

Public Submission to the West Virginia Legislature Joint Committee on Redistricting

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From: Sarah Barnes
Sent: Thursday, August 12, 2021 10:33 PM
To: Joint Redistricting
Subject: Statement from League of Women Voters Morgantown-Monongalia County
Attachments: LWV-MM - Redistricting Statement - Google Docs.pdf

Dear Joint Committee Members,

Attached is a copy of the statement I read at this evening's hearing.

Thank you very much for providing the opportunity for the public to speak to you this evening. We are looking forward to participating in this process in the coming months.

Sincerely,
Sarah Barnes
President, League of Women Voters Morgantown-Monongalia County



Statement on Redistricting, 8/12/2021

My name is Sarah Barnes and I am president of the League of Women Voters of Morgantown-Monongalia County.

The League of Women Voters is proud to be a nonpartisan organization. This means we neither support nor oppose candidates or political parties at any level of government. However, we are always working on vital issues of concern to members and the public. Ensuring fairness and public participation in the redistricting process is one of these vital issues.

- We have long advocated for the redistricting process to be the responsibility of a non-partisan commission to ensure that political districts are not drawn to favor political parties or to discriminate against certain voters.
- In the absence of such a commission, we expect this Redistricting Committee to adhere to the provisions in our state constitution requiring districts to be compact, contiguous, and considerate of the boundaries of our counties, neighborhoods, and communities.
- We ask the committee also to take into account the efforts by the City of Morgantown last year to rebalance the boundaries of its wards. This process is thoroughly documented and was successful in fairly adjusting the ward boundaries for population and registered voters while respecting existing neighborhood, street, and topographic boundaries.
- Additionally, the maps for Morgantown were made available during the process to solicit feedback from the public, and adjustments to the final map reflected that vital feedback.

- We recommend that this Committee follow the Morgantown model and engage the public throughout the redistricting process to ensure our maps are representative of our communities. The goal should be voters choosing their representatives instead of representatives choosing their voters.
- Finally, redistricting should be transparent and participatory. Public hearings are essential for accountability. We appreciate your meeting with the public today and on other days. We expect this Committee to continue to engage the public as participants in the drawing of the new maps on which we will rely for the next decade.

Thank you.