



TESTIMONY TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE

SB 2100/HB 2100 Election Districts - General Assembly and Representatives in Congress

POSITION: Informational

By: Linda Kohn, President

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Since 1920, the League of Women Voters of Maryland has had one singular mission: Empower Voters, Defend Democracy. LWVMD has overcome obstacles, discrimination, and sins of the past, and we continue our fight to always put voters at the center of democracy—not political parties.

The idea that SB/HB 2100 is a simple amendment to the Constitution to clear up a court decision is an insult to the voters of Maryland. It is a blatant step towards mid-cycle redistricting in an effort to get rid of the last **R**epublican district of Maryland. In effect, silencing the voters of the Eastern Shore.

Beyond the short-sighted nature of this bill to simply remove **R**epublican representation, there are very real long-term consequences. These are decisions that can impact Marylanders well beyond this current political climate and this current General Assembly. This amendment comes without a sunset clause, without clear definitions of how maps should be drawn, and essentially gives whoever is in power a blank check to redo maps before elections as they see fit.

Through the constant fighting for even more power, Maryland's majority party has forgotten that, at the end of the day, it should be the voters who choose who represents them. If maps are so gerrymandered that elections are predetermined, you have cut voters out of the democratic process.

Let us be clear: Maryland has 4.2 million voters, and hearing from approximately 50 people over the course of 2 hours does not a democracy make. We have seen a commitment to holding meetings and votes behind closed doors, rushing the process to leave voters out, and a general lack of transparency that seems almost intentionally designed to confuse voters. If mid-cycle redistricting is truly the destiny of Maryland, LWVMD must insist that it be done using the following criteria:

1. An independent commission is established
2. New maps use the basis of compact, contiguous, and equal populations
3. A complete and totally transparent process



The League of Women Voters of Maryland makes a simple ask: remember that you, the legislators, serve the people of Maryland; that politicians must never choose their voters; and that, most importantly, you cannot defend democracy by destroying it.