To NYSIRC

Dear Commission Members:

We are writing to you on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Tompkins County and following up on the two live testimonials League Member Connie Stirling-Engman presented on our behalf in September and October. When Stirling-Engman finished her testimony on October 25 one of your members asked what comments she had to make on the Letters and Names Assembly Maps you have presented to us. As she was speaking on behalf of a group of people, she was unable to respond to you at that time, but promised to get back to you.

The primary reason for not including comments on the Assembly Maps was lack of time, and the fact that the same comments made regarding the Congressional Maps and the Senate Maps also apply to the Assembly Maps.

We now wish to restate some of our key concerns about the maps and make specific comments about the lines drawn for the Assembly district maps. In writing the following comments we have not looked at the voting patterns included in the different maps and the way Democrats and Republicans are divided up. We are not looking for a district that will vote one way or another. We are looking for a district that makes sense culturally, economically, and geographically.

* Why have you presented us with two sets of maps for each district without any rationale except that the commission members from the two major political parties could not agree?
* Why have you not followed clearly established guidelines for compactness and maintenance of municipal boundaries?
* When we look at the **Assembly Names Map** for IthacaBroome, we find that Tompkins County is not maintained as a single unit. Trumansburg, Jacksonville and Newfield, at least one quarter of the County, are cut off and included in **Sncaschlr Names Map.**
* IthacaBroome containing part of Tompkins County stretches into Broome County, another University Community, but does not include Binghamton University. Why extend into Broome County if the University is not included?
* Tompkins Cortland Community College (TC3) remains in IthacaBroome map which makes sense for Tompkins County. However, although Cortland County is made whole in Ondgacrtland Names map, TC3 is separated from the City of Cortland.
* When we turn to the **Letters Map** for District DW, Tompkins County remains whole. However, the district line goes north up Cayuga Lake only as far as Aurora, which is neatly cut in half, although Wells College does remain in DW district.
* What is the rationale for including Otisco and Skaneateles Lakes in this district but excluding Owasco Lake and the northern part of Cayuga Lake? Your rationale may be good but we do not know what it is.
* On the face of it and from the point of view of Tompkins County only, the letters map makes more sense. However why is Aurora cut in half? There is something wrong here which makes one query everything else.

We appreciate that drawing district lines is an extremely difficult job, but as Commission Members you are not expected to do this job on your own. You have people who are experts in data analysis and others expert at mapping to work with you. In addition to drawing maps, these experts should be able to provide their reasons for the proposed lines instead of just asking communities to submit their own maps.

If we were to draw a map, from a geographical point of view only, it makes more sense to start with the DW Letters Map but to draw the lines of the proposed district north to include the whole of Cayuga Lake and then eastwards north of Auburn to Skaneateles and from there south on the west side of Skaneateles Lake. But this only looks at the geography, keeping municipalities such as Aurora whole, and does not look at population figures or any other data points.

As you draw the lines for the final maps you will be presenting to the Legislature, we very much hope that you will pay close attention to all the testimony you have received since you presented you first maps. We also urge you strongly to take advantage of the quantitative methods that are now available to identify any gerrymandered Congressional, Senate or Assembly districts.

We understand that you must take many different factors into account when drawing the lines and want to thank you for the very difficult task you have undertaken.

Sincerely,

Members of Redistricting Committee of LWV Tompkins County.