

Transcript: PPFM Day of Action Kick Off

Narrator: Good morning to everyone watching us today on YouTube. We would like to welcome everybody to the People Powered Day of Action national kickoff pep rally event. We will get started in just a few moments, thank you. Hello everyone and welcome to the People Powered Day of Action national kickoff pep rally event. We're so happy to be with you all this morning to kick off this very exciting Day of Action. I would now like to introduce our first presenter of the day Elena La Fulana, who will be kicking us off with a musical performance.

Elena La Fulana: Good morning, everyone. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Elena La Fulana. I'm a bilingual Latin folk artist based in Washington DC. I'm excited to share this day with you for the People Powered Day of Action and I'm glad to come together to help achieve fair maps that will reflect the communities that we live in. We're all here today because we care about democracy. We care about our communities, our families and each other. And so, I thought we could start by singing together. I know we're all separate but together but I want to encourage you to sing along with me so I'm going to go ahead with the lyrics to the song that I wrote in the chat. And I want you to sing along with me I wrote this song during the pandemic during these times after the murder of George Floyd, feeling kind of helpless feeling like we've lost our way. And this is kind of my not only my talk to myself, but hopefully to the community and to each other that we have better angels to appeal to that will bring us together that will help support one another. And to me music is the role that's always played as in supporting me and then that in that faith and that spirit, so I want you all to sing along wherever you are, don't unmute yourselves, but please sing with us and that would be it would be a really awesome way to start off today. So, it goes like this and I'll teach it to you. [sings] Thank you all, thanks for singing, have an awesome day today. Thanks for being here.

Virginia Kase Solomón: Oh my gosh, can we get a round of applause and a huge thank you to Elena La Fulana. How blessed are we to just be able to have such an incredible artist here sharing her talents with us today. Elena thank you so much. My name is Virginia Kase Solomón. I am the CEO of the League of Women Voters of the United States. Thank you all so much for joining us and welcome to our People Powered Day of Action. I am so excited to be here this morning to kick off this nationwide event to bring attention to redistricting an area where the League of Women Voters has played an important role for several redistricting cycles when I say several, I mean decades of redistricting cycles. And we are so proud of our Leagues hosting events in 44 states and the District of Columbia soon to be the 51st state we hope with more than 100 events to fight for fair maps and for a stronger democracy. In the past redistricting cycle, we've seen district lines drawn to intentionally decrease voters' power based solely on their political party. And we believe redistricting should be fair, transparent, and with public input. Our program People Powered Fair Maps™ was launched in September 2019. To create fair and transparent People Powered redistricting processes that eliminate partisan and racial gerrymandering nationwide. People Powered Fair Maps™ is a national redistricting program of the League of Women Voters focused on creating fair political maps nationwide and all 50 states plus as I said, we hope soon the 51st state DC. In June 2019, the US Supreme Court ruled in the case of Russo versus the League of Women Voters of North Carolina, that no fair test existed for courts to determine when partisan gerrymandering have gone too far. As a result, federal courts will be hands off and we just have due

