

Testimony by Abigail C. Nichols (Abigail\_Nichols@hotmail.com)  
League of Women Voters of Illinois  
ILGA Senate Redistricting Committee, Tuesday, October 12, 2021

Good afternoon. My name is Abigail Nichols.

I am a member of the League of Women Voters of Chicago, and as such, am also a member of the League of Women Voters of Illinois (LWVIL). I am authorized by state president Allyson Haut to speak today for the League of Women Voters of Illinois.

Founded in 1920, the League of Women Voters of Illinois is a member-driven organization with 42 chapters and more than three thousand five hundred members throughout the State of Illinois. Since the 1990's we have advocated reforms to the state redistricting process. Our recent efforts have focused on an amendment to the Illinois constitution to provide for a more transparent map drawing process and community input through the use of an independent State redistricting commission.

The LWVIL has closely monitored the process in the Illinois legislature for the drawing of state house and senate district maps this spring and summer. We find the process lacking. It fails to ensure equity and transparency. For example:

- Final bills with actual data defining the maps were introduced less than 24 hours before the Illinois General Assembly took votes that approved maps. This process did not allow an opportunity for the public to study the maps or weigh in after the final proposals were released. Nor did this process provide any response to the public by the Illinois General Assembly such as explaining their decisions or making needed adjustments to the maps.
- No written evidence was provided to show that the final legislative maps provide equity by meeting the standards of the Federal Voting Rights Act and the Illinois Voting Rights Act standards which require effective representation of racial and linguistic minorities.

Now it appears that the process for adopting maps for the Illinois US Congressional District Maps is following the same pattern as the one used to adopt State Legislative District Maps. There is no transparency and no assurance that the public will be able to have meaningful input prior to votes approving Congressional District Maps.

Illinois must adopt a redistricting process that is more accessible, equitable, and transparent and accountable to the people. Responsibility for redistricting should be vested in an independent special commission.

The League of Women Voters of Illinois supports redistricting processes and enforceable standards that promote fair and effective representation at all levels of government with maximum opportunity for public participation.

Thank you for the opportunity for the League of Women Voters of Illinois to express its views on the process of redistricting in Illinois.

