

Redistricting in Wisconsin: A Comparison of Majority Minority Population within Legislative Districts **By Sarah Kemp, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Applied Population Laboratory**

In the summer of 2011 when the attention of the State was focused on the publicized recall senate elections the State legislature approved senate and assembly redistricting plan maps and rewrote the current redistricting legislation before local governments had completed their work of creating ward and supervisory district boundaries.

Prior to 2011, redistricting occurred at the local level followed by the legislative process of redistricting senate and assembly districts. Past legislatures had utilized locally approved ward boundaries to create the senate and assembly districts. However, in 2011 the legislature disregarded the local government process and utilized U.S. Census block data to create the senate and assembly districts.

State law requires that state senate and assembly districts and county supervisory and city aldermanic districts are compact, substantially equal population, and respect communities of interest in order to enhance the participation of members of a racial or language minority group in the political process and their ability to elect representatives of their choice.

The population of the State of Wisconsin is comprised of 86% non-Hispanic white and a racially and ethnically diverse population is not distributed throughout the State. However, a notable population by race/ethnicity does include Hispanic, African American, Asian, and Native American populations concentrated in mostly urban areas of the State. This research compares the demographic composition of race/ethnicity by assembly districts in the State of Wisconsin for 2000 and 2010.

Ward boundaries were used to create the legislative districts in 2002, while U.S. Census block data was used in 2011. This research will examine which of these two methods produce more racially and ethnically distinct legislative districts. Using ArcGIS and GeoDa, an exploratory spatial data analysis was conducted of the race/ethnicity population within assembly districts.

Maps will illustrate and tables will provide an assessment of the race/ethnicity composition and offer a comparison of the 2002 and 2011 assembly districts. Preliminary results indicate that legislative districts are no more racially and ethnically distinct created with a smaller geography.