



June 14, 2021

Re: 852 Sub A – Reapportionment

House State Government and Elections
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI

Dear Chairman Shanley and members of the committee:

The League of Women Voters of Rhode Island is deeply disappointed in 852 Sub A. It does nothing to increase citizen representation in the process, which has been shown to improve responsiveness in the resultant legislatures, nor does it protect elected officials from partisan manipulation of their districts.

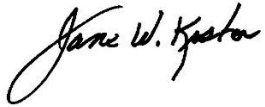
We support legislation that makes the process of redistricting more transparent so that citizens can effectively monitor and participate in the redistricting process, which affects them at every level of representation. This bill does not go far enough to ensure public hearings will be heard in different geographic locations and diverse communities across the state.

Additionally, this version of the reapportionment bill only makes redistricting software available to the public on the internet if there is a health crisis. Providing mapping software and granting the public the right to submit their own maps for consideration establishes transparency and accountability. It requires the commission to justify its choices with regard to all criteria used to draw the new districts. It is unreasonable to expect everyone who wants to try his hand at drawing maps to make an appointment to use software only available during certain hours in the basement of the state house.

This bill should specifically add language to preserve partisan impartiality as well as to require legitimate consideration of diversity and communities of interest, including race and language, in the mapping process.

The League of Women Voters of Rhode Island urges you to make these changes so 852 Sub A before passing it.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane W. Koster". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and a long, sweeping underline.

Jane W. Koster
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