

Public Testimony on General
Assembly Redistricting

Before the Ohio Apportionment Board

By Steve Dana, League of Women Voters of Oxford, Ohio

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Good afternoon. I am Steve Dana of the League of Women Voters of Oxford, Ohio. Thank you for the opportunity to provide public testimony on this important issue.

I encourage you to take three steps that will bring about dramatically positive results for the people of Ohio and enhance respect for their government: (1) Consult the maps that have risen to the top of the redistricting competition entitled "Draw the Lines"---here you will find districts that embody the best thinking based upon objective, nonpartisan criteria; (2) post your maps on the Internet at least two weeks before they are voted on; (3) allow public testimony after the proposed house and senate districts are drawn.

The League of Women Voters was founded in 1920 after a long fight to enfranchise women. This current effort to bring about districts that are representationally fair and competitive is the logical extension of the League's work to **fully** enfranchise women and men.

Ohio's Apportionment Board has created new district lines every ten years since 1971, with each major political party controlling the process twice. Each time it was done under the axiom "to the victor go the spoils," which entailed the manipulation of districts to a partisan advantage. Ohioans deserve better from their elected officials, and I urge you to seriously consider the three proposed suggestions. In short, create districts that will represent the voters of Ohio, not just one of the political parties.

Ohio is known as a battleground state because our voters are about equally divided between the two major parties. Yet nearly 2/3 of our house, senate and congressional districts favor one party or the other by over 15%. Consequently, seats have been drawn so as to practically ensure who will be elected long before the election. 61 of our 99 state house districts favor Republicans; when Democrats drew the districts, they also distorted the lines, so that a majority of districts favored the Democrats.