January 20, 2022

Chairman Ray Rodrigues  
Florida Senate Reapportionment Committee  
305 Senate Building  
404 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

Chairman Tom Leek  
Florida House of Representatives Redistricting Committee  
402 House Office Building  
402 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Dear Chairman Rodrigues, Chairman Leek and members of the Senate Reapportionment Committee and the House Redistricting Committee:

We write to you today about the submission of a Congressional redistricting map by Ryan Newman, the Governor’s General Counsel on behalf of the Executive Office of the Governor.

We applaud the disclosure rules that you have mandated for submission of maps drawn by those other than legislative staff and ask that you hold the Governor’s submission to the same rules and requirements that you apply to other Florida citizens.

In reviewing the submission, we were astonished to find that the Redistricting Suggestion Form submitted with the Governor’s map does not provide vital information that every other person is required to provide if they want to submit a map. Specifically, Florida citizens who wish to submit a map must provide a list with “the name of every person(s), group(s), or organization(s) [they] collaborated with on [their] . . . submitted map”. The Governor and his staff have failed to comply with this requirement.

Legislative leaders, recalling the sordid history of the 2012 redistricting cycle, have said that they have no intention of repeating the mistakes of the past. They have explained that knowledge of who actually drew a map is essential to ensuring that any map considered in the process was not drawn with partisan intent in violation of the FairDistricts amendments. Leadership has made it clear that if any member wants the body or its committees to consider a
map that was not drawn by legislative staff, the member must be able to vouch for the map with knowledge of who drew it and the drawer’s motivation. We agree and ask that the Florida Legislature hold Governor DeSantis to the same strict standards.

Our Florida Constitution provides no official role for the Governor in the redistricting process. In fact, this is the first time in memory that a Governor has inserted himself into a process that is constitutionally delegated to the Florida legislature. Governor DeSantis should not be exempted from policies established by the committees. He should be required to divulge the names of every person involved in any way in drawing his suggested map.

In this specific instance, the Governor’s choice to insert his office into the legislative process, at a minimum, creates an appearance of partisan intent. And his failure to disclose the identity of every person involved in drawing the map underscores that appearance of improper intent.

We ask you to remove map P000C0079 from the joint redistricting website and from any legislative consideration unless and until the Governor, like any other citizen, reveals who was involved in any way in drawing the map.

We thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

The Fair Districts Coalition Executive Committee

All On The Line Florida
Common Cause Florida
Equal Ground
FairDistricts Now
Florida Watch
Florida Rising
Florida Conservation Voters
League Of Women Voters Florida
Progress Florida
State Voices Florida
Unidos US

CC: All Members of the House and the Senate