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September 22, 2021

To: Cook County President Toni Preckwinkle and the Cook County Board of Commissioners
via email

Re: Proposed Cook County Redistricting Map of 2021, Agenda Item 21-5299

Dear President Preckwinkle and Commissioners:

The League of Women Voters of Cook County would like to register our concerns with the process that has resulted in the proposed County Redistricting Map of 2021 that is included in the Redistricting Ordinance to be voted on by the Cook County Board at the September 23, 2021 meeting. ([Agenda Item 21-5299](#))

1. First and foremost, our concern has always been that the Map should not be drawn by the elected officials most impacted by the redistricting process. The League has a longstanding position that redistricting should be done by an Independent Commission, and we have strongly advocated for this at all levels of government for many years, including for the Cook County Commissioner Districts. While you state that your process was transparent, it was clear from statements made at the public hearing on September 14 that much of the work on the maps was done by the Commissioners in conjunction with Mr. Creticos and his team in private meetings.
2. The purpose of doing redistricting is to establish districts that adjust for population changes by using the data collected and analyzed during National Census. The process that Mr. Creticos and his team followed in coordination with the Cook County Commissioners used the existing districts as a starting point with the intention that there would be minimal adjustment. But in the 30 years since the present districts were originally drawn based on the 1990 census, there has been significant change in the population distribution throughout the County. A total redraft of the map could have produced a map that better reflects the diversity and changing demographic population of Cook County that did not divide so many towns and Chicago neighborhoods and other communities of interest among two or more districts. Next time (in 2031), surely a total redo is in order.
3. While the map as presented appears to have no strong objectors, we do think that townships should not be regarded as a key component in the process. Townships are an antiquated political division within the state, and towns/villages in the suburban areas and neighborhoods in Chicago are better indicators of "communities of interest" than township boundaries.
4. We also urge that more time be given between the notices of meetings and publication of the proposed maps so that the public has a true opportunity to provide comments. Four business

days or less is not sufficient notice for hearings on such an important matter that is only done every 10 years.

5. We do commend you for including the provision in the ordinance that will allow the present districts to hold until the next election in November of 2022. This makes it clear to the voters that if there is a change in their district, it will be at the next election that they will be voting for the Cook County Commissioner in their new district.

We register our concerns now so that they will be on record for the next process. Thank you for your consideration.

Yours truly,

Cynthia Schilsky
LWVCC President

The League of Women Voters of Cook County is a nonpartisan political organization which encourages the informed and active participation of citizen in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. The Cook County League is composed of the over 1800 members of 13 local Leagues within Cook County.