process, even when new district lines are drawn to intentionally decrease the voting power of boards based solely on their political party. Instead, it will be up to state courts to correct these issues. Now let's go over some words you're going to be hearing about today. So redistricting, what is it it's the process of crafting new boundaries for local state and congressional districts. Congressional redistricting is based on census data. This is done as you know only every 10 years so it is so important you do it right. And gerrymandering is the intentional manipulation of redistricting processes by politicians to stay in power. I'll say it again. It's intentional. It's done by politicians so that they can choose their voters and stay in power. New district lines can be drawn intentionally to decrease voter power, and we believe redistricting should be fair, transparent, and inclusive. You're also going to hear about apportionment as it relates to redistricting. And apportionment is the process of dividing the 435 congressional districts or seats in the US House of Representatives among the 50 states. This week, the census bureau announced which states will gain or lose a seat in Congress. This is different from the census data that will be released this fall, which will show us where all the people counted live. But why does it matter? It matters because communities can be divided differently, and that there can be challenges with the data. So, to counteract this, we need as many people as possible involved in the redistricting public comment period, and even as part of the map drawing process. At the end of the day, it's up to us let's look at Pennsylvania as an example, the Pennsylvania maps will be drawn and used for the 2018 election. What we saw was that when the maps were drawn fairly specifically in Pennsylvania, more diverse candidates win, for example, in 2018, the winning candidates for districts were more reflective of the political makeup of the state. Have to say it. More women were elected to Congress. Redistricting impacts everything and you'll get to hear more about this with our speakers this morning. But let's not forget, this really is about us. It's called People Powered Fair Maps™ for a reason and the maps created this year will have a lasting impact not only on elections, but on issues we all care about. Congressional maps can determine the outcome of legislation by unfairly tilting power from voters to politicians. We can end it we can gerrymandering and we need to end it for a democracy to truly represent the will of the people because we know how dangerous it is to our country when people don't feel like their voices are being heard. Now we have with us today a very exciting program. You'll hear from our national partners for this rally, Fair Immigration Reform Movement better known as FIRM, the amazing Greenpeace, and our dear friends at NAACP. We'll also hear from League leaders in Arizona, California, Georgia, who with our partners will speak about how redistricting impacts very important issues for many people in this country. Everything from immigration, climate change voting rights. And racial justice. Now, we're going to get this program started so with that I am honored to introduce to you a powerful group of leaders when I talk about powerful I mean powerful who are going to talk to you about how redistricting impact issues we all care about at the national and the state level, Rabayah Ahkter immigration project manager Fair Immigration Reform Movement or FIRM, Pinny Sharon advocacy chair LWV Arizona, Jonathan Butler democracy campaigner for Greenpeace, Carol Moon Goldberg, president of the League of Women Voters of California, Dominik Whitehead vice president of campaigns at NAACP, and Susannah Scott president of LWV Georgia. Take it away folks.

Rabayah Ahkter: Thank you Virginia and good morning everybody. Happy People Powered Day of Action and happy Ramadan to those who are observing my name is Rabayah Ahkter. I'm the census project manager for the Fair Immigration Reform Movement. At community change two years ago the previous administration tried to add a citizenship question to the 2020 census to scare immigrants and people of color so that we wouldn't be counted. We fought and the Supreme Court heard us we fought to get counted because the census is one of the ways that even undocumented immigrants who aren't allowed

to vote can participate in our democracy. There are 11 million undocumented people in this country many of them essential workers who deserve a path to citizenship. We fought to get our people counted because this is our home and we deserve to be seen this year maps will be drawn fair maps impact all of us so we must join our friends and allies to demand transparency, inclusion and fair maps that truly represent our communities. So, I want to thank the League of Women Voters for bring us together today and thank you all for joining us this morning let's get this pep rally started. Thank you.

Pinny Sheoran: Greetings from Arizona. I am Pinny Sheoran representing the League of Women Voters of Arizona as the state advocacy chair and the president of the League of Women Voters of Metropolitan Phoenix. Arizona is ranked among the 10 most diverse states in the country and the seventh fastest growing state. It's important that our diverse and growing population is fully represented and included in the map creation process. This happens every 10 years and only every 10 years and it is important that we get this right as it impacts the future generations for several decades to come. At the League of Women Voters of Arizona, we are working together with the 2021 independent redistricting commission to ensure that all communities are encouraged to participate. We are doing this in the following ways. We're hosting the very first public event at which the chair of the Independent Redistricting Commission will have a conversation with our leadership. The event is open to the public. We will be working with the Commission to reach out to communities to participate in the public hearings planned by the Commission. We will educate the public on how to participate in these Commission hearings, ways to give compelling testimonies and learn to monitor and post public comments during the meetings. Our very first LWV Arizona redistricting 101 Education public event is scheduled for May and we will be adding many more with the release of the Arizona census apportionment and Arizona's disappointing undercount LWVAZ's work to reach out in partnership to ensure that maps are created with fair representation of communities that have been under counted. We have expanded our efforts in our collaborative work as partners on the Arizona voting rights coalition. The C4 table Arizona wins in supporting advocacy actions workshops and education outreach. Another of our efforts will be to produce easy to understand information that we hope to distribute to the public libraries. We continue our work as the League and in partnership with the Arizona independent redistricting commission, Arizona thanks you all for championing People Powered Fair Maps™. Thank you League of Women Voters of the US.

