

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW MEXICO ADVOCACY STATEMENT ON REDISTRICTING*

The League of Women Voters of New Mexico believes that responsibility for redistricting should be vested in an independent redistricting commission with membership that reflects the diversity of the population.

LWVNM supports a redistricting process and standards that provide the people with a meaningful choice in electing their representatives and facilitate holding government accountable.

The criteria for preparing redistricting maps should require that districts meet all federal criteria including equal population and the provisions of the Voting Rights Act. In addition, it is important that districts

1. be contiguous;
2. provide racial minorities with an equal opportunity to participate in the political process;
3. preserve and protect “communities of interest.” A *community of interest* is defined as an area with recognized similarities of interests, including but not limited to economic, social, cultural, geographic, or historic identities (from the Brennan Center Criteria Guide);
4. minimize the partition of major jurisdictions (counties, municipalities, tribal areas) to the extent possible;
5. be reasonably compact, in terms of travel time from one part of the district to another;
6. avoid crossing geographic barriers to travel, such as mountain ranges;

The criteria should exclude

- protection of incumbents through such devices as considering an incumbent’s address;
- preferential treatment for a political party.

The process must

1. provide specific timelines, enforceable by the court, for the steps leading to a redistricting plan;
2. give the public access to all information used in the redistricting process on a timely basis;
3. be subject to open meeting laws;
4. enable the public the opportunity to comment and be heard on the proposed redistricting processes, criteria, and results;
5. include a provision that any redistricting plan should be adopted by the redistricting authority with more than a simple majority vote;
6. establish a protocol for the courts to promptly review and rule on any challenge to a redistricting plan and require adjustments if the standards have not been met;
7. encourage competition to the extent that preceding criteria have been satisfied.

*This document is based upon the redistricting position of the LWVUS and the LWVNM League of Women Voters of New Mexico Position on Apportionment and Redistricting

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