



**CGA Reapportionment Committee
July 18, 2011 Public Hearing
Norwalk City Hall
Comments by Pat Donovan, Redistricting Specialist**

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut, a statewide organization with nearly 2000 members, commends the spirit of cooperation that the members of the General Assembly's Redistricting Committee have shown and the committee's efforts to obtain public input. We urge that all meetings be well publicized, that the public continue to have access to testimony and transcripts, and that all redistricting proposals submitted by the public, and eventually the committee, be posted on the state's redistricting page.

Redistricting is not straightforward; there is more involved than the size of or shift in population. Redistricting plans must comply with Sections 2 and 5 of the Voting Rights Act (one person, one vote) and the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteen Amendment. The Acts have the potential to conflict with partisan objectives. Districts can be drawn to give some people more voting power than others. Redistricting effects citizen representation. District lines can be drawn in an infinite number of ways, and how they are drawn can effect who is elected.

Our comments will be directed towards a process that is representative, accountable, transparent and responsive. Redistricting should establish and maintain voting districts that are faithful to the principal of one person, one vote. The League of Women Voters believes that legislative districts should have equal population, respect minority representation, be contiguous and compact and follow political and geographic boundaries. In order to achieve representative democracy, we cannot stress enough that redistricting plans must be drawn in a manner that allows elected bodies to reflect the diversity of the populace, especially racial and ethnic diversity. To that end, one specific measure for redistricting purposes we support is for the Committee to count those incarcerated as part of their hometown population and not the towns in which they incarcerated.

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut applauds the Committee for the efforts it has taken to ensure transparency and invite public input. We look forward to reviewing the Committee's proposed redistricting maps and hope to see districts that have equal population, respect minority representation, are contiguous and compact and follow political and geographic boundaries.