



Board of Supervisors of Santa Barbara County (via email)
County Clerk of the Board (via email)
cc: Joe Holland (via website)

October 12, 2020

RE: Meeting of October 13, 2020; **AGENDA ITEM D-2** County of Santa Barbara's 2020 Citizens' Independent Redistricting Commission.

Dear Chair Hart and Members of the Board of Supervisors:

The League of Women Voters of Santa Barbara (LWVSB) is concerned that the candidate pool for the County of Santa Barbara's 2020 Citizens' Independent Redistricting Commission does not reflect our County's ethnic, racial, geographic, age, and gender diversity. Given the candidate pool you are being presented with today, our further concern is that it may be impossible to ultimately compose an 11-member commission from the remaining 38 individuals that reflects the County's demographic diversity.

Locally and nationally, the League of Women Voters has long supported the establishment of truly Independent Redistricting Commissions with membership that reflects the diversity of the area. The League of Women Voters California played a leadership role in creating the California Statewide Redistricting Commission, which is now being used as a model for other states. Both the Santa Maria Valley League and the Santa Barbara League of Women Voters played significant roles in helping pass Measure G in 2018 – to establish an independent, open public process to redraw Supervisorial District boundaries.

Of additional concern to the LWVSB is that, to date, the establishment of a County of Santa Barbara Citizens' Independent Redistricting Commission has not been open, public, or transparent. The County Elections Official has been silent about how applicants were ranked or chosen to be part of the applicant pool of "the most qualified 45." The screening by the County Elections Official resulted in an applicant pool of 45 eligible individuals that is not reflective of the County's ethnic, racial, geographic, age and gender diversity of the general population; nor is it reflective of or proportional to the actual voter registration demographics of the County.

The League feels strongly that every redistricting process should include full disclosure throughout the process and robust public input. In addition, the League states that redistricting at all levels of government must be accomplished in an open, unbiased manner with citizen participation and access to all levels and steps of the process.

Measure G defined a multi-step process for establishing a commission, with the goal that **the final eleven-member Independent Commission reflect Santa Barbara County's ethnic, racial, geographic, age and gender diversity and be as proportional as possible to the actual voter registration demographics of the County**.

Specifically, the current candidate pool is significantly underrepresented by Santa Barbara County residents under the age of 40 and is overrepresented by men.

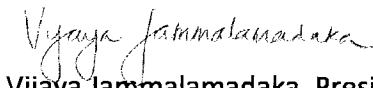
Of further note is that no women were selected from the entire applicant pool in the Third Supervisorial District.

Of equal concern, the ethnicity of the "most qualified pool" is highly skewed and not at all reflective of the diversity of Santa Barbara County – where individuals of Hispanic/Latinx heritage make up 46% of the population. By contrast, the current "most qualified" pool contains only six such individuals, or 13%.

While the LWVSB understands that the Board of Supervisors has not been involved in selecting the pool of potential commissioners, we respectfully call upon you to do all in your power to ensure that **the final 11-member Citizens' Independent Redistricting Commission reflect Santa Barbara County's ethnic, racial, geographic, age and gender diversity and be as proportional as possible to the actual voter registration demographics of the county** – as was promised to voters who overwhelmingly supported Measure G.

Please contact Mary Rose, LWVSB member at mary.rose@maryrose.cc or 805-448-0663 if you have questions.

Sincerely,



Vijaya Jammalamadaka, President

League of Women Voters of Santa Barbara (LWVSB)