



*The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 101-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.*

June 1, 2021

To: [Rep. Barbara Smith Warner](#), Chair  
[House Committee on Rules](#)

Re: [SB 259 A](#) – Statutory deadlines for redistricting of congressional districts – **Support and Comment**

The League of Women Voters of the United States and of Oregon support fair and transparent election processes designed to engage voters and to allow them to inform themselves in a timely manner concerning candidates and measures on the ballot.

### **Support SB 259 A**

SB 259 A, as amended, resets dates for candidates to file for the May 2022 primary election, and reschedules dates for appeals of congressional redistricting, based on the decision and related peremptory writ issued in the case of *State ex rel. Koteck v. Fagan*, 367 Or. 803 (2021). The provisions of this bill would only be used if the Legislative Assembly fails to adopt new congressional districts based on the census by September 27. The LWVOR supports the principles contained in SB 259A for administrative purposes (based as they are upon existing statutes and Supreme Court direction).

### **Concerns regarding redistricting, encourage public hearing**

However, the League notes with disappointment that the redistricting process being used so far this year by the Legislative Assembly includes:

- Failing to make a legislative referral to the November 2022 ballot of a broadly-supported reform to establish an independent citizens' redistricting commission (ICRC) to perform congressional and legislative redistricting; and
- Denying a public hearing in this regular session on the concept of a ICRC such as in [HJR 7](#), an idea recommended for consideration by the tens of thousands of Oregon voters who signed initiative petitions for [IP 57 in 2020](#) to create an ICRC.

The LWVOR explained the rationale and support behind an ICRC in its oral and [written testimony](#) before the February 25 concurrent meeting of the House and Senate redistricting committees. In their testimony, other Oregon organizations also made this call for reform. In ten subsequent public hearings that the redistricting committees held this spring, seeking citizens' input on redistricting, dozens of Oregonians submitted oral and written testimony urging at least a public hearing of this concept, if not a legislative referral to the November 2022 ballot, to let the Oregon voters decide this issue.

[SB 827-1](#) that is moving through the Senate would require a thorough review by the Legislature of selected initiative petitions. There is nothing now preventing such a review of any subject, so we would welcome such a review of [IP 16](#).

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

Rebecca Gladstone  
LWVOR President

Norman Turrill, Governance Coordinator

Chris Cobey, Governance Specialist