

# **APPORTIONMENT**

## ***Support action for apportionment based substantially on population of congressional districts and of all elected state and local governmental bodies***

The League of Women Voters of Oklahoma (LWVOK) believes that both houses of the state legislature should be apportioned substantially on population. The LWVOK is convinced that this standard, established by apportionment decisions of the Supreme Court, should be maintained and that the U. S. Constitution should not be amended to allow for consideration of factors other than population in apportioning either or both houses of state legislatures.

Of overriding importance to the LWVOK in coming to this decision is the conviction that a population standard is the fairest and most equitable way of assuring that each person's vote is of equal value in a democratic and representative government. Other considerations influencing LWVOK decisions are that the U.S. Constitution should not be amended hastily or without due consideration because of an "unpopular" court decision, and that individual rights now protected by the Constitution should not be weakened or abridged.

Against the background of its long-standing interest in state government, the LWVOK also hopes that, by maintaining a population standard, state government may be strengthened by ensuring that state legislatures are representative of people wherever they live. Finally, the LWVOK is certain that the term "substantially" used in Supreme Court decisions allows for adequate flexibility for districting to provide for any necessary local diversity.

Consensus approved 1979

## **BACKGROUND**

The United States Constitution requires reapportionment of election districts every ten years following the decennial census, with state legislatures having the responsibility for drawing the boundary lines for congressional, state, and local districts. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1962 and 1964 that both houses of state legislatures must be apportioned substantially on population.

The Oklahoma Legislature was one of those affected by the Supreme Court ruling. However, efforts at reapportionment met resistance finally ending in a court battle. The court finally accepted a plan prepared by a member of the LWVOK. Based on this solution, reapportionment became an actuality in 1964.

The League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) adopted a position on apportionment in 1966. At its 1979 convention, the LWVOK chose to adopt portions of the national position in order to act more effectively at the state level to insure protection of the one-person-one-vote doctrine in any redistricting which might occur.

In January 1981, the LWVOK published a booklet on reapportionment in Oklahoma. The LWVOK planned to update the booklet when the 1990 census figures were finalized and to monitor carefully the reapportionment of the state legislature. Nothing has been found in the LWVOK records to indicate whether the update and monitoring occurred.

Apportionment continues to be an issue into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Addressing apportionment issues has been a priority of the League at the national level (LWVUS). The LWVUS has collaborated with several state Leagues to challenge the procedure used to change district boundaries. In 2019, the LWVOK became one of the organizations supporting a petition to put redistricting on the ballot. The proposed state question would create a non-partisan redistricting commission and take the process of redistricting out of the hands of the legislature.