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## Editorial: Follow through on that veto promise, governor

By Messenger Post editorial

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Canandaigua, N.Y. — Talk about insulting. New York's state senators and Assembly members have **reverted to self-serving form** and have begun redrawing their own political districts.

The districts — at both the state and federal levels — need to be recast every 10 years to reflect U.S. Census figures. State lawmakers last fall fell in line with an initiative led by former New York City Mayor Ed Koch to have an independent body redraw the maps. **They have since gone back on their word** and instead established a task force made up of themselves (technically, two state senators, two Assembly members and two outside consultants). Don't let the highfalutin' name — the Legislative Advisory Task Force on Demographic Research and Reapportionment — fool you; it could just as accurately be known as the Incumbent Protection Program.

That politicians are again crafting their own districts is an insult to all New Yorkers and an affront to fair representation.

Editorial pages, good-government groups and champions of reform have railed against the practice for years — decades — but lawmakers haven't even pretended to care. This year, however, there's a critic who may just get Albany's attention: Gov. Andrew Cuomo.

The popular, first-term Democrat has made it clear he's none too pleased with **the business-as-usual method** of redrawing New York's political maps. Better yet, he has threatened to veto any proposal that is politically skewed and not put together by a non-partisan, independent body.

There are signs the lawmakers have noticed. For instance, the task force intended to ignore a new law that requires prison inmates to be counted in the district in which they lived before their incarceration. Until last year, they had been counted as living in the district in which they were imprisoned, a move that helped pad population numbers for upstate Senate Republicans.

Lawmakers now say they'll follow the law, which is still being challenged in court by Senate Republicans. That lent irony to task force co-chairman state Sen. Michael Nozzolio's assertion that, "the law will be complied with, whatever that law is."

It's nice of New York's elected officials to comply with the law; now they ought to consider complying with tenets of fairness, decency and the public good, not to mention the will of their voters. They ought to hand the entire redistricting process over to an independent body.

And if they do not: Veto away, governor.

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