

LWVIL 2013 - 2015 Biennium Report: Redistricting Reform

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Yes for Independent Maps – Ballot Initiative for 2014

The LWVIL supported the efforts of the *Yes for Independent Maps* initiative to place the Illinois Independent Redistricting Amendment on the November 2014 ballot. The proposed amendment to Article IV, Section 3 of the Illinois Constitution would have changed the way the Illinois General Assembly House and Senate districts are drawn after the US Census by providing for an independent commission to the draw maps.

LWVIL Redistricting Campaign Efforts included:

- Approval by the LWVIL Board on September 7, 2013 to support the *Yes for Independent Maps* initiative.
- Updates in the LWVIL E-News between September 2013 and July 2014 including:
 - An explanation of LWVIL support of the amendment
 - Information on obtaining, circulating and returning petitions
 - An explanation of why the amendment did not include a way to redraw Congressional Districts
 - Ideas on locations to pass petitions
 - Progress of the ballot initiative
- Presenting a plenary session at the Annual Issues Briefing in February 2014, titled *Redistricting: What's Been Happening Since 2011?* Speakers included Ryan Blitstein, CHANGE IL Senior Advisor, Yes for Independent Maps, Ruth Greenwood, Fellow, Chicago Committee for Civil Rights Under the Law and Mary Schaafsma, ED LWVIL.
- Making a statement at a press event on May 1, 2014 when the petitions were delivered to the State Board of Elections Office in Springfield.
- Sending a TFA asking for volunteers to help validate signatures on the petitions at the *Yes for Independent Maps* campaign office.

In July 2014, the *Yes for Independent Maps* campaign decided not to further pursue its efforts to get the amendment on the November ballot. The *Yes* initiative failed because of a lack of valid signatures and a ruling in the Circuit court of Cook County that while Legislative Redistricting appears to be a valid subject for a citizen initiative, there were some amendment provision that were neither structural nor procedural as required by the Illinois Constitution.

LWVIL participated in a debriefing of the *Yes for Independent Maps* Campaign in September 2014 and contributed to the discussion about positive aspects and lessons learned from the campaign.

Independent Map Amendment – Ballot Initiative for 2016

A new petition campaign to establish a non-partisan, independent commission to draw legislative maps was formally announced on April 28, 2015. Mary Kubasak, LWVIL President, is a member of the Board of Directors for the Independent Map Amendment ballot initiative. The LWVIL Redistricting Committee

met on April 29, 2015 to discuss the League's involvement in general public education on redistricting and advocacy work on the Independent Map Amendment. The ballot initiative campaign kick off for LWVIL is taking place at LWVIL convention in June. There will be a speaker at the Plenary Session and Caucuses on the initiative. Volunteers can download petitions and instructions at www.MapAmendment.org.

LWV Chicago

In 2014, the LWV of Chicago filed a lawsuit, which challenged the City of Chicago ward maps. Chicago drew maps, which protected 41 incumbents and thus avoided a referendum on the maps. Chicago also began to use the new maps, prior to aldermen being elected for the new wards in 2015. The lawsuit, claiming that the city's ward re-map violated the "one person, one Vote" principle and therefore denied Chicago residents equal representation in City council, was dismissed in court.

LWVUS

Delegates to the 2014 LWVUS Convention recognized the importance of national redistricting reform by adopting a comprehensive three-part program combining study and review of key specific structures of American democracy, with one of the three parts being , "A review of the redistricting process for the U.S. Congress ... for the purpose of developing action steps".