



WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?

A coalition, supported by over 25 nonpartisan organizations in Ohio and led by the League of Women Voters, Ohio Citizen Action and Common Cause, allowed private citizens to create districts using nonpartisan redistricting principles. These nonpartisan principles have been incorporated into a proposed constitutional amendment that would reform Ohio's redistricting process. With enough support this issue can be on this November's ballot, so that Ohio's voters can decide.

WHAT IS VOTERS FIRST?

Voters First is led by a coalition of nonpartisan groups and people from across Ohio. It was created to take the power over drawing our congressional and legislative districts out of the hands of the politicians and put it in the hands of the people. The Voters First campaign comes after a highly controversial redistricting process where Ohio's district maps—drawn by politicians—received widespread criticism from citizens and editorial boards of major newspapers across Ohio for destroying competition, dividing communities, and giving one political party an unfair advantage over the other party.

WHAT WOULD THE NEW PROCESS LOOK LIKE?

Voters First's proposal will create an Independent Citizens Commission. Politicians, lobbyists and political insiders are prohibited from serving on the commission. The Commission's work will be open and it will be accountable to the public. The Commission will empower voters to choose their politicians instead of politicians picking their voters.

■ Citizens, not politicians

Instead of the current procedures (in which politicians draw district boundaries that unfairly favor their own party and/or protect incumbents), a 12-member Citizens Commission will create the districts. Any member of the public can submit a plan for consideration.

■ Openness and transparency

All meetings, records, communications and draft plans of the Commission must be open to the public. No more backroom deals.

■ Balance and impartiality

The Citizens Commission will include equal numbers of Republicans, Democrats and independents, and the approval of at least seven of the twelve members of the commission will be required for the adoption of any plan. This will ensure that the final plan fairly represents all Ohioans, not just those currently in power.

■ Community representation

Districts will be created that are geographically compact, and which minimize the division of counties, townships, municipalities and wards between different districts.

■ Accountability & competitive districts

Politically balanced districts will be created, rather than "safe districts" which make it difficult or impossible for voters to hold elected officials accountable.

■ Fairness

To the greatest extent possible, the share of districts leaning toward a party will reflect the political preferences of the voters of Ohio.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

To move forward, we need to identify sufficient resources to gather **386,000 signatures by July 4, 2012**, and mobilize a statewide educational campaign for the November 2012 election.

Here's how you can help:

- Circulate the Voters First petition to Reform Ohio's Redistricting Process. If you need Voters First petitions in your area, please contact your Labor Relations Consultant.
- Commit your time, money and influence to supporting the effort to put this on the ballot.
- Communicate your support to petitions2012@ohea.org
- Encourage your local association members, colleagues, family and friends to endorse this plan.

For additional information visit the Voters First website,

<http://votersfirstohio.org/>.

And visit OEA's page on the Constitutional initiative to reform redistricting in Ohio at www.ohea.org/redistricting-reform-in-ohio for talking points, a members-only webinar, "Campaign 2012: OEA & Voters First," and "Putting Voters First," a webinar from Dr. Dan Tokaji, Professor of Law at the OSU Moritz School of Law and an authority on election law and voting rights.