**Testimony for Senator Matt Huffman’s Redistricting Proposal**

**January 23, 2018**

As a volunteer signature collector for the League of Women Voters Fair Districting Amendment,  I am committed to a bipartisan Redistricting Plan.    The LWV’s plan is sponsored by a known bipartisan organization.

I was one of the 20 people who gave testimony to the Working Committee on October 28, 2017.  I attended the second hearing Nov. 1, 2017.  In all there were 39 testimonies all recommending to the Working Committee the LWV’s redistricting proposal.

Apparently not much of that testimony was considered.  If it had been, the Republican proposal would have included a Redistricting Commission with 2 members from the minority party who could effectively block the making of a map that favored the majority party.   In the Huffman proposal a 4 year map could still be made without any minority approval.   You cannot have a bipartisan map without an effective minority voice.

The Huffman Proposal was written by a Republican with no initial input from the Democrats on the Working Committee.   This bill was not co-sponsored by any Democrat.  That makes the SJR a partisan proposal.

I was at the Hearing in which Senator Huffman presented his proposal on January 10, 2018.   Neither Democrat from the Working Committee was involved the initial presentation of the proposal.  In its presentation it is also an entirely Republican proposal and therefore partisan.

I was at the first hearing on SJR5 on January 17, 2018.   I wondered why no one was there from Common Cause and LWV.  I learned later they were notified of the meeting too late for someone from LWV or Common Cause to attend.   I watched while reporters gathered around Senator Huffman.  Reporters would not listen to any of the Fair District Volunteers.   So there was no participation from those opposing SJR5.    The late notification of the LWV and Common cause was a careless mistake or a partisan act.

SJR5 can be put on the ballot without any Democratic votes.   This bill could be totally partisan in its passage.

SJR5’s map approval process puts the map approving process in the hands of the majority party.    As I have pointed out above, the Redistricting Commission can be side-stepped.

If SJR5’s gets on the May 8 ballot, the majority party will likely use their big money war chest to flood the public media with negative ads about the Fair Districting proposal and misrepresent SJR5 as a fair proposal. If this happens the public could well be misinformed or at least, confused about the fair districting amendment.

As I see it, SJR5 and its passage and much of the media information (including advertising) will likely be partisan or will muddy the waters about redistricting.

The LWV volunteers are thousands, well informed, and dedicated.   We will work hard to get the LWV Fair Districts Amendment on the ballot and will work hard to get it  approved by voters in November 2018.

Out of a belief in fairness we ask that the Ohio House and Senate vote against SRJ5 and support the LWV Redistricting Proposed Amendment.