



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF OHIO**

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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 Ann Henkener, League of Women Voters of Ohio  
June 20, 2011

Good morning. I am Ann Henkener of the League of Women Voters of Ohio. Thank you for the opportunity to provide public testimony on this important issue.

At the press conference yesterday announcing the launch of our competition in which anyone can submit a proposal for redistricting Ohio, I described the public interest criteria used in drawing maps for the competition, and was asked by a member of the media whether Ohio's current maps are a failure. I immediately answered yes, they are a failure. In retrospect, a more nuanced answer was probably in order. Both times the maps were drawn by the Democrats, in 1971 and 1981, they were very successful in undermining voters intent and were successful in advantaging the Democratic party. Both times the maps were drawn by the Republicans, in 1991 and 2001, they were very successful in undermining voters intent and were successful in advantaging the Republican party. The only failure came in drawing districts that were fair to voters. Districts were drawn to be "safe" for one party or another, so where a competitive district could just as easily been draw, it was carefully avoided. Districts were drawn to artificially favor one political party by "packing" the voters of the opposition party into a very few districts. They were drawn to "crack" areas that would naturally produce districts favoring the opposition party.

As we sit here in Columbus, the state's capital, we are in a "cracked" district. Columbus is large enough to be a single district with just a little left over, but it is in three different districts. Likewise, Franklin County could be in about one and a half districts, but is split into 3 districts. A district solely in Franklin County would be either Democratically leaning or it would be a competitive district. However, by skillfully adding voters from numerous surrounding counties to the fragments of Columbus and Franklin County, all 3 districts have consistently sent Republicans to Congress, except for one two year span in the 15<sup>th</sup> district.

The competition in 2009 was based on the same information the legislature used to draw the current maps. It showed districts can be drawn to fully comply with the Voting Rights Act, be compact, competitive, respectful of political subdivisions, and fairly represent the political values of Ohio voters. That is my definition of success for the people of Ohio. A similar competition is being conducted this year and the public is submitting maps based on current data. More information is contained in the attached press release. I urge you to carefully review those maps and approve districts that reflect the values of the voters, not the values of a political party. I encourage you to again hear public testimony after the legislature has drawn proposed Congressional districts for the next decade so that you can have the benefit of the public's input on your specific proposal.

Thank you for your attention. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

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