

Weiss, Rachel

From: gedgeworth@aol.com
Sent: Thursday, May 06, 2010 9:34 PM
To: Districting
Subject: I support fair non-partisan legislative districts

I support fair non-partisan legislative districts!

***One percent or less variation in the size of districts: It's not fair if one representative has to represent 9400 people, and the next one up the road only has 8600. The people in the smaller district get easier access to their government.**

***No political data should be used to draw districts. Districts should be drawn to represent people, not partisan politics**

***Don't keep the current districts: The current districts divide communities in two, they have wildly varying population sizes — in general they're not unbiased.**

Name: Glenda Edgeworth

Address: 870 N Burnt Fork Rd, Stevensville, MT

Date: 5-6-10

Weiss, Rachel

From: Brockie Family [friskydog@bresnan.net]
Sent: Thursday, May 06, 2010 10:03 PM
To: Districting
Subject: Redistricting parameters

I support fair non-partisan legislative districts!

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Name: Mike and Susan Brockie

Address: 545 Beverly Hill Blvd, Billings, MT 59102

Date: May 7, 2010

Weiss, Rachel

From: Gloria H. ROARK [zibec@msn.com]
Sent: Thursday, May 06, 2010 10:55 PM
To: Weiss, Rachel
Subject: Redistricting

I support fair non-partisan legislative districts!

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Name: Gloria H. Roark

Address: 10079 Miller Creek Road, Missoula, Mt. 59803

Date: May 6, 2010

Weiss, Rachel

From: gknelsen@3rivers.net
Sent: Thursday, May 06, 2010 10:56 PM
To: Districting

I support fair non-partisan legislative districts!

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Name: Gordon V Nelsen

Address: 517 6th Ave. S.W. Conrad, Montana 59425

Date: May 6th, 2010

Weiss, Rachel

From: Gloria H. ROARK [zibec@msn.com]
Sent: Thursday, May 06, 2010 10:57 PM
To: Weiss, Rachel
Subject: Redistricting

I support fair non-partisan legislative districts!

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Name: Douglas B. Roark

Address: 10079 Miller Creek Road, Missoula, Mt. 59803

Date: May 6, 2010

Weiss, Rachel

From: Ann Brigham [abrigham@bresnan.net]
Sent: Thursday, May 06, 2010 11:14 PM
To: Districting
Subject: I support fair non-partisan legislative districts!

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Name: A. Brigham

Address: 1002 E. Gallatin Ave., Belgrade, MT

Date: May 6, 2010

Weiss, Rachel

From: Linda [grasshoppercreek@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, May 07, 2010 5:54 AM
To: Districting
Subject: re-districting

I support fair non-partisan legislative districts!

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Name: Linda J Loendorf

Address: 155 Moose Run, Polaris, MT 59746

Date: 6 May 2010

Linda

www.grasshopperviewpoints.blogspot.com

www.wethepeoplemontana.com

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Name: Ron Ehli

Address: 391 Blodgett Camp Road, Hamilton, Mt 59840

Date: 5-07-10

I support fair non-partisan legislative districts!

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Name: George Torp

Address: 3116 Old Pond Road, Missoula, MT 59802

Date: 5/7/2010

Weiss, Rachel

From: Kay Wilson [kaywilson@windermere.com]
Sent: Friday, May 07, 2010 7:47 AM
To: Districting
Subject: Redistricting

I support fair non-partisan legislative districts!

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Name: Kay Wilson
Address: 459 Sawtooth Lane
Hamilton, MT 59840

Date: 05/07/2010

Weiss, Rachel

From: Dave & Nancy [daveandnancy@blackfoot.net]
Sent: Friday, May 07, 2010 8:21 AM
To: Districting
Subject: Redistricting

I support fair non-partisan legislative districts!

Weiss, Rachel

From: Harris Himes [harrishimes@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, May 07, 2010 8:24 AM
To: Districting
Subject: REDISTRICTING

I support fair non-partisan legislative districts!

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Name: Harris Himes

Address: PO Box 540, Hamilton, MT 59840

Date: 5/7/10

Weiss, Rachel

From: Nancy Neville [nancy@nevilog.com]
Sent: Friday, May 07, 2010 8:34 AM
To: Districting
Subject: legislative districts

I support fair non-partisan legislative districts!

