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## LWVSC Testimony, H.4717, Redistricting

The League of Women Voters of South Carolina opposes this bill. We do not do so because we wish to defend the current South Carolina congressional map. We have made our thoughts on the enacted plan for our state's congressional map clear in both federal and state courts.<sup>1</sup> The map proposed in H.4717 is nevertheless even worse.

Redistricting should serve the interests of voters by accurately reflecting social, political, and economic commonalities and needs of communities of interest. We reject redistricting that is instead designed to serve the interests of candidates or parties. Redistricting systems that deprive eligible electors of meaningful votes fundamentally corrupt representative democracy.

The evidence is clear that sponsors of H.4717 wish to conduct a redefinition of the South Carolina congressional map for the purpose of producing an outcome that they prefer. The proposed map would reduce the Black Voting Age Population in CD 6 from 46.89% to 35.67% and the partisan lean from 65.03% D to 52.25% D. It achieves this through complete abuse of the traditional criteria that underlie responsible redistricting. CD 6 would extend from the coast at Charleston to the Waxhaws south of Charlotte. CD 3 would take in the entire Savannah River Valley.

Overall, the districts do not meet the usual House standard of compactness and would diverge from legitimate redistricting standards such as shared economic and social environments. Both candidates and winners of congressional elections would face difficulty simply covering distances of many miles within their districts, as well as serious problems in adequately representing their interests.

This massive restructuring of our congressional map would proceed with no opportunity for public input other than standard legislative subcommittee hearings, including this one, which are seldom followed by the public. We further note that legislators often argue that we should avoid massive changes in district boundaries because voters value the relationships that they have established with their representatives, relationships very often ended by this map. It is likely that the people of South Carolina would eventually find opportunities to make their great unhappiness about both the process and the result known to legislators.

This map would violate Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act as it has been interpreted by courts since its passage. Applying this map to the midterm elections would also surely be challenged as a violation of the Purcell principle, which holds that election rules should not be changed soon before an election.

In conclusion, we ask you to reject H.4717.

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<sup>1</sup> LWVSC *et al* Amicus Brief, NAACP v. Alexander (Docket No.22-807 before the U. S. Supreme Court); also LWVSC v. Alexander before the South Carolina Supreme Court (Appellate Case No. 2024-001227, Opinion No. 28301).