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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE REDISTRICTING SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE SC SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

October 21, 2021

The League of Women Voters of South Carolina has submitted our proposals for Congressional and SC Senate maps. Our principal map drawer, John Ruoff, is here with me today and will discuss individual map decision points. Shayna Howell is also here from Charleston. Shayna has been coordinating very important parts of our process including organizing our independent Redistricting Advisory Committee (RAC) of former public officials, representatives of public interest groups, and academics with relevant background. Their advice was immensely valuable. Another important member of our team, Matthew Saltzman of Clemson, could not be here today. He has worked with a team of university students to evaluate both current South Carolina maps and those we have submitted to you and will lead our evaluation of maps to be proposed by the Senate.

During the map drawing process, we attended Senate public hearings, watched video of hearings we could not attend, solicited input from local League members across South Carolina, and received advice and comments in a series of virtual meetings with our RAC members. Our maps reflect those sources of input in the context of the League's criteria, which have been presented to you in previous meetings.

I would like to begin with some general points observations about the resulting League maps:

- We wanted our maps to receive serious consideration and have employed only criteria that are widely accepted and easily defended.
- Our maps protect minority voting rights while they do not artificially "pack" districts with minority voters to dilute their influence in surrounding districts.
- Our districts prioritize faithfulness to county and municipal boundaries. These are important communities of interest in themselves and their protection in map drawing was identified as a top priority by every group that we consulted and by many who testified to the Senate. Our map includes 21 counties split into more than one district and 47 cases in which counties were split into multiple districts. This is a substantial improvement over the 34 counties split 75 times in the existing Senate map. Dave's Redistricting App rates the current Senate districts as "very bad" on this criterion, while the League map is rated "ok."
- Our map also splits far fewer precincts than our current map. In contrast to the 151 precincts split now, our map splits only 5 precincts. Election workers would be very happy to see this become reality.
- Our map improves compactness over the existing Senate districts, even though this was a relatively low priority for us.
- We did not use voting history data in our map drawing and did not design districts specifically for competitiveness. Realistically, our map provides more competitive districts than the current Senate map but still gets a rating of "very bad" on the Dave's Redistricting competitiveness scale, which looked at the number of districts in which partisan outcomes would be expected to fall within a 45-55% range. This reflects the extent to which underlying demography shapes our districts.
- Finally, "safe" districts are safe because they are very unbalanced in their partisan preference. The more extreme the imbalance, the easier it is for representatives to focus on a subset of constituents, their most reliable primary voters, leaving others ignored both in and out of election season. This in

turn leads to more extreme politics, a grave danger to our state and nation. We hoped that by focusing on drawing districts that realistically reflect the varied composition of our communities, our districts should produce less extreme election results. Even when a district isn't easily competitive, within a $\pm 5\%$ margin, candidates would have to understand that the district could become competitive with the right candidate and the right campaign.

There is no perfect measure of this, but we can provide a basic evaluation of our success or failure. We compared the Partisan Analysis Report results (based on Biden v. Trump results in 2020) for our League districts with partisan vote gaps between major party winners and losers in the 2020 Senate Elections. In 19 districts the League map reduced the gap between parties significantly, while raising it in only 5. Overall, in this comparison our districts would be expected to produce a mean difference in partisan outcomes for the major parties of about 24% with a SD of about 16%. This contrasts with the results of the Senate 2020 election in which the mean difference between parties in all districts is about twice as great, about 47% with a SD of about 37%.

To be completely fair, we recognize that the 47% figure for current Senate maps is skewed upwards by races in which there was no major party competition at all. This leads to districts in which the final numbers were around 97% or 98% for one party to 0% for the other. Presumably if someone from the opposing major party had run, they would have received some votes, although the totals would probably have been low. However, even if we consider only those 31 districts in which there were two major party candidates in 2020, the current Senate map difference between partisan outcomes only drops to a mean of 23% with a 14% SD, not quite as good as the figure for the League's statewide maps without the 15 most badly biased districts.

These numbers show that the current Senate districts have been drawn in a way that intentionally makes districts homogenous in a way that deprives our general election votes of meaning. At the same time, this exaggerates partisan differences between districts, a pattern that feeds the deadly polarization that is causing our politics to become increasingly extreme and more removed from the preferences of the average citizen.

We therefore believe that our League maps with their substantial reduction in what are now very exaggerated vote imbalances much more accurately reflects our communities and that representation in the South Carolina Senate based on our maps would be a very healthy thing for our state and nation.

