League of Women Voters Calls on Legislature to Form New York’s First Independent Redistricting Commission Before Feb 1st Deadline

The League of Women Voters has called on the state legislature to fulfill their constitutional duty to appoint commissioners to New York’s first ever independent redistricting commission by the constitutionally mandated deadline, February 1st, 2020.

In November of 2019, the League sent a letter to all legislators alerting them of the constitutional mandate and urging the leaders to make their appointments before the February 1st deadline. This week, the League sent a follow up letter reminding legislators of this important pending deadline and the need to appoint this commission now so that all constitutionally mandated commission actions can be fulfilled.

“Even though the census count has not yet begun, this commission must be formed with enough time to begin hiring staff, studying current legislative maps, and planning for the 12 public hearings that will take place in New York State in 2021. Legislative leaders must make their appointments by February 1st or risk undermining the fair and unbiased map making process.” Said Suzanne Stassevitch, President of the League of Women Voters of New York State.

In 2014, voters approved a constitutional amendment to allow for the creation of an impartial redistricting process that would allow legislative lines to be drafted by an autonomous body. Article III, Section 5-b of the New York State Constitution states that “on or before February first of each year ending with a zero…an independent redistricting commission shall be established to determine the district lines for congressional and state legislative offices.” The League is working to ensure the constitutional deadlines for commission action is followed from now until the release of the commission’s proposed legislative maps in September of 2021.