Johnathan Butler: Hello and welcome I'm so glad to be here with all of you all today. My name is Jonathan Butler. I use they/them pronouns. I'm coming to you live and direct from as Virginia was saying hopefully the 51st state DC so excited to be here because I came to say one thing and say it clear a fight for fair maps is a fight for our future and for the future and health of our planet. For far too long. Gerrymandering has been an unfortunate, racist and institutionalized part of our politics. The fact is when people aren't choosing their elected officials their elected officials are choosing them. That means we're heading the wrong direction. But the time is now we have a pristine, a wonderful, beautiful opportunity. As you're going to hear from people on the call today to actually turn around so we actually can get close to fair representation so that people are actually counted their voices are heard and that we can actually start making progress on the things that matter to us, especially as it pertains to the climate. I think we can all agree that access to healthy foods, access to housing, access to clean water, clean air, are basic human rights, and that's something regardless of where you come from that something that we can agree on. One of the key things those folks voices, especially those most directly impacted by climate disaster, by the impacts of climate change, which are Black or brown, Indigenous

low wealth communities and those voices are heard. It's not because folks are showing up it's because they're strategically being counted out. We have to make sure that their voices get counted in. And this is what this moment is about this moment is about clean air. This moment is about clean water. This moment is about People Powered Fair Maps™, where we can actually be closer to reality where Everyone is able to have their voice heard, everyone's able to live healthy lives. Everyone's able to get closer to get all the things all the resources, all the care and attention clean air, clean water, everything that they need to not just survive but thrive in this world. I'm so excited to be here with you all today and so glad that we're having this all together. Thank you League of Women Voters, thank you Virginia. Thank you everyone who's been a part of this and continue this fight for not just our communities but for our planet. Thank you.

Carol Moon Goldberg: Wow, you're a tough act to follow, Jonathan. Thank you very much to everyone for inviting me to be involved in this. We're crossing the country now from Washington DC to California. I am Carol Moon Goldberg, president of the League of Women Voters of California. We know in California that independent redistricting commissions give a voice to underserved communities. It is a powerful tool to advance democracy and central to the concept of fair mapping districts is a respect for communities of interest. A community of interest is made up of people who live in an area and share a common interest such as an environmental concern. Here in California, we don't have a lot of water and that makes every drop of it very precious. Safe, affordable drinking water is a huge concern, no matter where you live, an urban area, a suburban area, a rural area. It's so important to life itself to have safe affordable drinking water, in urban areas. Here in California industrial wastes infiltrate water tables and the wells that serve a community. In rural areas, runoff from pesticides and herbicides can end up damaging the water quality. And all too often it's people of color agricultural workers, low income seniors and low income families who live in places with poor water quality. Fair mapping helps to address environmental injustice issues like water quality, and they do that because of the public input required. Here in California, our League is dedicated to helping to educate members of the community on how to step forward in the public comment sections to explain to the redistricting commission why they have a community of interest. Why this issue, water quality or any other environmental concern is important. This gives those people an opportunity to be heard and it gives the commission an opportunity to draw maps that will give voice and power to these people. Because that's what they need. They need power to pick the people who represent them. They need the power to hold those representatives responsible for addressing issues like water quality. Fair mapping is such a great tool to make sure that all the people in the community are heard they live there. They deserve to be heard. Fair mapping. Let's advance democracy and let's serve all the people in our communities. Thank you everyone for being here and thank you League of Women Voters national for organizing this great event and thank you to our partner organizations.

