



League of Women Voters of the South Bend Area

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### **Citizens Redistricting Commission Will Meet in South Bend March 15 - Seeking Public Input on New District Maps**

The Indiana Citizens Redistricting Commission (ICRC), an 11 member group formed by AARP Indiana, Common Cause/Indiana and the League of Women Voters of Indiana to monitor the 2011 redistricting process and promote citizen input into the new maps will hold a public meeting in South Bend on Tuesday, March 15, 2011.

The public hearing will be held at the Main Library, Multimedia Room from 6:00 + 8:00 p.m. and all are welcome. The meeting will include a short excerpt from the film Gerrymandering and a presentation to educate attendees about the redistricting process in Indiana and how they can participate. Much of the meeting will be spent in a discussion about what communities of interest exist in northern Indiana and how they should be grouped together, or divided, for purposes of political districts.

Citizen input from the South Bend meeting, along with the other 7 meetings across the state will be compiled by the Commission and submitted to the General Assembly for consideration as they develop their maps. The ICRC will also use the public discussions to draw its own maps that will be modeled on public interest criteria such as compactness, preservation of communities of interest, protection of minority voting rights and electoral competition. These maps will be useful to compare with the legislative proposals and may help identify those districts in the legislative proposals that have been drawn for partisan advantage.

The ICRC is a diverse representation of Indiana voters and includes two former state legislators, Democrat Dave Crooks and Republican Bill Ruppell, as its co-chairs. It also includes a former Libertarian candidate for Secretary of state, a Tea Party member, the Indiana NAACP, the ICLU, and a college student. The ICRC will demonstrate that an independent group can do a better job of drawing fair districts than politicians.

Lisa Plencner, President of the League of Women Voters of South Bend Area said, "I encourage citizens in northern Indiana to take part in this important discussion and share their ideas about where the district lines should be drawn. The 2011 redistricting will have a profound impact on who gets elected, what issues are debated and how they are resolved over the next decade, so it is

critical that voters pay close attention and encourage lawmakers to prioritize the public interest, not political interests in the new maps."

For more information about the Indiana Citizens Redistricting Commission and redistricting in Indiana, go to <http://www.drawthelineindiana.org>.

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