contact Randy Ford in Congressman Tanner's office at 5-4714 or randy.ford@mail.house.gov or Adam Healy in Senator Johnson's office at 4-5842 or adam_healy@johnson.senate.gov.

Sincerely,


John Tanner
Member of Congress


Tim Johnson
United States Senator

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