

Washington State Redistricting Commission
C/O Sarah Augustine, Chair
CC: Lisa McLean, Executive Director

September 23, 2021

Re: LWVWA Examples of District Map Solutions

Dear Commissioners,

Since 1930, The League of Women Voters of Washington has been a leader in redistricting advocacy. The LWV believes in equitable representation. As you know, we have been holding a parallel process to develop new legislative and congressional district solutions – hosting listening session and drafting maps. Alison McCaffree is our Redistricting Issue Chair and led the work. We are submitting the following maps for your consideration with the attached narratives. We have executed a statewide, transparent, nonpartisan process to develop maps resulting in these example solutions that put communities of interest first.

Legislative Districts: <https://davesredistricting.org/join/129a61ac-6e8f-4b9a-9afa-9a19feb56298>

Congressional Districts:

Recommended Map:

<https://davesredistricting.org/join/fb321178-e606-4897-b421-38bd313cf305>

Additional Example Map: (developed before Colville Tribe's press release)

<https://davesredistricting.org/join/163fbd3a-f48e-49b0-88f8-780cd5af99c2>

BACKGROUND PROCESS

Speak Up Schools

For this cycle of redistricting, the League held workshops called Speak Up Schools across the state to teach a wide range of people to testify and has educated over 4700 people to date. (See lwvwa.org/speakup). We commend you for your outreach efforts and your commitment to language access. While we are disappointed in the number of people who have testified so far, we understand the difficulties during the pandemic. We hope that you recognize the high quality of content presented by the testifiers who have been through LWV training.

Feedback and Listening Sessions: The League has managed a process parallel to your own of developing new legislative and congressional district solutions. We used Dave's Redistricting App tool to both develop and publicize our draft maps throughout the process. To develop these maps, we held over 40 listening sessions. We have been publicizing draft maps each month based on feedback from communities across Washington State.

To guide our decision-making process, we intentionally ranked the criteria defined in Washington State law and prioritized the maps in the following way:

1. Contiguous & Equal Population
2. Keep Communities of Interest together
 - a. Tribal populations: Consolidate each native reservation and surrounding tribal population into single districts or distribute into multiple districts according to the expressed wishes of tribal members or representatives.
 - b. Known racial & ethnic communities (Latinx, Black, AAPI, etc.)
 - c. Build majority BIPOC districts where possible (example CD9, Yakima area, S. King County).
 - d. Identify and honor, where possible, areas of shared economic, environmental and transportation common interests.
 - e. Identify and honor where possible rural, suburban, and urban communities.
3. Provide fair and effective representation.

4. Create districts that are compact and convenient.
5. Minimize splitting political boundaries - county, city, and other municipalities.
6. Encourage electoral competition at district, region, and state level. Not favor incumbent or party interests.

For our purposes, we define a community of interest as an area with recognized similarities of legislative concerns, including but not limited to racial, ethnic, geographic, governmental, regional, social, cultural, partisan, economic or historic interests. While we have prioritized racial and ethnic communities, we recognize that not everyone in each group thinks or votes the same way. Our focus has been on empowering those communities who have historically been underrepresented to have enough voting power to decide their own representatives.

MAP EXPLANATION

Please find attached a document with a narrative of each region, detailing the trade-offs made, as well as areas where we were not able to achieve all our objectives. Our goal was to create a balanced solution that meets the needs of the greatest number of people. We originally developed a Congressional solution with the idea of uniting the Colville Tribes and until the recent announcement the official tribe representative would prefer to be in multiple districts. We are submitting to you both maps with a recommend solution that honors the Colville Tribe's wishes.

Only after we created drafts that satisfied our goal of balancing community needs did we turn to electoral competitiveness. We then adjusted where possible to create more competitive districts. These draft maps include 13 competitive districts. Some districts as drawn will necessitate a change in representation, as incumbents will no longer be in their current district. We acknowledge this as a reality of the redistricting process. The suggested maps are in no way a statement of quality of service or responsiveness on the part of the representatives affected.

While redistricting relies on technology and data analysis, we must ultimately use human judgement to balance representation among many disparate groups - with many, sometimes overlapping, often conflicting needs. We recognize that maps are a compromise among a range of objectives and that there are many possible mapping solutions that are legal and equitable. Our hope is that our solutions will focus your attention in a fresh way on the needs of communities, and on the details of how and where people live.

This process was included redistricting educational events beginning in April 2017 and included more than 64 events with 4700+ registrants for the Speak Up Schools that we used to train people to give testimony to your commission. Eight full, three session schools across the state were held.

The maps represent considerable input, and we have encouraged our 20 local Leagues to testify to the commission because although our process has ended, their input to you is relevant and important and not all of them were engaged in the final maps/document we are forwarding to you at this time.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these mapping solutions. Our hope is that you will study our district lines and use them to develop the best solution for the people of Washington. Thank you, as well, for your ongoing communication throughout this process. The League of Women Voters of Washington appreciates your commitment to this critical work and your willingness to accept thoughtful input.

Sincerely,



Lunell Haught, PhD, President

Attachments: Legislative Map Solution Narrative Congressional Map Solutions Narrative