Dominik Whitehead: So many tough acts to follow but we are now leaving California coming back over to the east coast. Soon to be 51st state Washington, DC so excited about that. Good morning, everyone. I'm Dominik Whitehead, Vice President campaigns for the NAACP. With the release of apportionment data recently, each state now needs to prepare for fair and transparent redistricting process that includes input from the public in particular communities of color. NAACP knows that racial gerrymandering is an attack on communities of color, not to have fair representation at all levels of government. We also know that Black voters helps to change the course of our democracy in the 2020 election and the Georgia runoff election, and as a result, there has been retaliation on the text of our

voting rights in the NAACP will be focusing on the comprehensive effort on congressional redistricting in Texas and Florida and state legislative redistricting across the country where we're being attacked by voting rights our strategy, will give special thought to the issue of state legislators with an eye to changing the political makeup of those legislatures which are engaged in a massive voter suppression effort. Although we have been warned of partisan [unintelligible] We believe we have reached a point where in addition to determining whether there are opportunities for creation and majority minority districts, we must be intentional. And I say that again. We must be intentional about the general makeup of the legislative bodies. We also believe we must be intentional and thoroughly consider legal options. You see what's happening in certain states like Texas already with lawsuits that are happening. There'll be a huge effort across the country and we need to have a big strategy in place and NAACP is in the fight with League of Women Voters to ensure that happens. We also know the NAACP data analytics, is extremely important in this process. The NAACP is in partnership with GSSA a data analytics firm, based out of Denver, Colorado and they'll be assisting with us directly around our mapping for the redistricting. I'll end with this. It is more important than ever that we work together to ensure fair and transparent redistricting process our democracy depends on it. This is why we are a proud partner of the Charge Hub, a redistricting hub with many partners with organizations like the League of Women Voters, it is also a part of it. Thank you League of Women Voters let's get to work let's get a fair process.

Susannah Scott: Thank you, Dominik. And thank you, everyone with the League and our partners. My name is Susannah Scott and I'm president of the League of Women Voters of Georgia. To follow on what Dominik had to say, diluting the voting power of communities of color through gerrymandering can create additional opportunities to undermine your access to the polls. Here in Georgia gerrymandering has led to one party's control of the legislature, which has happened it's flipped back and forth during my lifetime. And this has happened with both parties. But the current legislature has used their dominance to enact massive election law overhauls that will desperately impact voters of color. This includes allowing for a state takeover of boards of elections and election offices if they don't like what how the local communities are handling elections, they're safeguards really, and they've also added provisions that shorten periods of request to return an absentee ballot and limits the access to ballot drop boxes. This is almost guaranteed to lead to longer lines at the polls on Election Day, which historically impacts voters of color. Voters will have to work harder to overcome these additional impediments. But one of the key steps is fighting for fair redistricting process so that all voters have equal representation communities of color can work together with other committees of common interest to push legislatures for a fair process so that their voices aren't further diluted with our partners, including Georgia redistricting alliance which we are a member of. We will be training communities on how to use mapping tools over the summer so that they can provide community input during our redistricting process this fall. So, there is work that we can do, we need to make sure that our communities have the information that they need so they can participate in the redistricting process and give valuable feedback to our legislators when they are drafting these new districts. So, we've got work to do but we've got the tools to do them and thanks to our partners and the League of the US and everyone here today, we can make this happen. So, thank you all for being here. We're really excited for our Day of Action.

