



LWV/LA County

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY - An Inter-League Organization

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Statement on the Formation of the Citizens Redistricting Commission

before the California Bureau of State Audits at the Los Angeles Central Branch Library, Mark Taper Auditorium, 630 W. 5th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90071

Monday, February 23, 2009

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen. My name is Lola Ungar and I represent the League of Women Voters of Los Angeles County as Advocacy Director. We are an Inter-League organization that comprises 11 League of Women Voters groups throughout Los Angeles County.

We have worked hard in support of ^{independent} redistricting for many years because we were tired of politicians who were unaccountable and want to help stop the gridlock in Sacramento that keeps pressing issues from being addressed.

The most recent marathon budget impasse in the California legislature is yet another reason that the new Redistricting guidelines are so very urgent. The passage of the Voters First Act will forever change the current system which has allowed legislators to draw their own district lines to guarantee their reelection. State lawmakers have had an inherent conflict of interest and have been unaccountable to voters and their needs—which is why we couldn't get a budget passed, or healthcare reform, or proper education funding, or you name it.

After the 2010 census, the new Redistricting Commission will have removed power from the legislators to redraw district boundaries for the State Senate, State Assembly and State Board of Equalization.

The League supports the Applicant Review Panel that narrows the pool to 60 persons and then the final appointment of a 14-member independent citizens commission to perform this process, establish clear criteria for how the boundaries shall be drawn. The League most assuredly supports an open and transparent process with due notice, public hearings, and no communications outside of the hearings.

And, in the formation of the commission, we would like to suggest that you cast your nets far and wide by giving state-wide notice using a public and transparent application process that disseminates the process information and forms to news organizations, cities, counties and especially, public libraries throughout the State of California. Thus, information about the Commission and the application process will be able to reach the largest possible audience and include the broadest group of applicants that we expect should include women and minorities.

And, because women and minorities represent such a large percentage of our state's population we are counting on you to reflect that population in your final appointments to the Redistricting Commission.

We look forward to hearing more about your open hearings throughout the state, the comments of the hearing participants, and we will continue to follow the application process as it plays out.

Thank you for your attention.