



## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TEXAS

### TESTIMONY LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TEXAS

#### TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE March 15, 2011

I am Anita Privett Advocacy VP, testifying on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Texas (LWV-TX). We thank you for this opportunity to present our concerns on the redistricting process. The LWV is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of all citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

“One Person One Vote” is a basic tenet of our democracy. Redistricting every ten years based on census data to create voting districts approximately equal in population is a basic step in insuring that each citizen’s vote carries the same weight in an election. This is especially important given the 20.6% population growth that Texas has experienced in the last ten years as well as the dramatic differences in where the growth occurred.

The Texas Legislative Council’s Redistricting Web site indicates some flexibility in the standards depending on the type of office being redistricted with the congressional redistricting having the stricter one-person, one-vote standard. We’d ask that you apply that standard on the SBOE districts and that you try to keep communities together. One has to wonder why all the counties with large cities are broken into at least two districts and in the case of Harris there are three districts. The State Board of Education is an important entity in Texas and all Texans should have an equal vote when it comes election time.

We also ask that you provide transparency in your processes and make sure there are significant opportunities for public input. Last summer there were regional meeting where citizens were able to comment on the process. Now we are asking that you provide similar opportunities for public comment on the actual maps you are considering. All Texans deserve an opportunity to assess the impact of your choices before they are final.

Thank you for this opportunity to encourage you to be open and transparent.