I will now turn this over to League member John Ruoff, who drew our maps, to discuss some more specific points of interest.

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APPENDIX

District #	2020 Presidential Election Partisan Difference for LWVSC Map			2020 Senate Race by Current District			Difference in partisan outcome between LWVSC Map and 2020 Senate race
	Trump 2020	Biden 2020	Partisan Difference	2020 Senate Republican	2020 Senate Democratic	2020 Senate Partisan Difference	
01	70.14	29.86	40.280000	98.02	0	98.020000	-57.740000
02	79.85	20.15	59.700000	98.10	0	98.100000	-38.400000
03	72.40	27.60	44.800000	74.03	25.87	48.160000	-3.360000
04	68.88	31.12	37.760000	72.71	27.21	45.500000	-7.740000
05	69.99	30.01	39.980000	76.13	23.81	52.320000	-12.340000
06	62.27	37.73	24.540000	63.13	34.75	28.380000	-3.840000
07	36.91	63.09	-26.180000	37.23	65.51	-28.280000	2.100000
08	58.20	41.80	16.400000	96.36	0	96.360000	-79.960000
09	64.63	34.37	30.260000	96.95	0	96.950000	-66.690000
10	62.46	37.54	24.920000	55.96	43.95	12.010000	12.910000
11	53.05	46.95	6.100000	55.45	44.50	10.950000	-4.850000
12	64.70	35.30	29.400000	64.86	34.98	29.880000	-0.480000
13	66.85	33.15	33.700000	97.16	0	97.160000	-63.460000
14	74.98	25.02	49.960000	83.86	0	83.860000	-33.900000
15	49.38	50.62	-1.240000	60.17	39.76	20.410000	-21.650000

16	63.06	36.94	26.120000	63.25	36.66	26.590000	- 0.47000000
17	55.32	44.68	10.640000	48.40	51.51	- 3.1100000	13.750000
18	63.63	36.37	27.260000	72.22	27.68	44.540000	-17.280000
19	21.57	78.43	-56.860000	0	98.76	- 98.760000	41.900000
20	36.33	63.67	-27.340000	46.56	53.24	- 6.6800000	-20.660000
21	28.75	71.25	-42.500000	0	97.91	- 97.910000	55.410000
22	31.92	68.08	-36.160000	37.76	62.17	- 24.410000	-11.750000
23	66.54	33.46	33.080000	72.51	27.36	45.150000	-12.070000
24	60.75	39.25	21.500000	96.96	0	96.960000	-75.460000
25	66.80	33.20	33.600000	69.55	30.36	39.190000	-5.5900000
26	62.51	37.49	25.020000	45.49	54.43	- 8.9400000	33.960000
27	61.24	38.76	22.480000	50.97	48.94	2.0300000	20.450000
28	70.20	29.80	40.400000	98.36	0	98.360000	-57.960000
29	47.39	52.61	-5.2200000	46.20	53.66	- 7.4600000	2.2400000
30	46.25	53.75	-7.5000000	97.01	0	97.010000	-104.51000
31	52.33	47.67	4.6600000	97.29	0	97.290000	-92.630000
32	43.79	56.21	-12.420000	39.32	60.56	- 21.240000	8.8200000
33	61.40	38.60	22.800000	96.99	0	96.990000	-74.190000

34	56.80	43.20	13.600000	66.70	33.22	33.480000	-19.880000
35	67.74	32.26	35.480000	0	96.19	- 96.190000	131.67000
36	45.98	54.02	-8.0400000	42.45	57.45	-15	6.9600000
37	56.24	43.76	12.480000	58.67	38.64	20.030000	-7.5500000
38	51.91	48.09	3.8200000	58.84	41.05	17.790000	-13.970000
39	41.93	58.07	-16.140000	43.44	56.47	- 13.030000	-3.1100000
40	48.14	51.86	-3.7200000	0	97.46	- 97.460000	93.740000
41	43.69	56.31	-12.620000	50.85	49.07	1.7800000	-14.400000
42	23.79	76.21	-52.420000	0	98.04	- 98.040000	45.620000
43	49.75	50.25	- 0.50000000	56.17	43.75	12.420000	-12.920000
44	58.79	41.21	17.580000	57.01	42.88	14.130000	3.4500000
45	47.18	52.82	-5.6400000	40.49	59.41	- 18.920000	13.280000
46	58.56	41.44	17.120000	65.74	34.20	31.540000	-14.420000

