

LWVO supports Redistricting Reform Ballot Issue

(From January 2015 League Leader Updates)

At its January meeting, the LWVO board discussed the redistricting reform measure (HJR12) that was passed by the legislature in December. The LWVO Board voted to support the redistricting reform proposal that will be on the November 2015 ballot as Issue 1.

The proposal meets many of the criteria in the LWVO position:

- LWVO's position on redistricting calls for a bi-partisan redistricting board. The proposal calls for a redistricting commission made up of the Governor, Auditor, Secretary of State and 2 majority party appointees and 2 minority party appointees. There must be bi-partisan approval of any plan that is to last for the entire decade. This is a big step forward because not only is the commission bi-partisan, but there is a requirement that both parties approve the maps.
- LWVO's position encourages citizen participation. The proposal calls for 3 public hearings around the state to seek input after the commission selects proposed maps and before it makes final selections. It also requires that all meetings be open to the public and that they be broadcast electronically in a medium readily accessible by the general public.
- LWVO's position calls for districts to be compact and follow local political boundaries as much as possible. The proposal strictly requires districts to be within a single county or to be made up of people in counties next to each other. If that isn't possible, the commission must respect municipal, township and ward boundaries. This should produce districts that make more sense to voters who are already familiar with the local political boundaries.

There is bi-partisan support for this proposal. The League is looking forward to working with traditional coalition partners, as well as other supporters of the ballot issue, in educating voters about the way this proposal could give us representatives who better reflect voters' political values.

It should be noted that Issue 1 only addresses how districts are drawn for the Ohio Legislature, not Congress. The League will continue to work for Congressional redistricting.