



The League of Women Voters of New York State  
62 Grand Street, Albany, New York 12207  
Phone: 518-465-4162 Fax: 518-465-0812  
www.lwvny.org E-Mail: lwvny@lwvny.org

**THE LEAGUE  
OF WOMEN VOTERS**  
*of New York State*

**TESTIMONY BEFORE LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON DEMOGRAPHIC  
RESEARCH AND REAPPORTIONMENT  
ALBANY, NY  
JANUARY 30, 2012**

Good morning members of LATFOR. My name is Barbara Bartoletti and I am the Legislative Director for the League of Women Voters of New York State. The League is a non-partisan organization which encourages informed and active involvement in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. We are also members of a statewide coalition dedicated to reforming New York's redistricting process, ReShapeNY, which consists of 35 organizations including civic groups, issue-advocacy groups, unions and business organizations.

While we appreciate the opportunity that today's second round of public hearing provides to comment on the recently released lines for state legislative districts, we are extremely disappointed that there has been no change in the process that produced these proposed state legislative district lines. It is no surprise that they have been the subject of so much criticism given the inherent self-interest of the process. One of the best critiques of the lines comes from our colleague Bill Mahoney at NYPIRG, who looked at a rising population inequality among all the districts. His analysis makes evident that the process has resulted in even more gerrymandered lines in the state Senate than that produced through previous cycles of political gerrymandering.

Back in August before this same body, we testified that continuing with LATFOR proceedings, the only legally mandated process at this time, will end in Governor Cuomo vetoing the very lines it draws, making this entire process a waste of time. Now the

governor has publicly stated that these lines are unacceptable and he will consider a veto. We agree. The League also believes that fixing the 2012 redistricting lines is not sufficient; enacting redistricting reform for the future is also critical. The ten-year cycle of Albany politicians drawing lines to ensure political incumbency of the parties in power for the next decade must stop. Now is the time to realize lasting and certain structural reform to this fundamentally flawed redistricting process.

The public wants an independent commission - not LATFOR - to draw state legislative and congressional district boundaries according to fair and objective criteria with public input. Voters across all parties want an independent body to draw the lines. Sixty-one out of 62 senators and 123 out of 150 assembly members have either signed on to the Governor's legislation or legislation proposed in their respective houses, or signed pledges and questionnaires from good government groups in support of reforming the redistricting process.

In the 2010 election, New York State had one of the lowest rates of voter participation in the nation. This is no surprise. Why should people vote if they face no real choice in candidates?