



**THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®**  
*O F W E S T C H E S T E R*

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***Summary of League of Women Voters of Westchester (LWVW)  
Statement on County Redistricting  
for the Public Hearing May 9, 2011***

Because both sides in the county redistricting debate have invoked the League of Women Voters name, we need to explain our position on this matter. Quite simply, we do not take any responsibility for the process or the results as they currently stand. The process has been extremely messy, and aspects of it have been very questionable.

Following the 2010 census, the League would have liked to see an independent commission reallocate county seats starting from scratch. Instead, very quickly, the Board of Legislators (BOL) took charge of the process. The consultant, Dr. Andrew Beveridge, proposed to just "tweak" the few districts that departed by five percent or more from the new population norm of 55,830; the BOL's Legislation Committee agreed.

Almost immediately, legislators were privately in touch with Dr. Beveridge to request changes in his proposed maps. He accommodated them. Over several meetings successive adjustments gave rise to new maps that made for a pile of paper we all struggled to keep up with. Dr. Beveridge was not always physically present. Some legislators came and went. No clear guidelines were evident except for the looming deadline in June. A particular issue in District 4 spurred discussion: a Republican contender for a Democratic legislator's seat was being redistricted into adjoining District 1. Dr. Beveridge said that it was simply a matter of pushing District 1 to the town border, but a result was to split the City of Peekskill.

The general approach continued into the afternoon of Monday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, when — in the absence of the League, which had not been notified of the meeting — Dr. Beveridge and the committee agreed on further changes to address an oversight: taking account of the fact that prisoners at the Bedford Correctional Institute and Sing Sing, in Ossining, should not be counted as residents of these municipalities. Only after the public hearing that evening did a committee staff member pass one of the two League representatives a report of those changes.

The LWVW appreciates the BOL Chairman's invitation to us to participate in the project. We found the committee members cordial; one even solicited our view of the process. When we criticized it for not being open enough, the committee chair immediately responded by reviewing changes district by district. But we think the process remained flawed.

Under these circumstances, the LWVW believes it cannot endorse the county redistricting process, and we wish to distance ourselves from the resulting product.