

LWVIL GOVERNMENT POSITION: STATE REDISTRICTING

Support for a redistricting process which is timely, orderly and meets the basic criteria relating to population, compactness and contiguity and the requirements of the 1965 U.S. Voting Rights Act and subsequent amendments.

STATE REDISTRICTING (1993): The League supports a redistricting process which is timely and orderly and which includes a formal announced timetable, makes information and related data available to all who wish to participate in the process, offers ample opportunities for expert testimony and public reaction to the proposed maps, encourages compromise among partisan representatives, avoids a partisan stalemate, and results in maps which offer the voters a choice of candidates for election.

The League supports the following criteria for drawing state legislative districts:

- 1) Population equity: The average deviation among all districts in each house shall not exceed a range of 1 percent, with no more than a 5 percent variance between the most populated and the least populated districts. Districts shall be based on current census statistics.
- 2) All districts shall be drawn in compliance with the United States Voting Rights Act of 1965 and subsequent amendments.
- 3) Compact and contiguous: All districts shall be compact, with the smallest perimeter possible, and contiguous, adjacent to one another with more than a single point of contiguity. Areas connected only at points of adjoining corners are not contiguous.
- 4) Boundaries:
 - a) The number of counties, towns and cities divided among more than one district shall be as small as possible.
 - b) Districts shall follow existing political boundaries (i.e., county, municipal, ward lines), as far as possible.
 - c) No city block shall be subdivided, since a city block is the smallest parcel for which census data are available.
 - d) Where possible, district lines shall follow permanent and easily recognized features, such as toll ways, expressways, highways, streets, rivers, and clear geographical features, and when practical, shall coincide with census tract boundaries.
- 5) No district shall be drawn with the intent to favor a political party or incumbent legislator or congressman.

- 6) Each state senatorial district shall consist of two entire house districts as currently stipulated in the state constitution. Ideally each state senatorial district shall be entirely within a single U.S. Congressional district.

These criteria may be applied to any redistricting process.

Background Prior to the adoption of the 1970 Illinois Constitution, LWVIL developed a position relating to apportionment that included a preferred method for redistricting legislative districts after each decennial census. Article IV, Section 3 of the 1970 Constitution details procedures to be followed in legislative redistricting. Four redistrictings have taken place using these rules. In 1981, 1991, and 2001, because there was no agreement on the proposed maps in either the legislature or the Legislative Redistricting Commission, it was necessary to select a tiebreaker member for the Legislative Redistricting Commission. The selected maps reflected the partisanship of the tiebreaker member's vote. Suits were filed each time and the new legislative districts were determined based on court rulings.

In 1992, LWVIL created a Redistricting Task Force to develop a position for local Leagues' concurrence. Delegates to the 1993 LWVIL Convention adopted the position on State Redistricting.

Delegates to the 2009 LWVIL Convention adopted the Action Focus: True Census Count 2010 & Redistricting Reform. The goal is to promote the full participation of all Illinois residents in the 2010 Census. LWVIL will work actively with a broad based coalition of organizations to achieve a full count. The League recognizes the need for a redistricting process that is timely, orderly and meets the basic criteria relating to population, compactness and contiguity and the requirements of the 1965 U. S. Voting Rights Act and subsequent amendments. The Census 2010 count impacts the number of Congressional Districts assigned to Illinois and the amounts of federal dollars that will be returned to the states. The Census 2010 results will also be used to draw state and local legislative and ward maps.

LWVIL action In 1992, Illinois' Secretary of State created a Bipartisan Review Commission to consider reforms in Illinois' Procedures for Re-mapping Legislative Districts. With the adoption of its State Redistricting position, the League was prepared to comment on this commission's recommendations.

The Review Commission was reconvened in 1998 and submitted its report to the governor early in 1999. The commission recommended changes that required a constitutional amendment. A Senate Joint Resolution, calling for submitting a proposed constitutional amendment to the voters, was introduced in May 1999. The amendment to Articles IV and XIV would have changed the way in which the State redistricts the Illinois House and Senate. If passed by both houses, the proposition would have been voted on in November 2000. If approved by the voters, it would have taken effect beginning with redistricting in 2001. The League was represented on the commission. Since the General Assembly never adopted the resolution, there was no opportunity to vote on the new redistricting process. In response to requests from legislative staff, the League submitted a copy of League's redistricting position to both the House and Senate Redistricting Committees. Redistricting statements were made to legislative committees, which held hearings around the state.