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TESTIMONY ON STAFF CONGRESSIONAL PROPOSAL BEFORE THE AD HOC REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE OF THE SC HOUSE

December 16, 2021

The proposed Congressional map is not one that the League of Women Voters can be enthusiastic about, although there are positive aspects. Overall, the map is slightly more competitive and proportional than the current map, although it cannot be rated highly in either respect.

Our greatest concerns relate to the treatment of regional communities of interest. Our own Congressional map proposal shows that it is very possible to draw a map that includes a reliable opportunity district for minority voters and that also conforms to South Carolina's major regions and broad communities of interest. The House proposal does not do that.

Everyone has recognized that CD 1 and 6 are subject to the greatest change in this redistricting cycle, given major population shifts. We risk sounding like a broken record because we have been saying this since introducing our own Congressional proposal in September, two and a half months ago, but North Charleston belongs with Charleston in CD 1, not with Columbia, as do the surrounding communities. Population growth has been substantial in the Lowcountry satellite cities and suburbs around Charleston. This area makes up a major cohesive community of interest that should be protected as such.

As the League map shows, when the Congressional map is drawn in a way that is consistent with that reality, CD 1 is a naturally competitive district, one in which the expected partisan gap according to our figures would be within 1 percent. The League believes that when an area is naturally competitive it is important that this is reflected in redistricting so that voters have a true choice in November elections. We acknowledge that CD 1 as drawn in the current House proposal is within a competitive range, but that outcome is not achieved in a way that accurately reflects regional economic and social relationships.

The House map also violates communities of interest in the Midlands. Drawing CD 6 with greater respect for real communities of interest, as in the League proposal, makes it a Midlands and upper Lowcountry district. In our proposal, Richland County is not split. In the House proposal, Richland County would no longer be split between Districts 2 and 6 but between Districts 5 and 6. To the best of our knowledge, Richland has not been placed in the equivalent of the 5th in the past century. Since the 5th is now dominated by the Charlotte suburbs that spill over into the northern tier of South Carolina counties, commonalities with Richland County are few. There is also no need to continue the current projection of CD 5 through Richland County, cracking minority neighborhoods in its path.

The current House proposal for CD 6 also gives the district a somewhat higher total minority population than is required to ensure that racial and linguistic minority voters can elect a candidate of their choice. It produces a massive gap in partisan preferences (based on a composite of 2016-2020 statewide elections) of 36%. Correcting the community and political subdivision issues would help to address this unnecessarily extreme imbalance.

Finally, we have noticed that as map proposals have gone through the multiple stages of amendment before final approval, they have tended to become worse, rather than better, from the perspective of voter interests. We hope that the House will work to improve this map and we recommend the voter-focused solutions embodied in our own proposal.

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APPENDIX

Partisan lean figures are based on Dave's Redistricting App (DRA) composite of statewide races from 2016-2020. Competitive districts are very generously defined as those having a $\pm 5\%$ partisan margin.

PARTISAN LEAN

Congress Districts	Current Map %			LWVSC %			Senate Staff %			House Staff %		
	Rep	Dem	Gap	Rep	Dem	Gap	Rep	Dem	Gap	Rep	Dem	Gap
1	54.46	43.19	11	49.26	48.31	1	55.92	41.82	14	51.91	46.65	5
2	56.50	41.29	15	60.29	37.67	23	56.36	41.43	15	59.79	38.19	22
3	67.98	30.19	38	68.19	29.96	38	67.92	30.25	38	67.72	30.45	37
4	60.81	36.96	24	59.97	37.79	22	59.92	37.84	22	60.15	37.62	22
5	57.51	40.58	17	58.85	39.3	20	58.30	39.79	19	59.24	38.72	20
6	31.45	67.08	36	35.43	62.95	28	32.60	66.74	34	32.43	66.01	36
7	58.54	40.08	18	59.76	39.74	20	58.56	40.06	19	58.58	40.04	19

DRA RATINGS

	Competitiveness	Proportionality	Splitting	Compactness	Minority
Current Map	9	0	30	38	50
LWVSC	20	25	78	42	50
Senate Staff	6	0	30	38	50
House Staff	14	8	47	40	50

DRA ASSESSMENT

	Rep Lean	Dem Lean	Number in $\pm 5\%$ Competitive Range
Current Map	6	1	0
LWVSC	5	1	1
Senate Staff	6	1	0
House Staff	5	1	1

SPLITS

	County Splits (6 splits needed for almost exactly equal population)	Precinct Splits (6 splits needed for almost exactly equal populations)
Current Map	12 counties are split a total of 12 times: Beaufort (1), Berkeley (1), Charleston (1), Colleton (1), Dorchester (1), Florence (1), Greenville (1), Newberry (1), Orangeburg (1), Richland (1), Spartanburg (1), and Sumter (1).	65
LWVSC Map	6 counties are split a total of 5 times: Barnwell (1), Berkeley (1), Edgefield (1), Greenville (1), Marlboro (1), and Spartanburg (1).	23
Senate Proposal	13 counties are split a total of 13 times: Beaufort (1), Berkeley (1), Calhoun (1),	10

	Charleston (1), Colleton (1), Dorchester (1), Florence (1), Greenville (1), Jasper (1), Orangeburg (1), Richland (1), Spartanburg (1), and Sumter (1).	
House Staff	8 counties are split a total of 8 times: Berkeley (1), Charleston (1), Colleton (1), Dorchester (1), Florence (1), Greenville (1), Richland (1), and Spartanburg (1)	26

MINORITY POPULATION, DISTRICTS 1 AND 6

	District 1 %		District 6 %	
	BVAP	Total Minority	BVAP	Total Minority
Current	17.27	29.01	52.45	60.42
LWVSC	23.33	34.60	48.80	56.54
Senate Plan	16.70	28.52	48.42	56.78
House Plan	21.02	31.61	51.83	60.12