

## **AN INDEPENDENT COMMISSION FOR REDISTRICTING IS POSSIBLE IN INDIANA!**

The final meeting of the Special Interim Study Committee on Redistricting was held on Monday, October 17, 2016. Thanks to the leadership of Rep. Jerry Torr, a recommendation passed by a vote of 8-3 calling for the establishment of an *Independent Redistricting Commission*. Rep. Torr's leadership and commitment to the study committee process is deeply appreciated.

Once again, members of the *Indiana Coalition for Independent Redistricting* packed the House Chamber with concerned and informed citizens from across the state of Indiana. Men and women from the local leagues of LWV filled most of the seats! Thank you everyone for your tenacity, wisdom, perseverance and civic minded non-partisan presence at these meetings. You made it possible. In addition to consistently attending the study committee meetings, we presented *fourteen resolutions from city councils from across the state in support* of an independent commission. Most of those resolutions came from the hard work of LWV local leagues. For those local leagues still working on getting a resolution passed, you can use the same template, just use the 'we hereby urge' paragraph to address the *2017 General Assembly*.

The final report can be accessed by clicking here:

[https://iga.in.gov/legislative/2016/committees/redistricting\\_special\\_interim\\_study\\_committee\\_on](https://iga.in.gov/legislative/2016/committees/redistricting_special_interim_study_committee_on)

While the final recommendation is not everything that we had hoped for, it is a strong beginning and sets the stage for legislation in the 2017 General Assembly. We have concerns about using public university presidents as nominating authorities for commission simply because the public universities in our state are dependent on the state legislature for funding. Our coalition suggested using the *Chief Justice of the Indiana Supreme Court and a panel of three retired judges* who could be chosen by the Chief Justice as the nominating authority. It is our belief that modifying the nomination authority in this way would greatly improve the overall process. We suggested that certain individuals be prohibited from Commission membership if they have been engaged in certain activities for *eight years instead of six* as outlined in the current document. Additionally, we feel that it is *not necessary to ban the use of political data*, rather state explicitly that *no boundary should be drawn to favor or disfavor any candidate or political party*.

While we are excited about the progress we have made, we still have a long way to go before the state of Indiana has an independent redistricting commission that will help end the partisan gerrymandering of legislative and congressional districts. President Pro-Temp David Long is opposed to this effort and *insists that there is no reason to change from the current process of the party in power drawing state and congressional maps*. While there is a good chance that the Indiana House might support legislation calling for an independent commission, we have serious concerns about such legislation passing in the Indiana Senate, which holds a Republican super majority of 80%. We must continue to advocate for this type of reform.

We still need your help! Here are a few things you can do at a local level:

- ✓ Contact Rep. Jerry Torr and thank him for his leadership and courage in supporting an independent commission. He can be reached at [h39@iga.in.gov](mailto:h39@iga.in.gov) or 317-232-9674.
- ✓ Contact your local legislator and inform them of the Interim Study Committee on Redistricting final report. Let them know that you support the concept of an independent redistricting.
- ✓ Write letters to your local papers citing the work of the Interim Special Committee on Redistricting and the necessity to end partisan gerrymandering by creating a citizen led independent commission for drawing state and congressional maps.

- ✓ Continue to advocate for mayors and city councils to pass resolutions in support of an independent commission.
- ✓ Stay informed, stay positive, and stay engaged concerning this very important issue.

I am proud to be a member of the League of Women Voters. Together we are 'Making Democracy Work'. A heartfelt thank you for making this happen!

In League,

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