



May 29, 2024

VIA Online Portal to Author and Assembly Committees on Elections and Local Government

The Honorable John Laird
California State Senate
1021 O St., Ste. 8720
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 977 (Laird) – County of San Luis Obispo Redistricting Commission – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Laird:

The League of Women Voters of California writes in strong support of your bill, SB 977, which would establish an 11-member Citizens Redistricting Commission in San Luis Obispo County, charged with redrawing the boundary lines of the districts of the Board of Supervisors.

The League of Women Voters of California supports a state redistricting process and standards that promote fair and effective representation with maximum opportunity for public scrutiny and engagement. We believe that responsibility for redistricting should be vested in an independent commission with diverse membership that is representative of the public at large and protective of minority group interests. We applaud your work to establish the County of San Luis Obispo Redistricting Commission to institute an independent process designed to protect voting rights, promote fair representation, and draw fair maps.

The state League was a proponent of Proposition 11 (the Voters FIRST Act) creating the state Citizens Redistricting Commission, which is nationally praised as a model for redistricting reform, and we continue to monitor the redistricting process in jurisdictions throughout the state. The League of Women Voters of San Luis Obispo County has been deeply engaged in working to ensure the fairness of local redistricting. Last year, they intervened in a 2022 lawsuit regarding the fairness of the Board-approved district boundaries. The resulting settlement

Senator John Laird

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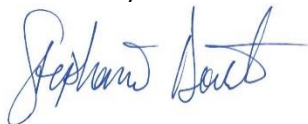
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required San Luis Obispo County to set aside the adopted map and reconsider alternative maps from the redistricting process, one of which was later adopted.

SB 977 follows Proposition 11 in many of its criteria and processes. The selection process excludes people from serving on the commission who are likely to have a conflict of interest, and it is independent of incumbents through reference to [Elec. Code Section 23003 \(c\) and \(d\)](#). SB 977 requires that the Commission adopt election district boundaries using the criteria set forth in the Fair and Inclusive Redistricting for Municipalities and Political Subdivisions (FAIR MAPS) Act of 2023, [Elec. Code Section 21130](#), which arose from legislation that the state League [co-sponsored](#) last year. The bill also includes post-service restrictions on commissioners' eligibility to run for office, hold appointive office, serve as staff in elective governmental agencies, or register as a lobbyist, similar to Proposition 11. Provisions regarding public accessibility to hearings and language availability are designed to ensure community participation in the redistricting process. Furthermore, it contains an important ban on ex-parte redistricting-related communications with outside groups.

The League of Women Voters of California strongly supports SB 977 to promote fair district maps in San Luis Obispo County.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Doute
Executive Director