

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NASSAU COUNTY STATEMENT TO
THE NASSAU COUNTY TEMPORARY DISTRICTING ADVISORY COMMISSION**

THIS STATEMENT WAS PRESENTED IN PERSON TO THE COMMISSION AT THE SEPTEMBER 21, 2022 PUBLIC MEETING

My name is Ann Leiter, Co-President of the Central Nassau Chapter of the League of Women Voters.

The League is a non-partisan, grassroots nonprofit encouraging informed and active participation in our democracy. While the League takes positions on a variety of public policy issues, it never supports or opposes any political party or candidate. As it has at all earlier public meetings of the Districting Commission, the League is here to advocate on behalf of a fair, transparent and inclusive redistricting process.

We remind you that redistricting is foundational to the right to vote and that the public will have confidence in the fairness of the process only if it's able to observe the work of the Commission. But the League is disappointed by the opaque manner in which the Commission has conducted the process thus far, holding its working meetings outside the public view, compressing the timeline, limiting public input and failing to update its website with relevant and timely information.

As we've mentioned earlier, all public, working and mapping meetings must be open to the public and publicized with ample notice via all forms of media, including but not limited to: Town, County and Commission websites; newspapers Newsday, The Herald and Long Island Business News; WLIW; local radio stations; and the numerous Town and Village publications the County Clerk already uses to publish legal notices, collectively known as "designated newspapers". The Commission's website must reflect agendas and minutes, press releases, a contact list of staff and consultants, a timetable and maps, as well as serve as a portal for public comment as soon as possible.

The League is concerned about the scarce number of public meetings and their accelerated time frame. The Commission has until January 7th to deliver its mapping plan to the Legislature, so there is no valid reason for cutting public comment off by early October.

The total lack of meetings for those physically challenged is not acceptable. In fact, County Legislature meeting notices clearly state "The Nassau County Legislature is committed to making its public meetings accessible to individuals with disabilities and every reasonable accommodation will be made so that they can participate." You've failed to accomplish this by holding no meetings virtually, which would enable the physically challenged to participate by making oral statements.

Most egregious is that **NO** public meetings will be held **AFTER** the Commission has released its plan and mere hours before delivering it to the Legislature. As you well know, this will give the public zero opportunity for review and comment, and no opportunity for the Commission to incorporate any concerns into modified maps. This is in sharp contrast to the procedure of the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission, which extended at least the appearance of respect for the public.

Finally, we remind you of the new redistricting requirements imposed under New York's amended Municipal Home Rule Law and the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act of New York. Per the Home Rule Law, "[d]istricts shall not be drawn to discourage competition or for the purpose of favoring or disfavoring incumbents or other particular candidates or political parties."¹ Nassau's redistricting must be non-partisan. Thank you.

¹ Consolidated Laws of New York, Municipal Home Rule (MHR) Chapter 36-A, Article 4, Part 1, Sec. 34(4)(e) at <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/MHR/34>.