

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

January 24, 2022

Statement from NYS Independent Redistricting Commissioners Martins, Nesbitt, Conway,  
Stephens and Brady

**DEMOCRAT COMMISSIONERS CALL IT QUILTS  
BLAME OTHERS FOR THEIR REFUSAL TO WORK ON A PLAN**

We are very disappointed to read a statement from our colleagues and the disingenuous accusations lodged toward half of this commission. We have worked diligently for the better part of two years to create a redistricting plan that removes years of gerrymandering by the State Legislature. Other than go through the motions, Chairman Imamura and the members of the commission appointed by the Democrats have done little or nothing to advance the process as envisioned by the drafters of the Constitutional Amendment that created the Independent Districting Commission. The Democrat appointed commissioners have no incentive to work cooperatively toward a consensus plan and, in fact, they purposely scuttled the process so that the determination of district lines would be tossed back to a legislature controlled by democrat super-majorities.

For the Democrat appointed commissioners to claim that the Republican appointed commissioners are purportedly “running out the clock to avoid a vote” for some reason, is both factually incorrect and illogical. Given the current political environment in New York, the ONLY way Republicans could have ANY say in redistricting would be through the bipartisan negotiations anticipated by the framers. For this reason, the Republican appointed commissioners stood ready, willing, and able to meet, negotiate and compromise.

In December, after months of public hearings and weeks of active discussions regarding consensus maps, Chairman Imamura announced that there would be no further discussion of consensus maps and that his caucus would be submitting its own set of maps to the Legislature. We were invited to do the same. Without a willing negotiating partner, this is precisely what was done.

On January 10<sup>th</sup> the legislature advised the Commission that the submitted plans were rejected. In the wake of the rejection, the two sides of the Commission had members meet to discuss a single plan for the final submission to the legislature. What the Democrat caucus isn't telling you, however, is that when this meeting took place, they took the position that they were “happy” with “their” plan and repeatedly refused to meet further for the purpose of discussing a single, consensus plan. Claiming to speak for all five of the Democrat appointed commissioners, Chairman Imamura stated that his caucus wanted to re-submit virtually the same plan that the legislature had roundly rejected. He kept asking to set a meeting date for the full commission with the sole purpose of advancing a flawed and previously rejected set of maps.

We offered through multiple emails to meet to discuss a single plan (one that had not been rejected by the legislature), but no response came from Chairman Imamura. After days of no response to our entreaties, on Saturday evening Commissioner Stephens sent a follow up email to Chairman Imamura and his colleagues expressing his concern that time was running out and imploring Chairman Imamura to return to the negotiations. This did get a response from Commissioner Elaine Frazier stating, “I thought we had reached a stalemate”.

A refusal by one side to engage in negotiation does not constitute a “stalemate”, it only constitutes a decision by the Democrat Commissioners and Chairman Imamura to wall themselves off and refuse to fulfill the Constitutional tasks entrusted to them by the voters of New York in 2014; a process and mandate that was reaffirmed this past November when the People of the State of New York soundly rejected a further Constitutional Amendment that would have weakened the collective role of the Independent Redistricting Commission.

It appears that Chairman Imamura and our other colleagues are handing over the keys to the Commission to the Democrat controlled legislature as they were apparently instructed to do when they were appointed.

-##-