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Name: Nancy A. Neville

Address: 2036 US Hwy 93 N, Victor, MT 59875

Date: 5/7/10

Weiss, Rachel

From: Brad Tschida [brad@themilkywhey.com]
Sent: Friday, May 07, 2010 8:38 AM
To: Districting
Subject: Re-districting

I support fair non-partisan legislative districts!

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Name: Brad Tschida

Address: 10635 Mullan Rd., Missoula MT 59808

Date: 5/07/10

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Name: Teresa Bergman

Address: 1758 West Kent, Missoula, MT 59801

Date: May 7, 2010

Weiss, Rachel

From: Jan Meyerdirk [jimm123@blackfoot.net]
Sent: Friday, May 07, 2010 9:40 AM
To: Districting
Subject: districting

I support fair non-partisan legislative districts!

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Name: Janet Meyerdirk

Address: 170 awks Nest Ln. Darby Mt. 59829

Date: 5/07/10

Weiss, Rachel

From: Karen [KarenThompson@tamarackconstruction.com]
Sent: Friday, May 07, 2010 9:43 AM
To: Districting
Cc: garymaclaren@yahoo.com
Subject: Redistricting

I support fair non-partisan legislative districts!

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Name: Karen Thompson

Address: 219 Totem View Dr., Victor, MT 59875

Date: 5/7/2010

Weiss, Rachel

From: Chris Rosenau [chris@therosenaus.com]
Sent: Friday, May 07, 2010 10:41 AM
To: Districting
Subject: Redistricting

I support fair non-partisan legislative districts!

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Name: Chris Rosenau

Address: P.O. Box 478, Lolo, MT 59847

Date: 5/7/10

Weiss, Rachel

From: Bob [robertleestar@yahoo.com]
Sent: Friday, May 07, 2010 10:58 AM
To: Districting
Subject: Re-Districting for the people of Montana, not for the political parties of Montana.

I support fair non-partisan legislative districts!

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Name: Robert L Starks

Address: 56949 Watson Road, Saint Ignatius, MT 59865

Date: May, 7 2010

Weiss, Rachel

From: patlamb@juno.com
Sent: Friday, May 07, 2010 10:59 AM
To: Districting
Subject: RE DISTRICTING

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PATRICIA LAMB

107 COHOSSET DRIVE

MISSOULA, MT 59803

MAY 7TH, 2010

Weiss, Rachel

From: Kootenai Sand & Gravel, Inc. [kootsandg@interbel.net]
Sent: Friday, May 07, 2010 12:38 PM
To: Districting

support fair non-partisan legislative districts!

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Name: Josh Letcher

Address: 3987 W Kootenai Rd. Rexford, Mt 59930

Date: 5/07/10

Weiss, Rachel

From: matthew sisler [mattandjules@msn.com]
Sent: Friday, May 07, 2010 12:52 PM
To: Districting

please support fair and non_partisan legislative districts

Weiss, Rachel

From: Starr Farley [starrfarley@hotmail.com]
Sent: Friday, May 07, 2010 5:18 PM
To: Districting
Subject: fair non-partisan districts

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Name: Starr Farley

Address: 233 Roaring Lion Rd, Hamilton, MT 59840

Date: 5/7/10

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Name: Kathy Jacobs

Address: 10742 Oral Zumwalt Way

Date: May 8, 2010

Weiss, Rachel

From: Jack Childress [jack@childresshome.com]
Sent: Saturday, May 08, 2010 9:42 AM
To: Districting
Subject: Redistricting

I support fair non-partisan legislative districts!

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Name: Jack Childress

Address: 91 E. Bell-Xing Stevensville Mt. 59870

Date: May 6, 2010

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Name: Earle Reimer

Address: 5942 Cunningham Crt., Florence, MT 59833

Date: 5/8/10

Weiss, Rachel

From: Bob Kubiak [montana.bob@hotmail.com]
Sent: Saturday, May 08, 2010 11:54 AM
To: Districting
Subject: REDISTRICTING

I support fair non-partisan legislative districts!

