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**Testimony for the Ohio State Local Government and Elections Committee
November 4, 2021
Submitted by Christine Corba, LWVGDA**

Senator Gavarone and the members of the Ohio Senate Local Government and Elections Committee, good morning and thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am Christine Corba, Executive Director of the League of Women Voters of the Greater Dayton Area.

The League of Women Voters has introduced and supported initiatives to place redistricting reform on the ballot for over 40 years. In 2018, after years of hard work and the overwhelming approval of voters across the state, a long-awaited constitutional amendment that defined new rules for congressional redistricting with the explicit purpose to end gerrymandering was adopted.

This fall, we, and thousands of other Ohioans, believed that the Ohio Redistricting Commission would, in good faith, follow the legal requirements put forth in the amendment as they created district maps for the Ohio General Assembly.

Unfortunately, instead of using a fair, transparent process that would result in maps truly representative of all citizens, the Redistricting Commission approved a highly partisan map that does not honor the spirit of the amendment and its intended goal: To end gerrymandering.

Now, the November 30 deadline to redraw the congressional map is looming. Two deadlines have come and gone for both the Ohio State Legislature and the Ohio Redistricting Commission with no opportunity for citizens to review and respond to maps. The ball is back in the Legislature's court, and it is your duty to ensure that the new congressional maps meet the letter of the legal requirements outlined in the constitution.

We know that it's possible to create fair maps, but once again, we are witnessing a process that is not in step with what was intended when citizens approved the constitutional amendment. Less than 24 hours was given to citizens prepare testimony, and the Republican drawn House and Senate maps were introduced just before and during their respective hearings, giving legislators and constituents little time to study and respond to them. The map presented by Senator McColley demonstrates a partisan lean and was given a failing grade by the Princeton Gerrymandering Project, and by his admission, drawn without using demographic information to ensure that provisions in the Fair Rights Act are upheld.

It is clear there is much work to be done to assure that a thoughtful, fair congressional map is produced. On behalf of the League of Women Voters of the Greater Dayton Area I ask that the Legislature do the right thing. Give us a map that follows the letter and the spirit of the law, guarantees that all citizens' voices are heard, and ensures that we are represented by politicians invested in our needs and interests for the next ten years. We deserve it.