



League of Women Voters of Greater Cincinnati

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**Public Testimony on Congressional Redistricting  
Before the State Government and Elections Sub-Committee on Redistricting  
(in conjunction with the Senate Select Committee on Redistricting)  
By Alice Schneider, League of Women Voters of Greater Cincinnati, Ohio  
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Good Afternoon. My name is Alice Schneider and I am the immediate past president of the League of Women Voters.

While redistricting is only one part of the electoral system, it is a very important part. The League of Women Voters urges that there be a fair and impartial process of creating voting districts. I would like to express the concern that the League has on the integrity of the election process when officials "gerrymander" districts. Dividing up districts so that they are safe for either party undermines the election system in several ways.

**First of all, it undermines the confidence that voters have in the system.** Voters feel that the election is rigged before they even vote.

**Secondly, the creation of an overwhelming preponderance of Congressionally safe seats has the effect of nullifying politics.** In other words, no matter how the voters feel, about 90 percent of the districts are now preordained to go to a certain party because of sophisticated gerrymandering. The decline of marginal districts has a polarizing effect on House and Senate politics, and, indirectly, on all politics. Safe seats lock in the left-liberal tendencies of the Democratic Party, and the right-wing dominance of the Republican Party. In addition, safe districts result in primary elections that pull the most partisan voters. Because of that, the candidates must appeal to those hard-core partisans. The system gives us legislators who are more concerned about party ideology than finding common ground or finding the middle or compromising. As a result we see stalemates in Congress rather than a working toward the common good.

**Third, there is less accountability from elected officials in "safe districts".** Candidates should have to worry about the views of their constituents.... If districts were not drawn, as they are, to minimize competition, representatives would be more accountable to the American mainstream. Most incumbents would still win. But they'd have to worry more about explaining themselves in public to nonpartisan voters. And they'd be less free to play to the national right or left and to party leaders.

The League believe that the system should be reformed to require that redistricting be