



**TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE RULES AND EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS  
COMMITTEE**

**HB 2 Congressional Districting Plan**

**POSITION: Oppose**

**BY: Nancy Soreng & Deborah Mitchell, Co-Presidents**

**DATE: December 6, 2021**

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan grassroots organization that has worked for over a century to empower voters by increasing citizens' understanding of public policy issues and advocating for transparency and best practices in our democratic system. The League believes that the redistricting process, when done right, has the potential to reduce political polarization and build trust among communities of interest.

We appreciate that Maryland's redistricting process has improved compared to 2011. The transparency and accessibility of the state-wide hearings was a significant step toward our 2004 position of "...maximum opportunity for public scrutiny."

The LWVMD's position further states: "An independent commission as the preferred redistricting body. The membership of the redistricting commission should:

- be multi-partisan
- include unaffiliated voters
- be geographically representative
- not include any current state elected official

The process whereby the Governor appointed the three co-chairs, who then selected the remaining six members without articulating their standards for doing so, left it open to mistrust. Without clear direction from Maryland's constitution or statutes, and without appropriate funding, this Commission lacked legitimacy in the eyes of the electorate. Maryland needs redistricting reforms codified in law or its Constitution, establishing standards for who can serve on the commission and criteria that must be followed when drawing district maps.

The LWVMD's position also states: "Standards on which the redistricting plan is based should include: substantially equal population; geographic contiguity; and geographic compactness." This Congressional district map does meet these standards.

The LWVMD, representing over 1400 concerned citizens throughout Maryland, urges an unfavorable report on HB 2 Congressional Districting Plan.