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Name: Robert E. Kubiak

Address: 840 Bear Creek Trail, Victor, MT 59875

Date: 5-8-2010

Hotmail has tools for the New Busy. Search, chat and e-mail from your inbox. [Learn more.](#)

Weiss, Rachel

From: Patrick Connell [pconnell1@yahoo.com]
Sent: Sunday, May 09, 2010 10:40 AM
To: Districting
Subject: Redistricting Comments

Members of the Commission:

I am writing to you to urge you to take a much higher ground *-politically-* than was done during the last redistricting effort. Regardless of party, it is incumbent that the citizens of Montana CANNOT look at the next voting district maps and immediately spot an obviously gerrymandered border.

I am a candidate for the republican nomination for Legislator to represent HD 87, and it is a perfect example of a districting effort that gave little consideration to its residents, especially in Pinesdale, along the western edge of the Bitterroot Valley. HD 87 otherwise is comprised of the area generally southward from Hamilton, except for an umbilical cord type connection linked by a thread through the Bitterroot National Forest *with no private land ownership* until the thread pops off the Forest to include Pinesdale northward toward Victor. District boundaries should be set by neighborhoods, not by political demographics, regardless of party.

Further, in this day and age of computer analysis, I believe that there is well beyond sufficient, low cost ability to determine neighborhood precinct populations so that there is a minimal difference in district population levels being represented. Any district differentiation beyond 1% is dramatically shifting representation, and should not be necessary.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my comments on this very important process

Regards,

Patrick Connell

Conservation is the wise use of resources for the benefit and enjoyment of ALL mankind ... g.pinchot

Weiss, Rachel

From: robert wood [cotterwood@wildblue.net]
Sent: Sunday, May 09, 2010 4:57 PM
To: Districting
Subject: Redistricting

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Name: Bob and Carole Wood

Address: 118 Timber Ridge Drive, Sula, MT 59871

Date: May 9, 2010

--
Carole Wood

Districting and Apportionment Commission
PO Box 201706
Helena, MT 59620-1706

May 5, 2010

Dear Sirs:

The current legislative districts in Montana are inappropriate and unfair and need to be changed. Many were clearly configured on the basis of political considerations rather than population. For Example:

1. House District 15 encompasses 5 counties and the towns of Arlee and Browning. Clearly, the criteria for this district was to elect a Native American, and inappropriate reason for such Gerrymandering.
2. Missoula County has 10 legislative districts. Because of the revised configuration, with 9 of the districts being pie-shaped to include a part of heavily Democratic central Missoula, all of these 9 districts have had Democrats elected in the 3 elections since the districts were created. Furthermore, the margin of victory in these districts was consistently at approximately 60% Democrat, 40% Republican, a huge margin by most standards. This is not because of the candidates. Republican candidates have included Physicians, College professors, Businessmen and Hospital Administrators, all of whom would have raised the intelligence of the legislature. Clearly, past voting patterns were utilized to configure these districts.
 - . Due to the redistricting, over 40% of the electorate in Missoula county is not represented in the legislature. This is inappropriate, and needs to change. We deserve:
 1. 1% or less population variation in districts.
 2. No voting data should be used in configuring districts. They should represent all people equally.
 3. No pie-shaped districts or configuration based on ethnicity.

Thanks you for your consideration.


Philip L. Barney
40491 Melita Island kRd
Polson, MT 59860

Weiss, Rachel

From: Scott Mendenhall [smendenhall@ineva.com]
Sent: Monday, May 10, 2010 12:15 PM
To: Districting

Dear District and Apportionment Commissioners:

As a termed out member of the Montana House of Representatives, I'm writing to provide input to your important upcoming decisions on reapportionment. Having run two concurrent campaigns that overlapped the enactment of the last redistricting plan, I've some pertinent experience that I believe could be useful to your deliberations.

I first ran in HD 39 in 2002 and was elected to serve beginning in January, 2003. At that time we resided in Cardwell just south of I-90 in southern Jefferson County. HD 39 exactly mirrored the borders of Jefferson County. The County had grown to the point that the prior convention of using the county line would no longer suffice in order to keep within the population deviation.

However, the Reapportionment Commission, bolstered by an overtly political 3-2 Democratic party advantage, opted to consider political affiliation in redrawing the lines and placed the line about 1/2 mile north of my residence thus attempting to pit two incumbent Republicans against each other in the ensuing election and leaving a wide open race in the newly created HD 77 that encompassed most of Jefferson County.

