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*****Plaintiffs and attorneys to hold press conference*****
Thursday, June 15, 1:30 PM
Main Rotunda, Capitol Building, Harrisburg, Pa.

Pennsylvania Voters File Lawsuit Challenging Partisan Redistricting

Plaintiffs allege Commonwealth's U.S. Congressional map is one of the most gerrymandered redistricting maps in the nation

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Harrisburg, Pa. – Today the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania and individual voters filed a lawsuit challenging Pennsylvania's 2011 congressional district map as an unconstitutional partisan gerrymander. Voters contend that in 2011 Pennsylvania elected officials manipulated the congressional district boundaries to entrench a majority Republican delegation in Congress and minimize the ability of Democratic voters to elect U.S. House representatives.

In addition to the League of Women Voters, the lawsuit – *League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* – is brought by individual voters from each of Pennsylvania's 18 congressional districts. The plaintiffs are represented by attorneys from the Public Interest Law Center and Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer LLP.

Filed in the state's Commonwealth Court, the complaint alleges the current congressional map was designed to pack as many Democratic voters as possible into Pennsylvania's 1st, 2nd, 13th, 14th and 17th districts. At the same time, the map was designed to spread the remaining Democratic voters among the other 13 districts so that Democratic voters fall short of a majority in each of these 13 districts. The net effect maximizes the number of Pennsylvania congressional seats held by Republicans.

“By any measure, Pennsylvania's congressional map is among the top three starkest partisan gerrymanders in the country,” said Mimi McKenzie, legal director with the Public Interest Law Center. “This map was drawn to ensure that our general elections will be decided before voters even go to the polls on Election Day.”

“This lawsuit is intended to protect the rights of all voters, regardless of party affiliation,” said Susan Carty, President of the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania. “The creation of “safe” seats for either party undermines the ability of all voters to elect representatives of their

choosing. We are suing to make sure that elections will be decided by the voters, not by partisan politicians.”

Every ten years, following the national census, congressional maps are redrawn through the process of redistricting. Indeed, election results in Pennsylvania over the past three congressional elections demonstrate the effectiveness of the current gerrymander. In the 2012 election Republican candidates won 49% of the statewide vote, but secured 13 of 18 congressional seats, whereas Democrats only secured 5 seats, but won over 50% of the statewide vote. And Republicans held this 72% share of congressional seats in both 2014 and 2016 even though they obtained only 55% and 54% share of the statewide vote, respectively.

“The 2011 map was meticulously drawn to perpetuate a lopsided Republican majority in Pennsylvania’s congressional delegation regardless of normal swings in voter preference,” said David Gersch, senior counsel with Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer LLP. “Voters need only look at the map to see that it has been highly engineered. It is impossible to explain these bizarre districts except as the product of partisan gerrymandering.”

Under the current map, counties like Montgomery are chopped up across as many as five districts, cities like Chester are split in two, and district shapes are a mockery, with the *Washington Post* nicknaming Pennsylvania’s 7th District “Goofy kicking Donald Duck.”

“Pennsylvania’s leaders were deliberate and successful in discriminating against voters when they designed this map,” said Mary Elizabeth Lawn from Chester, Pennsylvania. “After decades of living in one district, in 2011 my community was split up into multiple districts and now members of my community are basically casting wasted votes.”

The lawsuit has been filed against the state and state leaders in their official capacities. While most of the officials were not involved in drafting the 2011 plan, they would be responsible for implementing a new map should the court strike down the current map. In addition to suing the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Pennsylvania General Assembly, respondents include Governor Tom Wolf, Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives Mike Turzai, President Pro Tempore Senator Joseph B. Scarnati III, President of the Pennsylvania Senate Lieutenant Governor Mike Stack, Secretary of the Commonwealth Pedro Cortés, and Commissioner of the Bureau of Commissions and Elections Jonathan Marks.

With this lawsuit, Pennsylvania voters join voters across the country in challenging partisan redistricting plans that are antithetical to democracy. In a lawsuit brought in Wisconsin a federal court recently held that the state house plan is unconstitutional and the maps must be redrawn. That case, *Gill v. Whitford*, is now before the U.S. Supreme Court. Similar cases are also proceeding in Maryland (where the congressional plan unfairly favors Democrats) and in North Carolina (where the congressional plan unfairly favors Republicans).

The lawsuit asks the court to declare the 2011 map unconstitutional, enjoin its use for future elections, and order new maps be created.

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The Public Interest Law Center uses high-impact legal strategies to advance the civil, social, and economic rights of communities in the Philadelphia region facing discrimination, inequality, and poverty. We use litigation, community education, advocacy, and organizing to secure their access to fundamental resources and services in the areas of public education, housing, health care, employment, environmental justice and voting. For more information visit www.pubintl.org or follow on Twitter [@PubIntLawCtr](https://twitter.com/PubIntLawCtr).

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The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania (“LWV”), a nonpartisan political organization that does not support or oppose any candidate or party, is dedicated to encouraging informed and active participation in government by all Pennsylvanians, working to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influencing public policy through education and advocacy. The Pennsylvania League is made up of 33 local Leagues and over 2000 members statewide and is the leading provider of voter education and voter services in Pennsylvania. For more information visit <https://www.palwv.org/>.