



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF NEBRASKA

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Public Pulse, Omaha World Herald

Re: LB580

The League of Women Voters of Nebraska is delighted with your editorial (3/6/16) supporting the redistricting bill (LB580) in the legislature. We are especially pleased with your recommendation to assure that one of the nine members of the redistricting commission would be an independent. All the other states that have created redistricting commissions have assured that it is “impartial;” i.e., one party does not have a majority vote in the commission. For example, Arizona requires two Republicans and two Democrats, and then those four select an Independent as Chair.

The other content of concern to the League is the inaccurate language presented as in the Nebraska Constitution, i.e., that it “Protects the incumbent officeholder’s constitutional right to remain in the district and serve a full term.” What the Nebraska Constitution says is, “When the Legislature is redistricted, the members elected prior to the redistricting shall continue in office, and the law providing for such redistricting shall where necessary specify the newly established district which they shall represent for the balance of their term.”

Thus, the Nebraska Constitution does not say that incumbents have a “right to remain in the district...” It simply says that the incumbent has a right to continue his/her term and that the law drawing the districts “shall specify the newly established district which they shall represent for the balance of their term.” The Constitution’s wording provides fewer restrictions on drawing district lines. This creates greater options for drawing district lines than insisting that every incumbent must be within the district they represent. We believe the bill should be amended to reflect the Constitution accurately. We hope Senators will strengthen the bill by amending the wording of the two issues.

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