



TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE RULES AND EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

HB 1260 Congressional Districts – Standards (Anti-Gerrymandering of Maryland’s Congressional Districts)

POSITION: Support

BY: Lois Hybl & Richard Willson, Co-Presidents

Date: March 15, 2021

The League of Women Voters supports a fair redistricting process and standards that promote fair and effective representation of the entire population of Maryland in the US Congress. Election maps are adjusted every ten years after the Census to account for population shifts and ensure each district has substantially equal populations. However, since 1812 US politicians on both sides of the aisle have also used the redistricting process to provide their party with an advantage in elections for the coming decade. Using our current technology, politicians today can achieve this with unprecedented precision.

The standards in this bill are the same as those the Maryland constitution already applies to legislative districts, and we think that they are equally appropriate for Congressional districts. Adjoining and compact districts give the voters a much better opportunity to know their representatives and to engage in political discussions. Setting territorial standards in the redistricting process would help to restore the faith of voters in their elected officials.

After the 2010 Census, seven states (CO, MI, MO, NY, OH, UT and VA) adopted commissions to draw these districts to reduce partisan influence, for a total of eighteen states. Maryland should join them, if not by legislating a commission, at least by strengthening our democracy by setting standards for drawing districts

We urge a favorable report on HB 1260.