



STATEMENT

Thursday, March 8, 2012

Dick Dadey, Citizens Union, 917-709-2896

Alex Camarda, Citizens Union, 202-494-0611

Sally Robinson, League of Women Voters NYS, 914-441-5144

Citizens Union and League of Women Voters Announce Joint Support for Permanent Redistricting Reform

Governor-negotiated Constitutional Amendment, Mirroring Statute, and Improved 2012 District Lines Represent Best Reform Option

[Citizens Union](#) and the [League of Women Voters of New York State](#) today jointly announced their continued support for achieving permanent structural reform and ending once and for all New York's partisan redistricting process.

The two groups together called upon Governor Cuomo to act in the short-term and long-term interests of redistricting reform as he considers how best to exercise the power of his veto. Ideally, we support him using the power of his [veto](#) to remove the pen from the hands of the legislature in achieving lasting redistricting reform while aggressively seeking needed changes to this year's partisan-drawn gerrymandered maps that should have been drawn by an independent commission but unfortunately were not. Doing so would make New York State a leader in the country in establishing a fairer process for redistricting.

This year's partisan-drawn gerrymandered maps have reached new lows. The justifiable outrage that they have produced demonstrates precisely why we have to forever change this process by seeking a constitutional amendment accompanied by a companion statute that ensures no more broken promises and realizes the reform that our groups have pursued for decades.

Like many New Yorkers, we feel betrayed by the [184 legislators who pledged to enact structural redistricting reform for the 2012 election cycle and beyond](#). A veto is tempting as an act of retribution against lawmakers who did not honor their pledges, but it is only a temporary reprieve from partisan redistricting. The unfortunate reality is that even with the Governor's veto, the flawed process resulting in partisan-drawn lines will continue to exist in the long-run, and ultimately not hold the legislators accountable for the change they promised. Even if the courts produce better state legislative lines in 2012 as they appear to have done for the

congressional lines, it will be a correction of fleeting value in the long arc of partisan redistricting history.

In short, a veto may win a redistricting battle, but it will most assuredly lose the redistricting war.

The solution that creates fair maps for decades to come and improved maps now is negotiation between the governor and lawmakers. Negotiation achieves a constitutional amendment. Negotiation achieves improved maps for 2012. A veto gambles on judges wrestling with the proper **amount of** discretion to the legislature to achieve potentially better lines for ten years. It will not achieve permanent reform later, no matter what some legislators agree to do in the future. We have been fooled once before and will not allow them to fool us once again with the promise of future reform.

The governor and legislature appear close to achieving the trifecta of a constitutional amendment, a mirroring statute, and improved 2012 maps. At its core is a constitutional amendment that represents real change to the redistricting process, a bipartisan agreement that, while not perfect, reflects a reasonable political compromise to an inherently political process. It is not comparable to a lofty ideal that languishes for years and it is not enacted even when the same party controls all the levers of state power as happened during the 2009-2010 legislative session.

The state's constitution has not seen a substantive change to redistricting since 1945, 77 long years ago. It's time to seize this historic moment and change redistricting not only for this cycle, but for this century.

299 Broadway, Suite 700 | New York, NY 10007 US