VKS: Can we get a round of applause. I feel like I'm the only one out here clapping but I will say I am so thankful to be in this great company with amazing people. Thank you so much Rabayah, Pinny, Jonathan Carol, Dominik and Susannah you all have inspired us today you are such inspirations to me, personally,

for the incredible work you do, the spirit that you bring to this work and your commitment to fight for fair maps for everybody because we know that our country needs to be able to have champions like you do in this work. So, thank you so, so so much. And thank you all for sticking with us. I am now joined by a powerful group of League leaders who early on this year volunteered to work with our national team to put this Day of Action together. So, thank you, Pinny, Hilda, Iris, Martha, Dixie and Rebecca for all your hard work and your commitment to People Powered Fair Maps™. There's over 100 events around the country today. 100, not 10 not 20, but in typical League style we like to do it big. 100 events around the country. And I want to thank and congratulate all the amazing leaders around the country and their partners in making this possible. I encourage all of you visit our People Power Day of Action landing page. For those watching us on YouTube. You can find the link on the comments below. You can also find it on our League of Women Voters outreach circle. This is a great and easy way to be part of the growing group of democracy defenders empowering voters around the country. The link to join our circle is also in the comments below. So, while we have a chance I just want to give you a sampling a sample of the events taking place today. Maine, where you at Maine, LWV of Maine is hosting a friend to friend text bank to encourage residents to contact their senators and pass the For the People Act. New York, where you at, the League of Women Voters in New York is hosting their first ever virtual people's hearing on New York State redistricting. I'll say it again, it's a people's hearing on New York State redistricting. This virtual hearing will allow New Yorkers from around the state to present testimony of why redistricting matters to them and their community. Moving on, Pennsylvania. Together with their fair maps PA coalition LWV of Pennsylvania is hosting a variety of events throughout the state from crossing the Susquehanna river to street theater in Philadelphia highlighting redistricting. Next up North Carolina, where it all started. We want you to join the LWV of North Carolina to call your own legislators the members of the redistricting committees and the leadership. LWV of North Carolina is providing the contact information a basic script talking points and background information to make it easy for you to get involved. So, you want to just make sure that you are calling your legislators if you're in North Carolina with LWV North Carolina. Where are my folks from Michigan, Michigan are you in the house because Leagues across the state have undertaken a widespread educational effort to help voters understand redistricting and to ensure the Michigan independent citizens redistricting commission is being what voters have asked for, for citizens to draw district lines instead of legislators for special interests and for the commission to respect, respect, communities of interest. Missouri where you at, together with the Sierra Club and Fair Missouri, LWV of Missouri will be teaching people how to draw their own maps using district R mapping software. Moving on to the great state of Oklahoma we want you to join LWV of Oklahoma and people, not politicians for a fair maps rally at the Oklahoma state Capitol South Plaza. There'll be guest speakers poetry readings and more so you need to show up mask on. New Mexico the state League is spotlighting their redistricting committee and will have interactive discussions with the public so they can better understand how to get involved. And as you've already heard, California's in the house and local Leagues in California are bringing attention to redistricting and ways for the public to get involved. Local Leagues will cover a variety of cross cutting issues including how natural disaster impacts the redistricting process, how maps are drawn and protecting communities of interest. And last but not least our last sampling of the day Washington, Washington State will be covering a variety of opportunities for involvement, including how to prepare and deliver your own testimony to ensure the public participates in this important process. You can go to our landing page on LWV.org to find an event. All you have to do is go to [www dot LWV dot org](http://www.dot.LWV.org). You can also join us on

outreach circle to check your actions and let us know that you joined by checking in with us and now I'm going to leave you with our Day of Action volunteer committee.

Hilda Walker Thomas: Good morning. Good morning everyone. I am Hilda Walker Thomas president of the League of Women Voters of Louisiana. Let's educate. This is where it starts. Redistricting can be hard to understand. We need to continue to raise awareness about what redistricting and gerrymandering are and why it is important that we all get involved in creating fair maps for all one way to do this is to join the redistricting Community College. It starts tomorrow, April 30. And whether you are new or experienced, you can learn all about redistricting. The Redistricting Community College will include an introduction, the Voting Rights Act, community mapping rules and timelines, providing testimony and improving transparency and building coalitions. Don't delay and register on the link provided on the chat. And remember to share what you learn with others. Thank you.

