



### **Senate Redistricting Lake & McHenry Counties Hearing – April 7, 2021**

Thank you, Chair Aquino and committee members, for the opportunity to provide testimony about the Illinois redistricting process. My name is Mary Mathews, and I am a Director on the Board of the League of Women Voters of Lake County.

The League of Women Voters of Lake County (LWV-LC) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, political organization which encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Throughout the county, the LWV-LC attracts members. It acts on behalf of all residents of economically, racially, culturally, and politically diverse Lake County.

The League of Women Voters of Lake County has been involved with redistricting reform for decades and advocates for a transparent and independent process. The LWV-LC supports what has been referred to as Fair Maps, with districts that are compact and contiguous with practically equal populations. Additionally, a remapping process must recognize communities of interest and enable representation of minority populations. A number of Lake County districts do not appear to meet that criteria.

The LWV-LC opposes partisan and racial gerrymandering. To avoid such manipulation and to better serve the public, the LWV-LC believes an independent commission would provide more transparency and encourage meaningful community input.

Additionally, the LWV-LC supports #SB2554, legislation introduced by one of our elected officials, Senator Melinda Bush. Legislative initiatives should include

- 35 or more public redistricting hearings throughout Illinois, with ample notice and detailed information
- A website both for map submissions from the public and for posting relevant records from the General Assembly's work on the remap
- A public hearing after the introduction of a final map that will allow for adjustments to be made before the Illinois General Assembly or a backup commission votes
- Written evidence the final proposed map meets Federal Voting Rights Act and Illinois Voting Rights Act standards, ensures effective representation of racial and linguistic minorities, and provides for preservation and protection of community stakeholders

The League of Women Voters of Lake County believes the remapping process requires reforms leading to competitive elections. Residents would be empowered to elect legislators to represent the interests of the people and community and could be held accountable.

Thank you for considering my comments; I look forward to your response.

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