



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.

September 13, 2021

To: Chair [Kathleen Taylor](#), Co-Chairs [Shelly Boshart Davis](#) and [Andrea Salinas](#)
Concurrent [House](#) and [Senate Redistricting Committees](#)

Re: Final maps for redistricting congressional, state senate and state house districts – **Comment**

When we came [before you in February](#), we explained the League’s history of engagement on the subject of redistricting dating back to the 1960s, based on our extensive studies and positions.

We are now in an extraordinarily compressed period for consideration of the draft committee maps. When the League helped pass amendments to [ORS 188.010\(2\)\(a\)](#) ([HB 2974 Enrolled](#), 2015), that bill required five final hearings “after a reapportionment plan is proposed”. We imagined that we would have at this point in the process three near-final maps for congress, the state senate, and the state house. Instead, we have eight draft committee maps, as apparently neither the parties nor the chambers could agree on a single set of draft maps for the three jurisdictions.

Up to now in these final 12 hearings, you have heard mostly anecdotal assertions about fairness, adherence to criteria, communities of common interest, or partisanship, asking for you to move this line or that district, with little concrete evidence. However, we are about to present quite different information about how you might objectively evaluate all the maps.

The foundation of a representative democracy is that a legislative body roughly and proportionally represents the will of the voters. Gerrymanderers wish to create an **un**representative legislature. The counter to gerrymandering is a fair map where the share of districts favored by each party matches that party’s share of voting behavior in the state. This “**fair redistricting**” criterion was recently codified into the Ohio State Constitution.

(<https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/laws/ohio-constitution/section?const=11.06>)¹

Another measure of fair maps is the “efficiency gap”, which is the difference between each party’s share of “wasted votes” – those that don’t contribute to a candidate winning. A smaller gap is better. For example, the **FiveThirtyEight** website² measured the efficiency gap of the draft House Democratic congressional map plan as +17.0% towards Democrats; the draft House Republican plan as +16.7% towards Democrats; and the current congressional districts as +13.4% toward Democrats. In other words, all three plans highly favor Democrats.

The **FiveThirtyEight** website also gives an estimate of the “partisan breakdown” of the proposed congressional districts: The House Democratic plan is 2 solid Democratic, 3 leaning Democratic, 1 solid Republican, and no highly competitive districts. The House Republican plan is 2 solid Democratic, 3 highly competitive, and 1 solid Republican districts. In other words, both plans are highly partisan, since both attempt to create as many “safe” and leaning districts for their party as possible. Voters in safe districts lose control because they have little possibility of changing their representation.

There are many internet resources available to objectively evaluate redistricting plans: The **PlanScore**³ website, a Project of the Campaign Legal Center, allows the upload of plan shapefiles and other formats to obtain measures of efficiency gap, partisan bias, mean-median, and declination.

¹ <https://preprints.apsanet.org/engage/api-gateway/apsa/assets/orp/resource/item/6138e4f565db1ec5eab053ec/original/fair-and-square-redistricting.pdf>

² <https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/redistricting-2022-maps/oregon/>

³ <https://planscore.campaignlegal.org/oregon/#!2012-plan-statesenate-d2>

Likewise, **Dave's Redistricting**⁴ website allows analysis of uploaded plans. The unique **Princeton Gerrymandering Project**⁵ generates statistical and legal analyses of hundreds of redistricting plan variations for uploaded census data.

The League is critical of the Legislative Assembly's redistricting process, because of the inherent conflict of interest of legislators drawing their own districts. Furthermore, the public will have no opportunity to comment on final maps before Sept. 20, as implied by [ORS 188.010\(2\)\(a\)](#). Furthermore, BIPOC, non-affiliated (now the largest group of registered voters), and third party voters will all have little influence on the final maps. We believe that an independent redistricting commission, as proposed in [Initiative Petition 16](#), could better serve the voters of Oregon.

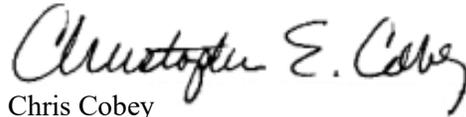
Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this vital issue.



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⁴ <https://davesredistricting.org/maps#state::OR>

⁵ <https://gerrymander.princeton.edu/reforms/OR>