

League of Women Voters of the Ann Arbor Area
Redistricting Reform Elevator Pitch

- Representatives elected to the US Congress and state legislatures often do not reflect each party's share of the popular vote.
- Both parties manipulate the district maps to keep themselves in power. Two examples are the states of Michigan and Texas:
 - Michigan voters in 2016 were split almost evenly between Democrats and Republicans; yet Michigan's US House delegation is 9-5 Republican, its state senate is 27-11 Republican, and its state house is 63-47 Republican.
 - Texas voters split their vote almost half and half between Democrats and Republicans in 1992. Yet, Democrats ended up with 21 Congressional seats and Republicans won 9.
- There are several reasons for such unrepresentative election results, but a major one is gerrymandering. Election districts are redrawn every ten years after the US census; and when one party is in control of state politics, it can – and often does -- draw electoral districts in its state so as to favor its own candidates. Leaving redistricting up to legislatures is like letting “the fox guard the henhouse”.
- In addition to being unfair, gerrymandering leads to the construction of safe noncompetitive seats, in which a challenger has no chance of winning and an incumbent has little incentive to be responsive to his/her constituents. This leads to extremism, gridlock, and unpopular policies.
- We believe that it is only fair to take the politics out of drawing election district lines. Voters should choose their politicians, rather than politicians choosing their voters.
- The best way to eliminate gerrymandering and achieve fairness in districting is to establish an independent redistricting commission. That is, one that is independent of the legislature.
- States, such as California, that have set up independent redistricting commissions to draw district lines have seen increased voter confidence in the system, higher voter turn-out, and greater civic engagement.