In the process, the Commission disregarded many other normal and rationale criteria:

1. Community of Interest: The new plan dropped the southern part of Jefferson County off by splitting the district at I-90 near Whitehall. In doing so, they split the community of Whitehall into two districts thus placing the Town of Whitehall and much of the adjacent area in with Madison County communities that lie much further to the south. The portion of the Whitehall community lying to the north of I-90 was put in with the southwesternmost area of Lewis and Clark County including some residents in Helena proper as well as homes lying to the south of Hwy 12 West as it proceeds over McDonald pass.

It would have made much more sense to use the southern border of Jefferson County and had the northernmost part of Jefferson County go in with a Helena District such as the East Helena District that was underpopulated. The people living in extreme-north Jefferson County most often work and socialize in Helena thus there is a more logical community-of-interest association there vs forcing people from Whitehall (about 1.5 hours away) to be in the same district with those that live near McDonald pass. There was sufficient population room in the adjacent districts to do so but the overtly politically-driven majority of the Commission opted to cheat instead.

2. Existing Political Boundaries: The new HD 77 district was created using political data to draw the northern-most district line in the approximate area of the Lewis & Clark/Jefferson County border. The result was a mishmash line that sometimes went into the City of Helena and sometimes didn't. As I campaigned door-to-door in this area I'd encounter areas where a couple of Democratic households on a street would be in my district while the subsequent adjacent couple of Republican households would be out. Thus, the Republican households were pulled into a Helena district that was strongly Democratic (thus negating their vote) while their Democratic neighbors were put into HD 77, a designed swing district where their vote would be of more consequence. This was absolutely an egregious dereliction of duty by the Democratic majority on the Commission.

3. Contiguity: The newly created HD77's northern boundary circled around Mount Helena in order to take in the Rimini, Colorado Gulch and other areas of SW Lewis & Clark County. This area isn't physically accessible in a contiguous manner with the remainder of HD

77 except for by off-road 4X4 during the summer months. In order to get to this area, you must drive all the way through Helena from east to west and then travel another 5 miles on Hwy 12 West.

4. Population Equality: The new HD77 was designed in such a way so as to cram as many voters into the southern-lying HD 71 made up of primarily Madison County along with Whitehall Town in Jefferson County. This well-known conservative base was packed with +5% deviation. However, the newly created HD 78 lying just north of HD77 had markedly fewer voters or -5% deviation. This area is a well-known Democratic leaning area. It would have made far more practical (but not political) sense to have those three districts at very close to the absolute average population or +/- 1% that would have more fairly created a "one person, one vote" situation. Instead the voters in HD78 effectively ended up with their votes counting 1.1 while those in HD 71 got 0.9. There was no other reason for this other than to gain political advantage.

5. Incumbents: As was the case in several other situations across the state, the Democratically controlled Commission overtly worked to undermine incumbents including me by using the address of incumbents as a criteria that could be used to cause two incumbents to have to run against each other in the ensuing primary election. This did not occur for any incumbent Democrats that I'm aware of! Unfortunately for the Democratic hierarchy behind the overtly fraudulent 2000 Redistricting plan, I foiled their plan by moving north to Clancy and back into my district where I could run. In the process, I was forced to sell my home at a considerable loss and uprooted my family. I successfully ran and held the seat for three subsequent terms during which the balance of power in the House was tied twice and was separated by 1 vote the other. This was flagrantly in the face of the popular vote that had about 10% more votes overall for Republican legislators than Democrats that should have resulted in an approximate 55-45 Republican advantage in the House. Obviously, the Democrat redistricting plan was to change my seat to their party which would have been the deciding vote in countless committee and floor votes in the 2005, 2007 and 2009 sessions. That their flagrant fraudulent plan was left to stand is outrageous.

What should this Commission do this time?

1. Resist the Democrat Commission member's attempt to use political data for redrawing lines for political advantage. They are the same people that authored the 2000 scam-plan.
2. Adopt a 1-2% deviation standard that would foil the Democratic plan to again use the deviation for political gain. This would give neither party an advantage—as it should be!
3. Use common-sense compactness, contiguity and community-of-interest criteria when at all possible regardless of political gain or loss. The 2010 sham-plan created by the Democrats resulted in egregious violations of these principals especially in SD 42 (Lewis), HD31 (Campbell), HD 30 (Kasten), the house districts in Billings and the disgusting "wheel" House districts of Missoula.
4. Disallow the lop-sided use of incumbents addresses to be used for political gain, i.e., if incumbents must unavoidably be pitted against each other in one situation, the same and opposite situation for the other party should exist somewhere else in order to end up with an absolutely neutral impact.

