

THE GARRETT COUNTY REPUBLICAN

Governor appoints LWVMD administrator to commission on 6th District gerrymandering

November 30th

On Monday, Gov. Larry Hogan announced an executive order to establish an emergency commission on 6th District gerrymandering to fulfill the order issued on Nov. 7 by the United States District Court for the District of Maryland.

The governor has appointed three members of this nine-member multi-partisan commission, including Ashley Oleson, League of Women Voters of Maryland administrative director (unaffiliated); Walter Olson, senior fellow at the Cato Institute (Republican); and Judge Alexander Williams (Democrat.)

“I’m excited to get to work immediately to comply with the court’s order, because there is no time to waste in ensuring District 6 has a district that fairly represents their interests in 2020,” Oleson said.

The six remaining members of the commission will be selected from a public application process. Two members will be chosen from both the Democratic and Republican parties, and two members will be from neither of those parties. The application process is open now at governor.maryland.gov/free-and-fair/. Applications are due by Dec. 10.

The three-judge panel of the U.S. District Court unanimously ordered the state to redraw the Maryland 6th Congressional District by March 7, in time for use in the 2020 election. The court determined that the drawers of the 2011 map intended to lessen the influence of GOP voters by replacing them with Democrats in violation of the First Amendment right to political association.

The League of Women Voters of Maryland has applauded the decision of the governor’s office to move forward with complying with the order.

“We know that the attorney general has appealed this decision to the Supreme Court; nevertheless, we believe that that our state should immediately proceed to remedy this violation of the U.S. Constitution which has already been in place for too many election cycles,” said Elaine Apter, co-president of the League of Women Voters of Maryland.

“During the 2019 session of the General Assembly, the League of Women Voters and our coalition partners will be working to convince our legislators that it is time to end gerrymandering in Maryland once and for all, and pass a constitutional amendment to establish a permanent framework for an independent, multi-partisan redistricting commission going forward,” added Richard Willson, co-president of the League of Women Voters of Maryland.

