



**Testimony in support of an open and transparent redistricting process  
Submitted to the Special Joint Committee on Redistricting  
By Judy Zaunbrecher and Elizabeth Foster-Nolan, LWVMA Co-Presidents  
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The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts supports continuing and enhancing the redistricting process implemented by the Special Joint Committee on Redistricting in 2011. This process included twelve open hearings across the state to solicit public testimony on the division of the Commonwealth into Congressional, state legislator, and Governor's Council districts and four public hearings on proposed redistricting maps. The League urges the Committee to conduct at least this number of hearings in 2021. The League encourages using open meeting law standards for the Committee's work.

Full disclosure of the process and timelines encourages public participation. The Special Joint Committee on Redistricting should design its public facing website and process to encourage unbiased testimony by citizens-at-large, representatives of public interest groups, and members of historically underserved communities. Providing the information in a variety of languages representative of the diverse communities in Massachusetts, making hearings easy to attend for residents with limited access to broadband and transportation, and ensuring access for people with disabilities is important so these communities feel welcome to participate in the process.

LWVMA recognizes that the current health emergency due to COVID-19 limits the Committee's ability to hold hearings in person. We encourage the Committee to work to ensure fair and equal access to virtual hearings and to hold in-person hearings as soon as public health officials determine it is safe to do so.

The League realizes the late release of the 2020 Census data creates uncertainty and pressure on the redistricting process and timeline. We encourage the Committee to maintain a plan that includes public comment periods on proposed maps developed using the US Census data.

The legislative and Governor's Council districts adopted by the legislature will provide the fundamental basis for representative government in Massachusetts until 2032. An open and transparent process that encourages broad public input should result in unbiased maps that provide for effective representation of racial and linguistic minorities and fair representation for all residents in Massachusetts. That process will also create public confidence in the final maps.

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts which represents 47 local Leagues across the state, from Cape Cod to the Berkshires, will encourage its members to participate in the process, help publicize the hearing schedule, and offer training to the public on the redistricting process and how to participate in it.

The League supports the Committee using an open and transparent redistricting process and doing all you can to do so in this challenging year. Thank you for your consideration.