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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS<sup>®</sup> OF FLORIDA NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LA RAZA

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## **Court Stands Up for Voters, Invalidates Senate Map**

Tallahassee, FL -- This morning, the Florida Supreme Court gave real meaning to the new redistricting standards approved by voters and invalidated the Senate district plan passed by the Legislature. The Supreme Court gave a voice to the Florida citizens who gathered signatures, contributed their hard earned dollars and voted for the Fair Districts Amendments in November 2010, sending a clear message to Tallahassee politicians that they cannot continue the unfair practice of designing districts to favor themselves.

"From this day forward our elected officials are on notice that they cannot ignore the Constitution and abuse the public trust by drawing districts to favor themselves," said Deirdre Macnab, president of the League of Women Voters of Florida. "The League of Women Voters of Florida has been working on redistricting reform for decades, and this is a historic day for all Florida citizens."

Peter Butzin, president of Common Cause of Florida, echoed Macnab's comments and said, "This is the first time in the history of Florida that the Supreme Court has had grounds to stop politicians from gerrymandering districts to favor themselves at the expense of the voters. In 2012, for the first time in our state, legislators will be running in districts where voters can fairly select their representatives rather than having politicians choosing their voters."

"We cannot overstate the importance of this ruling," said Jared Nordlund, national field director for the National Council of La Raza. "The Florida Supreme Court has sent a message to Florida voters that their work in passing Amendments 5 and 6 means that every vote will count equally; trying to rig districts for political gain will no longer be tolerated."

All members of the Fair Districts coalition expressed the hope that in redrawing the map, the Legislature will scrupulously adhere to the fairness rules now in the Florida Constitution.

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