



Endless Redistricting Litigation Signals Need for Reform

League of Women Voters of Texas and Common Cause Call for Changes to TX Redistricting Process

On Monday, the litigation on Texas' congressional and state house maps that originally began at the start of this decade will resume in a San Antonio federal court.

At issue during this latest phase of litigation will be the 2013 district maps that were adopted by the legislature with slight modifications from the 2011 court-issued interim maps.

It should be noted that Texas has found itself in court every redistricting cycle for the past four decades - and lost every decade - dating back to when Democrats were in power.

Following is a statement from Common Cause Texas Executive Director Anthony Gutierrez:

"This week's hearing will generate endless discussion about which party or candidate may benefit from proposed changes to current district maps but the real problem we should be discussing is the deeply flawed process by which we draw districts in Texas.

For decades, regardless of which party has been in power, the state has failed to draw fair maps that did not require some amount of litigation.

This push towards increasingly hyper-partisan gerrymandering has been a huge factor in our increasingly hyper-partisan and deeply divided politics.

There's a direct connection between our broken political system that focuses almost exclusively on issues that will help to win primary elections and a broken redistricting system that has largely eliminated competitiveness in general elections.

Our politics are broken, this redistricting system is broken and the time for reform is now."

**Following is a statement from the League of Women Voters of Texas
President Elaine Wiant:**

We are hopeful that the court hearing will focus attention on improving the redistricting process in Texas.

In Texas legislators are allowed to manipulate the district lines to keep themselves in power. As a result voter choice at the ballot box is astoundingly low: 82 out of 150 State House races were uncontested in the 2016 general election, and only one major party filed to run in 66 percent of the races.

Elections are supposed to represent the will of the people yet many Texas lawmakers have no competition in the General Election. Instead they are elected in the Primaries with very low voter participation.

We believe responsibility for redistricting should be placed in an independent citizen commission. Districts should have equal population, be geographical, contiguous, compact, with district lines that coincide with boundaries of local political subdivisions. Districts should not dilute voting strength of minority populations or favor or disfavor a political party or incumbent. The entire process should be transparent and provide public hearings.

The League stands firm in its support for a state redistricting process and standards that promote fair and effective representation with maximum opportunity for public scrutiny.