

# [***New York Democrats reject bipartisan congressional map and draw their own lines***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BDV-30X1-DY7V-G063-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

(CNN) &#8212; Democrats who control the New York Legislature on Monday rejected a [*congressional map devised by a bipartisan commission*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/15/politics/new-york-redistricting-house-map/index.html) that would have given their party only a modest electoral advantage and will now have the chance to draw their own lines.

The decision [*could shape which party controls the US House*](https://www.cnn.com/politics/redistricting-states-congressional-maps-house/index.html) next year. New York is expected to be [*at the center of the battle*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/10/politics/house-races-2024/index.html) for the chamber this fall, with Republicans' narrow majority on the line. The GOP flipped four House seats in the state in the 2022 midterms, gains that helped the party [*win control of the chamber*](https://www.cnn.com/2022/11/16/politics/republicans-win-house-of-representatives/index.html).

Several New York Democrats had signaled their displeasure with the map that was approved 9-1 by the state's Independent Redistricting Commission earlier this month. The map largely left undisturbed House districts in the New York City suburbs, which have been viewed as potential battlegrounds in November. Those include the 3rd Congressional District on Long Island, which Democrats [*flipped earlier this month*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/13/politics/santos-seat-tom-suozzi-mazi-pilip/index.html) in a special election to succeed disgraced former Rep. [*George Santos*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/19/business/george-santos-sues-jimmy-kimmel/index.html).

The commission's map would have put at risk freshman Republican Brandon Williams' central New York seat by adding more territory favorable to Democrats. But, under the compromise crafted by the commission, two Hudson Valley seats - held by Republican Marc Molinaro and Democrat Pat Ryan - each appeared to have grown safer for the incumbents.

On the Senate floor Monday afternoon, Democrat Michael Gianaris, the chamber's deputy majority leader, criticized the commission's map as slicing through counties in some cases and retaining district lines to protect sitting lawmakers.

"Maps should not be drawn specifically to protect incumbents," he said.

Democratic state Sen. James Skoufis cited similar arguments in explaining prior to the vote why he opposed the commission's map.

"I know this has been described as bipartisan, but the way I've characterized it is that this is mutually partisan," he told CNN.

Republicans, meanwhile, accused Democrats of bucking the will of New Yorkers, who supported a 2014 constitutional amendment that helped establish the redistricting panel.

In rejecting the commission's map, Democratic legislators were saying, "'We don't trust the people of New York state," state Sen. George Borrello said.

New York GOP Chairman Ed Cox called Monday's vote the "predictable result of a legislature drunk with power that ignores the will of the people."

Next steps

Under state law, the Legislature has the power to weigh in on the commission's map. A two-thirds majority vote is required in each chamber to approve or reject the map.

With the commission's work now rejected, the Democratic-led Legislature can craft new lines that could swing as many as six districts in Democrats' favor - a step likely to trigger fresh litigation over accusations of aggressive partisan gerrymandering in violation of the state constitution.

Working into the wee hours of Tuesday morning, state Democrats put forward a proposal by Gianaris and Assemblyman Ken Zebrowski for new districts. Two lawmakers with knowledge of the process told CNN they expect to release maps later Tuesday.

The timing of the bill introduction means legislators will have a chance to vote on the new congressional maps as early as Thursday. Bills are required to age for a minimum of three days after introduction. Lawmakers would be able to vote even sooner if Democratic Gov. Kathy Hochul sends what is known as a "message of necessity," a procedural move that allows the three-day aging period to be waived.

On Tuesday, Hochul indicated she was prepared to move quickly. "I'm anxious to have this chapter wrapped up as soon as possible," she told reporters. "I believe the legislature wants this wrapped up within the next day or so."

Monday's action is the latest chapter in the turbulent fight over district lines in New York and is one of several redistricting skirmishes closely watched for its impact on national ***politics***.

A state court judge oversaw the process of drawing [*the congressional map used in the 2022 elections*](https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2022/politics/us-redistricting/new-york-redistricting-map/). This came after the Independent Redistricting Commission failed to agree on new lines following the 2020 census and a map drawn by the Democratic-controlled Legislature [*was rejected*](https://www.cnn.com/2022/04/27/politics/new-york-court-blocks-map/index.html) by the Court of Appeals, New York's highest court.

Democrats, arguing that the court-drawn map should not be used for more than one election, went to court again asking for the redistricting commission to try again. The Court of Appeals, now under more liberal control, [*agreed late last year*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/12/12/politics/new-york-redistricting/index.html) and tasked the commission with drawing a new map.

House candidates are slated Tuesday to begin collecting signatures for petitions to run for office - although state legislators could opt to alter the petition process if they don't reach agreement on the map quickly.

Meanwhile, shortly after the Senate voted to reject the commission's map, state senators approved legislation that would require any legal challenges to the new boundaries to only be brought in four jurisdictions - Albany, Westchester, Erie or Manhattan.

The legislation, sponsored by Democratic state Sen. Zellnor Myrie of Brooklyn, has been described as an effort to limit so-called forum shopping - a practice that Democrats say Republicans employed in 2022 when they successfully challenged the Democratic-drawn map by filing a lawsuit in Steuben County - a deep-red dot in the overwhelmingly blue state. GOP state lawmakers warned that the new measure is likely unconstitutional.

This story and headline have bee n updated for additional developments.

By Fredreka Schouten and Gloria Pazmino, CNN

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