

League of Women Voters of Michigan

Comments by Jessica Reiser, President Michigan Redistricting Collaborative Press Conference February 10, 2011

The League of Women Voters of Michigan calls for an open redistricting process that provides meaningful opportunities for public involvement.

Open redistricting will give citizens and communities a voice in the process, the opportunity to make sure that their interests are heard. It makes the process about citizen representation, rather than political interests.

Throughout its history, the League has worked to promote the values and processes of representative government. We don't need to remind our elected officials that they represent us, the voters, the citizens. But sometimes we do need to remind them that we are entitled to watch how they carry out business, to give them our opinions on what they are doing, and to know the reasons for their decisions. This is one of those times.

Therefore, the League joins the Michigan Redistricting Collaborative in calling for a process that includes the following components, to support public involvement in redistricting:

- First, public hearings should be held in various parts of the state to obtain citizen input. We recommend that a minimum of three take place outside of Lansing and that hearings be broadcast so that all citizens have an opportunity to take part.
- Secondly, the data used to draw districts and tools to view and comment on proposed redistricting maps should be made available on the web.
- Redistricting maps proposed by the Legislature should also be posted on the state's web site for at least 30 days prior to adoption, with sufficient data and explanation to understand how the districts were drawn, the population make-up of each district, and how the public interest was best served by these configurations.
- On the county level, similar policies aimed at increasing transparency and public participation should be followed.

We urge the Legislature, as well as county redistricting commissions, to commit to providing citizens the opportunities to be informed and participate in this very important process.