



December 11, 2017

To: Common Council, City of La Crosse
From: Deborah Lutjen, President, League of Women Voters of the La Crosse Area
RE: Resolution 17-1618 Supplemental Support Information

The League of Women Voters of the La Crosse area supports adoption of the resolution 17-1618 by the City of La Crosse: "RESOLUTION TO CREATE A NONPARTISAN PROCEDURE FOR THE PREPARATION OF LEGISLATIVE AND CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING PLANS"

Thank you for the opportunity for the League of Women Voters to express our support for this resolution advocating for a nonpartisan redistricting process at the December 5th Judiciary & Administration meeting.

After listening to the debate at the December 5th meeting, we would like to follow up on our letter of support for this resolution. We appreciate some Council Members' reluctance to act on measures that are not perceived as within the purview of the Common Council, particularly if political differences could have an adverse effect on relations among members. Council President Gaul's desire to "maintain decorum" by avoiding issues with "political leanings irrelevant to the business of the City" is understandable.

We believe, however, that this explicitly nonpartisan resolution is relevant to the business of the City of La Crosse. Increasingly partisan voting districts have coincided with a loss of local control as state governments preempt the authority of county and municipal governments. Since redistricting in 2011, Wisconsin legislation related to taxes, revenue sharing, housing oversight, gun licensing, land use, residency requirements, and transportation have had significant consequences for our citizens and our city. Local interests have a more difficult time being heard at the state level when single-party rule often results in fast-tracked legislation, limiting public input, compromise, and bipartisan consensus.

As expressed in our earlier letter, we encourage the Common Council to adopt this resolution in the interests of fairness for voters and good government. As a matter of direct relevance to the City of La Crosse, a nonpartisan procedure for establishing voting districts is more likely to safeguard the important balance between state and local authority.