



League of Women Voters of New Mexico

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Testimony to the NM Legislative Redistricting Committee

Madame Chairs and Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters thanks the legislature for scheduling public hearings at locations throughout the state despite the lack of budgeted funds for this purpose. We have been told that these hearings will include education about the legal requirements of the redistricting process, sample maps, and time for public comment. The League supports these efforts and urges the Legislative Redistricting Committee to take public input into account when producing its final versions of the new redistricting plans.

The League appreciates the easily accessible, excellent redistricting information available on the NM Legislative web site. Having detailed maps, Census 2010 data, membership of this committee, and its meeting schedule are immensely helpful.

The League asks that the committee go further, and arrange to webcast all of the meetings and public hearings and make the videos available on the website. We also request that transcripts of the meetings be posted and that public comments be made available online as well.

Today, the League is announcing the availability to the public of the District Builder software. Developed by the Public Mapping Project, this software allows members of the general public to draw their own lines for congressional and legislative districts, producing plans that conform to the legally-required redistricting criteria and that clearly identify their communities. The web site is publicmapping.org. We encourage the public and members of this committee to try it.

We have been assured that the draft redistricting maps that the Legislature will vote on will be online before the beginning of the September Special Session of the Legislature. However, we are aware of no hearings that will let the public comment on those maps. Recognizing the time and budget constraints, the League of Women Voters is offering to help. If the Committee wishes, we could provide moderators for a series of follow-up meetings to present the Committee's recommendations to New Mexicans prior to the Special Session. This will add transparency to the redistricting process. These follow-up meetings will let the public see whether their concerns have been addressed, in what manner, and ask questions of Committee members.

In conclusion, the League thanks you

- for undertaking one of the most important tasks in a democracy, ensuring that every citizen is represented;
- for keeping the redistricting process visible and
- for soliciting public input.

Cheryl Haaker, Chair

Fair Representation Committee, League of Women Voters of New Mexico

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