



January 20, 2022

Via email to:

Sen. Bob Beach

Sen. Mike Caputo

Dear Senators:

For redistricting of congressional and legislative districts, the League of Women Voters favors *Fair Maps* free of partisan gerrymandering and produced by independent commissions. However, in West Virginia we recognize that the commission approach may be unlikely to achieve the necessary majorities to pass in the Legislature.

Still, the redistricting process can be improved. During redistricting in 2021, the public in Mon County demonstrated their great interest. The Morgantown public hearing was heavily attended, but much of the testimony from voters unfortunately focused on an issue – single-member House districts – already resolved by the Legislature in 2018.

A few simple changes to West Virginia Code could have enabled our voters to be more informed and their input to the Redistricting Committee more useful. These changes are reflected in a little bill, [HB 4099](#), which could have a big impact in the next redistricting cycle.

Based on best practices from Oregon and Michigan, *HB 4099* would require the Legislature to:

- Hold multiple public hearings around the state,
- Make actual apportionment plans -- maps and data -- available at public hearings around the state before considering them in special session,
- Prioritize hearings in areas with the largest changes in population,
- Make apportionment maps and data available for a 15-day public comment period prior to adoption in either house.

Del. Evan Hansen is the primary sponsor with co-sponsor Del. John Doyle. They and you are all Democrats. However, the nonpartisan League of Women Voters supports *HB 4099* because it takes a nonpartisan approach to improving transparency in redistricting next time around.

Both of you sit on the Judiciary Committee in the Senate. When the redistricting process concluded last year, Judiciary Chair Sen. Trump publicly expressed interest in ideas for improvements. We urge you to introduce a Senate bill mirroring *HB 4099* and advocate for it among your Judiciary colleagues.

The League of Women Voters of Morgantown-Monongalia County thanks you for your service.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "SAB", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sarah Barnes

President, League of Women Voters of Morgantown-Monongalia County