

Redistricting Reform in Maryland

A Ten-Year Plan 2023-2032

July 11, 2022

Goal

Achieve a 2031-32 redistricting process that aligns with the LWV positions. To achieve this goal, LWVMD will reflect on the previous cycle's redistricting process at the Maryland local, Legislative and Congressional levels as well as other states' results to build our success on lessons learned.

Initial Audience for this plan

LWVMD.

Introduction

The Legislative and Congressional redistricting process in Maryland in 2021-2022 involved two commissions, one constituted by the Republican governor, and the second by the Democratic-controlled legislature. In the end, the Democratic President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House drew maps that protected Democratic incumbents and were passed on party-line votes. Minimal adjustments were made that considered other interested parties, including Republicans on the Democrat-controlled commission and citizens testifying at those hearings. The Republicans immediately responded with multiple lawsuits in federal court (citing the Voting Rights Act) and in state court (citing the Maryland and Federal Constitutions).

The LWVMD was prominent in redistricting reform, notably in working with the Republican governor and both Republican and Democrat legislators from 2015 to study the redistricting process, produce a redistricting plan and draft redistricting reform bills that aligned well with the League positions. We were actively educating and advocating by 2018, two years before the Census. However, we did not have an organized plan to follow local redistricting processes or to support the local leagues (LLs) in doing so. The initial approved maps for Baltimore County and Prince George's County resulted in lawsuits.

Core elements of the Ten-Year Plan

1. Redistricting Positions

- a. Conduct a comprehensive review of the LWVMD positions, including funding, public outreach needs beyond holding hearings, the process to appoint independent commissioners, and clarifying the definition of a 'fair map.' This includes comparisons with the LWVUS and other state leagues' positions. Ask LWVUS to do a survey on what did or did not work for independent commissions with a focus on funding and member selection process.

- b. Prepare and market an overview of the redistricting process in each Maryland county and municipality. There seems to be as many variations as there are entities doing it, from an independent advisory commission (MontCo) to selection of Commission members by the County Central Committees (Howard).
- c. Examine the implications of Single vs. Multiple Districts while noting that there are more minority-majority districts in the MCRC plan.
- d. Draft and offer draft legislation that will move our position forward with the Maryland General Assembly

2. Education

- a. Reflect on and explore opportunities to deepen understanding of redistricting for:

High schools
Communities of Interest
New legislators
The County level
The public

- b. Utilize findings from social science to help shape educational messages for specific audiences

3. Advocacy

- a. Draw our own maps with assistance from a credentialed demographer
- b. Identify legal partners to help us weigh in with the courts.

4. Partners

- a. Continue to engage existing partners. The Tame the Gerrymander coalition is still willing to lead the effort (Common Cause Maryland and the LWVMD). Additional partners who showed recent commitment are Represent Maryland, the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority , the Divine 9, Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority (and their related alumnae organizations), and the NAACP county chapters.

- b. Deepen relationships with other organizations such as
 - The Maryland Student Coalition,
 - Asian American Parents Organizations
 - Local Leagues.
 - Compacts with the regional Leagues (Congressional maps).
 - Federal solution with the LWVUS.
 - State and local boards of elections.
 - Brennan Center <https://www.brennancenter.org/issues/gerrymandering-fair-representation/redistricting>
- c. Continue to cultivate strong relationships with elected partners including Democratic and Republican legislators, U.S. Senators and Congressmen, and ensure that the Republican MGA leadership and officials receive equal engagement. Continue to engage the key Caucuses (e.g., the Black, Latino and Asian-American Pacific-Islander Caucuses).
- d. Develop support from the Senate President, House Speaker and the Governor on the side of redistricting reform.

5. Communication

Develop a permanent, dynamic website that supports all of the above, e.g., right after maps are decided, links to new maps.

Develop and maintain active social media

Clarify ties to relevant topics like voter suppression and the Census.

Utilize research from social science studies to enhance effectiveness of social media messages to specific audiences.

Ten-Year Timeline

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
Position										
Education										
Advocacy										
Partners										
Communication										