

LWVLA POSITIONS ON REDISTRICTING

The League of Women Voters of Louisiana (LWVLA) is a non-partisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. It has over 300 members in local leagues and units in Orleans, St. Tammany, East Baton Rouge, Lafayette, Natchitoches and Caddo-Bossier parishes. LWVLA influences public policy through education and advocacy.

For the past two years, LWVLA has sponsored educational meetings and webinars on redistricting, often in collaboration with other organizations. These events informed voters on the state and federal constitutional requirements for redistricting and explained the process whereby the plans to redraw Louisiana's voting districts will be prepared. Since the process of redistricting is to begin with the upcoming Special Session of the Louisiana State Legislature, it is now time for the LWVLA to turn from educating to advocating for those policies which it considers crucial to the generation of fair voting district maps.

In addition to the minimally acceptable criteria adopted in the 2021 Regular Session HCR 90, the LWVLA supports the following redistricting policies.

When the Special Session of the State Legislature meets:

- All proposed maps should be available to the public as they are developed.
- Meetings should be open to public testimony.
- To ensure maximum public participation, virtual public testimony should be allowed.

Draw district maps to achieve proportional representation of minorities

- Of the six Congressional districts, two should be majority-minority.
- Of the seven Louisiana Supreme Court districts, two should be majority-minority.
- Of the five PSC districts, one should be majority-minority.
- Of the eight BESE districts, three should be majority-minority.

Plans for state representative and senator districts:

- Should not protect incumbency
- Should be politically competitive
- Should adjust districts to give added representation to areas that have had the greatest population growth
- Should respect communities with common cultural, economic and geographic interests:
 - Avoid dividing communities of interest among multiple districts
 - Avoid districts that are composed of an excessive number of parishes
 - Avoid districts that are primarily one parish with just a sliver of another

The LWVLA urges the members of the Senate and Governmental Affairs and House and Governmental Affairs Committees to adopt these policies with the goal of achieving fair maps through the redistricting process.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Hilda Walker Thomas, President
League of Women Voters of Louisiana