



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**Pa. General Assembly and its leaders seek delay
in partisan gerrymandering lawsuit**

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Harrisburg, Pa. – Pennsylvania’s congressional district map is one of the most extreme partisan gerrymanders in the country but state legislators are asking Pennsylvania Courts to do nothing about it except delay.

In June the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania and individual voters challenged the district map as unconstitutionally partisan, alleging it was made with the purpose and effect of rigging elections in violation of the Pennsylvania Constitution. Rather than defend this challenge, lawyers for the Pennsylvania General Assembly, Pennsylvania House Speaker Michael Turzai and Pennsylvania Senate President Pro Tempore Joseph Scarnati have asked the Commonwealth Court to halt all court proceedings until the U.S. Supreme Court decides a gerrymandering case out of Wisconsin, *Gill v. Whitford*.

The *Gill* case, which may not be decided until spring 2018, involves only issues under the federal Constitution. The Pennsylvania gerrymandering lawsuit challenges the state’s U.S. Congressional map under the Pennsylvania Constitution which has different and broader protections than the federal constitution.

On Monday, the League and voters, through their attorneys from the Public Interest Law Center and Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer LLP, opposed the requested delay, stating it would seriously interfere with voters’ ability to have fair and constitutional congressional districts.

“There are no legal or factual grounds for the General Assembly’s request to the Court to stay this important lawsuit that impacts voters’ fundamental rights,” said Mimi McKenzie, Legal Director for the Public Interest Law Center. “The state legislatures’ lawyers are simply trying to insulate an unconstitutional map for potentially another 11 months.”

“Voters in Pennsylvania have a compelling interest in resolving this case as quickly as possible. With this request for a delay, the General Assembly stands in their way,” said David Gersch,

Senior Counsel for Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer LLP. “Petitioners in Pennsylvania have different legal claims, theories, and evidentiary support than are presented in the *Gill case*. Pennsylvania’s redistricting case is not dependent in any way on the resolution of *Gill* and should go forward regardless of how *Gill* is decided.”

Today attorneys for the League and individual voters are also asking the Court to reject a request by a group of 34 members of the Republican Party of Pennsylvania to intervene in the case. The League and voters argue that the concerns of these 34 proposed interveners are already fully represented by the Republican-controlled General Assembly and Republican Pennsylvania legislative leaders are opposing the lawsuit on the same grounds that the Interveners are proposing.

The Court has scheduled a hearing on the requests to stay the case and intervene on October 4, 2017 in Harrisburg.

Additional court filings can be found on the Public Interest Law Center’s website: <https://www.pubintl.org/cases-and-projects/pennsylvania-redistricting-lawsuit-case-documents/>

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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/>.