The Commission has an opportunity to return this necessary process back to a decent, upstanding, and fair proceeding. The 2000 process was shameful and a flagrant insult to the hard-working honest people of Montana that have a strong sense of integrity, fairness and doing what's right. Your goal should be that there would be no obvious footing for arguments of impropriety or fraud in your resulting plan. I hope and pray that you do the right thing.

Sincerely,

Scott Mendenhall, Representative
HD 77

Weiss, Rachel

From: Jim Cain [jim@mtidlog.com]
Sent: Monday, May 10, 2010 2:11 PM
To: Districting
Subject: FW: Redistricting Postcard THIS IS REALLY SIMPLE AND IMPORTANT, DEADLINE MAY 12
Attachments: redistricting post card.doc

Here's my post card.

Jim Cain
Montana Idaho Log & Timber
1069 Hwy 93 North
Victor, MT 59875

Toll Free: 800-600-8604
Phone: (406) 961-3092
Fax: (406) 961-3093
Cell: (406) 370-6379

jim@mtidlog.com
www.mtidlog.com

-----Original Message-----

From: robert wood [mailto:cotterwood@wildblue.net]
Sent: Sunday, May 09, 2010 5:02 PM
To: gary reichert; Bill & Tammy Reed; Wolfgang & Barbara Kuhn; win4t@aol.com; Susan Hooper; herbert226; Jack & Linda Clark; jim@mtidlog.com; Elizabeth Chilcote; Sue Case; Kristine Steele; Keith Broere; Jerry & Kathy Renz; Michael Shea; Jay & Shelly Gasvoda; Jack Joern; Frank Lockwood,Sr.
Subject: Redistricting Postcard THIS IS REALLY SIMPLE AND IMPORTANT, DEADLINE MAY 12

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Dallas D Erickson <dallas@accessmtwildblue.com>
Date: Thu, May 6, 2010 at 7:40 PM
Subject: Redistricting Postcard
To:

All,

As you know, redistricting is very important to the people of Montana.

The redistricting commission is soliciting public comment on what parameters to use in the redistricting process.

Attached is an electronic postcard that I would like you to distribute to your Republican friends regarding redistricting. Please copy the contents to a New email, add your name, address, and date, then send to: districting@mt.gov.

The deadline for submission is May 13, so please complete and submit the attachment before then.

Please ask them to forward to as many friends as they can.

Thanks for your assistance.

Gary MacLaren garymaclaren@yahoo.com

--
Carole Wood

I support fair non-partisan legislative districts!

*One percent or less variation in the size of districts: It's not fair if one representative has to represent 9400 people, and the next one up the road only has 8600. The people in the smaller district get easier access to their government.

*No political data should be used to draw districts. Districts should be drawn to represent people, not partisan politics

*Don't keep the current districts: The current districts divide communities in two, they have wildly varying population sizes — in general they're not unbiased.

Name:

Address:

Date:

Weiss, Rachel

From: Pam Walzer [pamwalzer@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, May 10, 2010 6:14 PM
To: Districting
Subject: Upcoming redistricting comment

Commissioners,

I am very concerned about a rumored redistricting goal of a 1% population deviation for legislative district populations. I feel that this goal is in unnecessary excess of the Constitutionally accepted 5% population deviation for legislative districts.

I was elected to and served on the 2004-2006 Local Government Study Commission for the City of Missoula. During the course of our study, we determined the recent population growth in the City had been extremely uneven with respect to our six city council voting districts (wards). We determined with a very reliable methodology that our ward population deviation in 2005 was greater than 10%. With approval of the city attorney, we proposed a redistricting plan which was approved by the City Council. I was very intimately involved in the numbers crunching process, assisting in figuring out exactly where the ward lines should be drawn, so I have a great familiarity with the process you will be soon undertaking. In addition, I was elected to the Missoula City Council in 2007 and later voted to approve a second ward redistricting in 2009 due to continued uneven growth.

