

## **PUBLIC MEETING ON REDISTRICTING**

The League of Women Voters of the Tiffin Area will hold a public meeting on the topic of Ohio's redistricting on **Wednesday, November 15, 2023, at 6:30 P. M.** at the Essex House, across the parking lot from the Seneca County Commission on Aging, 382 S Huron St, Tiffin. Jen Miller, the Executive Director of the LWV of Ohio will be the guest speaker.

In May 2018, Ohio voters amended the state Constitution to ban partisan gerrymandering. Under the amendments, districts could not be intentionally drawn to favor or disfavor a political party. Furthermore, the proportion of districts that leaned towards either political party was required to closely parallel Ohio's statewide vote, based on the results of the state and federal elections held during the previous decade.

The amendment also created a new, multi-step process for state legislative redistricting. Redistricting is delegated to the seven-member Ohio Redistricting Commission ("Commission"), consisting of the Governor, State Auditor, Secretary of State, one member nominated by the Speaker of the State House, one member nominated by the President of the State Senate, and two members each nominated by the minority party leader in each chamber of the legislature. For the 2022 redistricting cycle, this meant Republicans had a 5 – 2 majority on the Commission.

Under the new redistricting process, if two or more members of the minority party vote for a proposed state legislative district map, then the districts would be in effect for ten years. If maps were passed purely on party lines, then the maps would only be in effect for four years.

In September 2021, the Commission adopted, on a 5 – 2 party-line vote, with all Republicans in favor and all Democrats against, new districts for the Ohio State House and State Senate.

On September 23, 2021, the League of Women Voters of Ohio, the A. Phillip Randolph Institute of Ohio, and several individual plaintiffs filed a lawsuit in the Ohio Supreme Court alleging the new maps violated the Ohio Constitution by disproportionately giving Republicans more districts. The plaintiffs also asserted that the Republican members of the commission intended to enact partisan gerrymanders throughout the redistricting process. Finally, the plaintiffs asserted the plan violated the Ohio Constitution's equal protection, free speech, and assembly provisions.

The Ohio Supreme Court struck down the maps, ruling they were a partisan gerrymander in violation of the Ohio Constitution. In response, the Commission proceeded to enact four successive remedial maps on party lines, each of which was struck down by the Ohio Supreme Court for being an unconstitutional partisan gerrymander. Each ruling was a 4 – 3 vote, with Republican Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor joining all three Democratic Justices in invalidating the maps.

On November 8, 2022, elections were held for the Ohio General Assembly using maps ruled unconstitutional by the Ohio Supreme Court. Litigation is currently ongoing. *League of Women Voters of Ohio: [lwvohio.org](http://lwvohio.org)*