



The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 101-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

February 25, 2021

To: Chair Kathleen Taylor, Senate Committee on Redistricting;
Chair Andrea Salinas, House Special Committee on Redistricting
[Submit Testimony](#)

Re: **Invited comment on Oregon state 2021 redistricting process**

On invitation of committee staff, the League of Voters of Oregon (LWVOR) submits these written comments for the joint information sessions of the House and Senate redistricting committees.

For many decades, the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) has researched, debated, and adopted positions on redistricting. Its most recent position, adopted in 2016, is:

The League of Women Voters believes responsibility for redistricting preferably should be vested in an independent special commission, with membership that reflects the diversity of the unit of government, including citizens at large, representatives of public interest groups, and members of minority groups.

Every redistricting process should include:

- *Specific timelines for the steps leading to a redistricting plan*
- *Full disclosure throughout the process and public hearings on the plan proposed for adoption*
 - *Redistricting at all levels of government must be accomplished in an open, unbiased manner with citizen participation and access at all levels and steps of the process, and*
 - *Should be subject to open meeting laws.*
- *A provision that any redistricting plan should be adopted by the redistricting authority with more than a simple majority vote.*
 - *Remedial provisions established in the event that the redistricting authority fails to enact a plan. Specific provisions should be made for court review of redistricting measures and for courts to require the redistricting authority to act on a specific schedule.*
 - *Time limits should be set for initiating court action for review.*
 - *The courts should promptly review and rule on any challenge to a redistricting plan and require adjustments if the standards have not been met.*

The standards on which a redistricting plan is based, and on which any plan should be judged, must:

- *Be enforceable in court*
- *Require:*
 - *Substantially equal population*
 - *Geographic contiguity*
 - *Effective representation of racial and linguistic minorities*
- *Provide for (to the extent possible)*
 - *Promotion of partisan fairness*
 - *Preservation and protection of “communities of interest”*
 - *Respect for boundaries of municipalities and counties*

- *Compactness and competitiveness may also be considered as criteria so long as they do not conflict with the above criteria*
- *Explicitly reject*
 - *Protection of incumbents, through such devices as considering an incumbent's address*
 - *Preferential treatment for a political party, through such devices as considering party affiliation, voting history and candidate residence.*

The LWVUS has sponsored its People Powered Fair Maps redistricting campaign, consistent with its redistricting position, in all 50 states.

Beginning in 2006, the LWVOR has researched, considered, and has taken public positions, and has vigorously advocated for fair and independent state redistricting. The state League's current position is:

Redistricting methods should advance the purposes of representative democracy by affording citizens meaningful choices and by holding government accountable to the people.

A redistricting plan should adhere to all legal requirements, such as districts must have equal population, be contiguous, fulfill provisions of the Voting Rights Act, and also promote competitiveness and partisan fairness.

Redistricting plans should be developed independently of the Legislature.

The LWVOR is particularly interested in supporting racial, ethnic, cultural and other communities which are often left with reduced legislative representation.

We urge the Legislative Assembly to use only the highest quality data for the purpose of redistricting -- that from the US Census Bureau. Using data gathered less stringently will likely lead to court challenges of any maps generated from such data.

With the repeated delays in the delivery to the states of the necessary US Census Bureau's redistricting data until as late as September 30, 2021, we urge the Legislative Assembly to use this year's general session to propose for the 2022 ballot a Constitutional amendment creating a citizens' redistricting commission comparable to that proposed by People Not Politicians (PNP) in 2020 (IP 57). Even during the pandemic, PNP, of which the LWVOR has been a primary sponsor, gathered more than 64,000 signatures of Oregon voters for IP 57. This amply demonstrated the popularity of IP 57 among voters.

We also urge the Legislature to create at least an independent citizens' advisory commission, as more than a dozen states have already done, for the 2021 Oregon redistricting process in the seven months before the Census Bureau redistricting data is expected to be received.

We urge your support for comparable reforms which would lead the Oregon process closer to a citizen-oriented, transparent, and equitable redistricting process, consistent with the redistricting positions of the LWVOR and LWVUS.

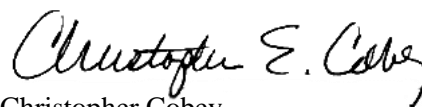
Thank you for your invitation to comment on Oregon's 2021 redistricting process.



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