



**TESTIMONY ON PROPOSED REDISTRICTING MAP FOR
THE KENTUCKY HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS AND
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

January 5, 2022

The League of Women Voters of Kentucky appreciates the opportunity to testify about the redistricting map released by Kentucky House Speaker David Osborne on December 30, 2021. We were especially pleased to hear House leadership's stated concern for preserving or expanding opportunities for voters from minority groups to elect candidates of their choice, though without the data, or principles used, it is difficult to fully understand this result. In our early review, many districts also seem more compact than the ones they would replace. It was also good to learn that key legislators are ready to support a delay in candidate filing deadlines so that the 2022 elections can be conducted in districts based on 2020 Census data.

With regret, however, we cannot support the proposed set of House districts, for the following reasons:

1. We seek districts drawn without attention to the impact on incumbent officeholders, in alignment with the position of the League of Women Voters of the United States. This proposed House map was explicitly designed to protect incumbents. From our 2017 redistricting study through all our work over the last four years, we have consistently called for the interests of voters, not the interest of current officials, to be the basis for redistricting.
2. We advocate for maps that divide counties where needed, but without slicing the larger counties to ribbons. In the newly released House map, however, a number of major counties have been divided in quite destructive ways. Parts of Laurel County, for example, are included in six different proposed seats, without any district centered on London. Some claim that gives Laurel County more power in the legislature because it has more representatives. This belies reality. Instead of a unified London voice in the legislature, its population is represented by diverse, adjoining districts that may have little in common with London. In our analysis so far, we have identified similar sharp divisions in Christian, Daviess, Franklin, Hardin, Jessamine, Madison, Pike, and Pulaski Counties. Those divisions appear to have been designed to ensure that incumbents, those currently holding office, could continue to do so. In our judgment, districts could have been drawn more constructively if voters, rather than officeholders, had been the priority.
3. We are struggling to understand the proposals for the state's very largest counties: Jefferson, Fayette, and Kenton. The released maps do not come with data on the population of the districts or with precinct or street boundaries that would let us analyze those elements. Again it appears that the emphasis was on incumbents. A holiday weekend was not enough time to analyze districts of this complexity.
4. A wider public needs the time and the opportunity to analyze and comment on all the proposed districts. For example, a real understanding of district changes that affect Covington

and Hopkinsville will require thought from people who live in those areas, but the current calendar that is being pushed through the House, does not allow those residents to share full thoughts with legislators or with the League and other civic organizations.

Accordingly, we respectfully urge:

- Rapid release to the public of the data and principles behind the proposed House map, shares in forms that allow careful consideration.
- Quick action to reset the filing deadline for those who want to run for office in the 2022 elections: the current January 7 deadline will clearly come and go before the maps are finalized.
- A responsible timetable for action to establish new districts, giving Kentucky citizens time to study them, identify concerns, and propose improvements. This process should take weeks, not hours, and include many participants, not just a few drafters behind closed doors.

One final point: At Thursday's press event, Rep. Jerry Miller offered the view that the League's Recommended Maps, if enacted into law, would violate the Voting Rights Act. We reject his claim. We worked zealously to propose maps that fulfill the full legal requirements for American legislative districts. The districts in our maps have total populations (as enumerated in the 2020 Census) that comply with the one-person, one-vote requirements of the U.S Constitution and the rulings of the United States Supreme Court and the Kentucky Supreme Court. The districts in our maps also provide opportunities for non-white voters to elect candidates of their choosing, and we analyzed those districts of opportunity by looking at voting-age population, in line with multiple Voting Rights Act rulings based on the same kind of data. We are in continuing dialogue with Rep. Miller about these issues and hope to arrive at a shared understanding in the very near future.

The League of Women Voters of Kentucky, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Since 2017, LWVKY has studied redistricting, provided multiple public presentations, advocated for an advisory commission approach to redistricting, published three versions of ways legislative seats could be districted, and conducted a statewide series of forums and online input opportunities to gather thoughts on the LWVKY Draft Maps. As a nonpartisan body, the League takes action on issues but does not support or oppose candidates or parties. The League supports diversity, equity and inclusion in membership and programming. Learn more at lwvky.org.

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