

Letter to the Editor, *Everett Herald*

November 22, 2017

The draft memo on geographic representation for Everett City Council presented by Council member Paul Roberts to the Council on November 11, 2017 has some serious flaws. The same is true for the 4-3 proposal suggested by *The Herald*. Such a division has received judicious consideration but it actually maintains the same issues that currently exist with the City's representation. In that light, the League of Women Voters of Snohomish County chose to back the five-district, two at-large initiative brought forward by Everett Districts Now.

During the recent election season, Council members Paul Roberts, Scott Murphy, and Jeff Moore publicly supported districting as did mayoral candidates Cassie Franklin and Judy Tuohy. Council member Brenda Stonecipher has been a long-time supporter. So our newly elected mayor and a majority of the City Council are in favor of districting for the City of Everett. The 3000+ registered voters in Everett who signed the initiative to let the voters decide the merits of a five-district, two at-large system of electing Council members have also spoken. Further study of the merits of districting appears superfluous.

However, if a committee is formed to prepare a districting proposal for the Council's consideration, the process must be democratic and completely transparent. Members of the committee need to be from the community at large, representing various interests in the city. They need to be selected by those individual interest groups. A few groups to be represented are: neighborhoods, Everett Transit, Paine Field Airport, the faith community, the business community, a variety of nonprofits, the arts, and ethnic interests. This committee must be bottom-up, not top-down in order for the work of this districting committee to be objective.

As a non-partisan organization, the League of Women Voters values and promotes informed citizen participation in government. We believe that our elected officials represent all of us, including those not yet registered. Our vision is that districts, once practiced and formed, will add the richness of new voices to the process of government within the City of Everett.

Yours truly,

Districting Committee, League of Women Voters of Snohomish County

Lois Wentink, Spokesperson from Everett

M. J. Donovan Creamer, Barbara Eklund , and Brenda Bolanos-Ivory, all from Everett

