



## The League supports Constitutional Amendment No. 1

On Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup>, Virginians have the opportunity to approve Constitutional Amendment No. 1 to create a citizen-led redistricting commission. It is a once-in-a-decade opportunity to create a more fair and democratic process for selecting Virginia's legislators.

"This Constitutional Amendment will end our state's years of gerrymandering and create a transparent process that respects community and geographic boundaries. Legislators will no longer be able to draw rigged district lines to keep one party in power," said Elizabeth Obenshain, president of the League of Women Voters of Montgomery County. The League of Women Voters has advocated for this amendment for more than 30 years.

**The amendment has bipartisan support from leaders of both political parties.** It will create a commission of eight legislators and eight citizens led by a citizen chairperson. Retired judges will select citizens from lists provided by General Assembly leaders from both parties. All meetings and decisions will be open and transparent to the public. No more backroom deals. The ballot question reads:

*Should the Constitution of Virginia be amended to establish a redistricting commission, consisting of eight members of the General Assembly and eight citizens of the Commonwealth, that is responsible for drawing the congressional and state legislative districts that will be subsequently voted on, but not changed by, the General Assembly and enacted without the Governor's involvement and to give the responsibility of drawing districts to the Supreme Court of Virginia if the redistricting commission fails to draw districts or the General Assembly fails to enact districts by certain deadlines? YES/NO*

A **"YES" vote** supports giving the power to draw legislative and congressional districts to a bipartisan commission of citizens and legislators. The General Assembly gets to approve the commission's map on an up-or-down vote but may not amend it. The meetings, minutes and data will be open to the public. This would be the first time in the state's history that citizens would have a voice in the process. The governor cannot veto any plan approved by the General Assembly. If the plan fails, the Supreme Court of Virginia becomes responsible for drawing these election districts.

Some critics have raised concern about the Supreme Court's role, but accompanying legislation requires the court to appoint a citizen special master to draw the maps. The justices are bound by rules of judicial ethics and are appointees of both Democrat- and Republican-controlled legislative chambers.

The amendment also requires lines be drawn in accordance with "laws that address racial and ethnic fairness."

**"Let's be clear: This amendment is the only chance Virginia voters have to take control of the map-drawing process from the partisan-controlled legislature for at least the next decade,"** wrote Bobby Vassar and Wyatt Durette, the Democratic and Republican co-chairs of the Fair Maps Virginia ballot campaign, in an oped in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*.