Iris Meltzer: Good morning. My name is Iris Meltzer and I'm the president of the League of Women Voters of Ohio. We need to inspire we need to inspire everyone because redistricting impacts everything and everyone we heard this morning from our friends at Fair Immigration Reform Movement, Greenpeace and the NAACP as well as the amazing work being done in Arizona, California and Georgia. And we know the power that comes from connecting fair maps to the issues that we care deeply about and the power of our own stories. There's nothing like sharing our stories, it humanizes the issue and it's easier for others to relate and understand why it matters to them as well. Now you can also share your story. Tomorrow. Our friends at the campaign Legal Center are launching their campaign our fair maps day, a social media testimonial campaign to help raise awareness about the importance of fair redistricting. We are inviting everyone to post a short approximately one minute long selfie style testimonial video on social media tomorrow and tell the world why you support fair maps and why it matters. You can find the action with easy instructions to participate at our national outreach circle. The link to join is being shared right now on chat. Thank you and forward to fair maps.

Martha Pint: Good morning. My name is Martha Pint, the co-president of the League of Women Voters of Kansas it's all about growing as we educate, motivate and inspire we grow our base of support. More and more people are getting involved every day in our fight for fair maps. Partnerships are as equally important and we need to grow the number of partners as well as make our partnerships stronger. At the League of Women Voters, we are working side by side with a growing list of powerful partners known as the Charge Hub they include common cause state voices API vote, League of Women Voters Mi Familia Vota, the NAACP, National Congress of American Indians center for popular democracy and fair count. These national partners also work in partnership and coalition in many of our states and they're also fighting for fair maps. If you're not already partnering with them at the state level reach out. You can also find more information on our national outreach circle. Thank you.

Dixie Sampson: Good morning I'm Dixie Sampson the PPFM™ coordinator for the League of Rhode Island today. We educate for redistricting reform. As individuals we have power we have our voice we have our stories and as a collective movement. We're unstoppable. We just need everyone to engage collectively to build the needed to power how to achieve fair maps, just like we're doing today all over the country. Let's continue to educate agitate and organize as Susan B. Anthony said. This fall census data will become available. We can't simply wait to get ready then we need to start getting ready now. This Day of Action is only the beginning. We have another upcoming opportunity to show our power many partners on May 8 we'll be joining the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Action day to visibly

show our support and get it passed. Why does this matter to redistricting? This year is going to be the first redistricting cycle without the section for protections of the voting. Right Act that were gutted in the Shelby decision. Certain provisions of the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act would give judges more leeway to block racially biased maps by establishing uniform rules for drawing districts banning partisan gerrymandering and requiring more transparency in the map drawing process it could protect us against the gravest threats to fair map drawing across the country. Check out the action alert at our national outreach circle to find out how to get involved and agitate. Thank you.

Rebecca Greenhaw: Good morning. I'm Rebecca Greenhaw, I'm president of the League of Women Voters of Oklahoma County, Oklahoma. Celebrate today. We join in activism and celebration, celebration of the journey we are on and celebrating that we are in this together for each other. We often don't celebrate enough. We move from action to action committed to growing and strengthening our democracy and there never seems to be enough time to celebrate. But we must not forget that joy is an act of resistance. Let's continue to celebrate our progress. From the little things to the big wins. Let's celebrate our lessons. And most importantly, let's celebrate each other. Systematic change takes time. We need to be in this for the long haul. Just like our sisters were 100 years ago, when they won the right to vote for some of us. We know that work is not finished. We stand here today committed to continue to fight for a truly representative democracy that works for all not just for some and that merits celebration. Fair maps for all!

VKS: It looks like somebody has turned my camera off so you're just going to hear my voice but what I will say is thank you to everyone for joining us. It looks like I'm back. Thank you everyone for joining us this morning. Now it is time to join our local events and continue to educate, motivate, grow and agitate for fair maps and democracy celebrating our progress and each other along the way. Thank you all so much for joining us. We are so excited onward and upward for fair maps.