



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS of the Lima Area

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Public Testimony on Congressional Redistricting
Before the State Government and Elections, Sub-Committee on Redistricting
By Judith E. Gilbert, Lean of Women Voters of the Lima Area
August 2, 2011

Good morning. I am Judy Gilbert, President of the League of Women Voters of the Lima Area. Thank you for the opportunity to provide public testimony on this important issue.

In our state we again find ourselves at a critical juncture regarding apportionment of voter districts following the most recent census. Unfortunately, redistricting in Ohio continues to be a political football tossed back and forth to favor one political party over the other.

In 1971 and 1981, redistricting maps were drawn by the Democrats. Both times the maps undermined the intent of voters and advantaged the Democratic party. In 1991 and 2001, redistricting maps were drawn by the Republicans. Both times the maps undermined the intent of voters and advantaged the Republican party.

Districts were drawn to artificially promote one political party by packing the voters of the opposition party into a very few districts, splitting up areas that would naturally produce districts favoring one party and dividing communities. In this system politicians pick their voters instead of letting voters pick their politicians.

Redistricting should reflect the values of voters not the values of a political party.

The League of Women Voters has a long history of supporting a redistricting plan founded on equitable apportionment based on population.

The League

- Encourages redistricting reform at the state level
- Favors a non-partisan, mathematical distributing plan
- Opposes political and racial gerrymandering
- Supports transparency for the Apportionment Board selection process

The LWV supports drawing districts that fully comply with the Voting Rights Act, are compact, competitive, respectful of political subdivisions, and fairly represent the political values of Ohio voters. These are the criteria for a competition recently launched by the Ohio Campaign for Accountable Redistricting (OCAR) in which the League is a partner.

Public citizens can go online and draw Ohio legislative and congressional districts using publicly available software and 2010 census data. Prizes will be awarded to the winners and OCAR will submit the highest scoring plans to the Legislature and Apportionment Board for their consideration. Here is your chance for civic participation in the democratic process! To submit your plan, go to drawthelineohio.org.

Thank you for your attention.
Judith E. Gilbert