



News from the Office of **ADAM J. BELLO** **MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE**

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MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE ADAM BELLO VETOES COUNTY LEGISLATURE TERM OF OFFICE LEGISLATION

The measure delays the legislative redistricting process and could expose the County to costly litigation for not complying with the constitutional one-person one-vote principle.

ROCHESTER, NY — Monroe County Executive Adam Bello today announced that he has vetoed a measure passed December 8, 2020 by the Monroe County Legislature that would provide all legislators elected in 2021 with two-year terms as new legislative districts are drawn based on data from the 2020 U. S. Census.

In August, Bello proposed legislation to create an independent, citizen-led commission to redraw the county's 29 legislative districts in an open and transparent manner. Under the County Executive's proposal, legislators elected in 2021 would serve a one-year term, instead of the typical two- or four-year terms, to ensure that residents of Monroe County would be represented according to fair and equitable legislative district boundaries starting in 2022. The measure passed by the County Legislature would not have legislators serving in re-proportioned districts until 2023. Monroe County could face costly legal challenges to the County Legislature's proposal because it would permit Legislators to serve in outdated, unevenly weighted districts when new Census data is available to evenly re-draw district boundaries.

The Republican majority County Legislature has so far failed to act on Bello's proposal.

"The Local Law I'm vetoing today would unfairly allow legislators elected in 2021 to serve in outdated, unevenly weighted districts for a year longer than necessary," said Bello. "I understand that pandemic-related delays in Census Bureau reporting and changes to the state's political calendar have made it impossible to complete reapportionment prior to designating candidates for this year's general election. But the measure passed by the Legislature not only fails to ensure equity in representation for all our residents, it also subverts the Constitutional principle of one person, one vote. It's imperative that the county complete its redistricting process as soon as possible and do away with unevenly weighted districts based on outdated Census data. This is simply a matter of fundamental fairness."

Bello urged the legislature to take up his proposal for an Independent Redistricting Commission.

“The redistricting process could certainly be completed in time for the 2022 general election,” he said. “My proposed legislation calls for prompt redistricting by an independent, non-partisan commission outside the hands of political party leaders and County Legislators. We must give voters confidence that this process is fair and impartial. In our democracy, voters pick their representatives, representatives do not pick their voters and we have a chance now to make real reforms to our redistricting process.”

Under Bello’s proposed measure, the Independent Redistricting Commission would have one Chairperson who would be a member of the Commission and would be elected by no fewer than five members of the Commission. The eight members of the Independent Redistricting Commission would not be compensated and would consist of the following:

- The two Commissioners of the Monroe County Board of Elections;
- Two retired judges who maintain their permanent residences in Monroe County, one to be appointed by the Majority Leader of the Monroe County Legislature and one to be appointed by the Minority Leader of the Monroe County Legislature;
- Two representatives recommended by a publicly recognized organization committed to voters' rights, one to be appointed by the Majority Leader and one appointed by the Minority Leader of the Monroe County Legislature;
- Two representatives of a publicly recognized organization committed to the rights of racial or ethnic minorities, women, persons who identify as LGBTQ, or persons with disabilities, one to be appointed by the Majority Leader and one to be appointed by the Minority Leader of the Monroe County Legislature.
- Additionally, elected officials, political party officials, lobbyists and relatives of those individuals will not be eligible to serve on the Commission.

The Commission would be tasked with drawing compact, contiguous districts that would seek to avoid dividing Towns, Villages, and neighborhoods within the City of Rochester. To ensure greater transparency, the Commission would also hold public meetings and at least two public hearings before completing its work. The enacted local law would also be subject to permissive referendum, further increasing public participation in this legislative process.

For complete details and to review this proposed local law, [click here](#).

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