

4-16-2011

Draft Statement for Spring 2011 Redistricting Hearings

President ^{ms} Good morning. My name is Judi Szilak, and I am a ~~a~~ member of the League of Women Voters of McHenry County.

^{ms} Thank you for this opportunity to share some thoughts with you about the League of Women Voters and the 2011 redistricting process of the Illinois General Assembly.

As you know, redistricting is an important and vital democratic process and one which cannot be taken lightly.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public policy through education and advocacy. We neither support nor oppose any political party or candidate for public office.

The League of Women Voters of Illinois has for many years promoted a set of redistricting principles as well as a process that is timely and orderly and includes the following elements:

- a formal, announced timetable;
- the availability of information and related data to all who wish to participate in the process,
- ample opportunities for expert testimony, public reaction and input into the proposed maps,
- compromise among partisan representatives,
- avoids partisan stalemate, and
- produces maps which offer voters a choice of candidates in elections.

The public should be allowed to see and comment on any new maps that are drawn by the Illinois General Assembly at least two weeks before they are voted on by the Senate and House during this session of the General Assembly.

Additionally, the General Assembly should give as much rationale as possible when describing the decisions that resulted in the final districts drawn.

Maps should not intentionally or unnecessarily split communities of interest. All too frequently, voters do not have a clear sense of who represents them in the General Assembly. Communities frequently are split unnecessarily into multiple legislative or congressional districts. If the map of a district is drawn rationally, keeping communities and municipalities together, elected officials and their constituents can build accountable, productive, working relationships.

The League of Women Voters believes that a fair and open redistricting process is one that ensures citizen participation and results in the best public policy for the residents of Illinois. Citizen participation is key to maintaining and strengthening democracy in our state.

Thank you.

Austi Splach (pres)

16 April 2011

League of Women Voters McHenry County