

February 7, 2022, Issue 5

Local Redistricting Gets Loud

Local Redistricting

HB873 passed the House Governmental Affairs Committee over the loud objections of Gwinnett Democrats. Instead of using the district maps drawn by the county commission after considerable citizen input, the bill was moved from the Intergovernmental Affairs Committee which normally has jurisdiction over local redistricting, to the more general committee. Maps were redrawn with no citizen input and in direct contravention of the wishes of Gwinnett voters. LWVGA and LWV Gwinnett issued a press release in opposition to the gerrymandered maps, quoting board member Julie Bolen, "This legislative sleight of hand … in the Governmental Affairs Committee further undermines our democracy and voters' trust in government. We call upon the Georgia House to reinstate the maps back to the original proposal in HB873 which have been crafted and approved by and for the people."

SB369 also faced loud opposition before passing by a vote of 32 to 21. It will make elections for the Gwinnett County Board of Education nonpartisan. A proposed amendment to the bill that called for a county referendum on the measure failed to pass. Yet another amendment—a general amendment tacked on to a local bill—that would have applied to all school boards in the state was ruled out of order by the Lieutenant Governor. Six of the seven senators representing Gwinnett County opposed the bill. The lone holdout and the only Republican in the delegation is the bill's sponsors, Sen. Clint Dixon (R-45, Buford).