Missoula City target ward population size is over 10,000 - greater than the last state legislative redistricting. Many census blocks had populations of greater than 200. There were even some census blocks with greater than 500 people! I expect the 2010 census will still include blocks that are much greater than 1 or 2% of a current ward or legislative district. It was extraordinarily difficult to draw equal population ward lines using our modified census data and major streets or geographic features as boundaries, let alone attempt to keep neighborhoods intact within one ward. It was almost unattainable at a 5% population deviation, let alone 1%.

The desire to achieve as close to possible - one person - one vote - is laudible. Unfortunately, the desire to achieve such a minimal population deviation figure can, and most likely will, result in legislative district lines that separate neighborhoods and communities, and will not uphold the intent of the Voting Rights Act.

Please as you move forward in your deliberations in setting legislative districts consider the following:
First - Do not start with a blank slate, rather work to modify the current district boundaries, and
Second - work to achieve equal district population sizes but consider the importance of keeping communities and neighborhoods together. Use up to the accepted 5% population deviation to attain that goal.

Thank you for all of the consideration you will undergo as you move through this process!

Pam Walzer
Missoula City Council
Ward 2 Alderwoman
406-327-8660
1329 Sherwood St.
Missoula, MT 59802

Weiss, Rachel

From: frickelw@aol.com
Sent: Monday, May 10, 2010 7:51 PM
To: Districting
Subject: redistricting information
Attachments: redistricting_post_card.doc

Hello,

For the past 20 years I have been campaigning in the Florence Area. I hope you will consider my advice as you redistrict the state once again. Thank you, Laura Fricke

I support fair non-partisan legislative districts!

*One percent or less variation in the size of districts: It's not fair if one representative has to represent 9400 people, and the next one up the road only has 8600. The people in the smaller district get easier access to their government.

*No political data should be used to draw districts. Districts should be drawn to represent people, not partisan politics

*Don't keep the current districts: The current districts divide communities in two, they have wildly varying population sizes — in general they're not unbiased.

I'm very familiar with HD 90 and 89 in Ravalli County. I suggest you change the south boundary line at the Three Mile Road to continue on passed Stevensville on the east side of the Valley. Then on the west side....stop HD 90 at Bass Creek. Thus have HD 89 go all the way to Victor. Call me if you would like to meet with me and I can show you on a map what would be best. My number is 273-2777 or 406-239-2738.

Name: Laura Fricke

Address: 229 Wagner Lane

Date: May 7,2010

Weiss, Rachel

From: Judy Birch [jebirch@mt.net]
Sent: Monday, May 10, 2010 8:01 PM
To: Districting
Subject: Competitiive Legislative Districts

May 10, 2010

Dear Legislative Services Staff,

I would like you to pass on my comments to the Redistricting Commission members.

I believe, that in the process of developing senate and house districts that will be competitive, partisan election results and voting patterns should be used as factors in creating these districts. Districts need to be competitive , not "freebies" that a particular party can count on.

Also, the voters need to hear the opposing views of candidates on issues important to the electorate. In turn, the candidates must be open to the views of their prospective constituencies. Then and only then, voters will have the opportunity to mark their ballots for the candidates who best represent their views.

In order to establish competitive districts, the commissioners must agree to enter into a bipartisan working relationship that benefits the voters of Montana, not the political parties favored by the commissioners. To accomplish this "feat," the commisssioners must allow the nonpartisan staff of the legislative services to develop districts that meet constitutional standards.

Sincerely,

Dr. Judy Birch
House District 79
704 Saddle Drive
Helena, MT. 59601

Weiss, Rachel

From: Home Mail Box [lyndamoss@imt.net]
Sent: Tuesday, May 11, 2010 7:27 AM
To: Districting
Subject: Comments Regarding Redistricting

Commissioners:

After serving three sessions (1 1/2 terms) in the Montana State Senate, I believe the current legislative districts have been working pretty well the past 10 years. The Montana Legislature has the largest Native American representation that also reflects the percentage of Native Americans in Montana. The fact that the House of Representatives as well as the Senate have been evenly split between Democrats and Republicans illustrates competitive districts.

My only concern is that as the demographics of the state continue to reflect de-population in eastern Montana and increasing populations in cities such as Missoula, Billings and Bozeman, that city populations are not divided as a means to establish rural districts that would then have the necessary numbers. Statistics noted by the O'Connor Center for the Rocky Mountain West report 80% of Montanans live within 50 miles of our seven small cities.

Last session in the Senate, the Agricultural Committee, traditionally a major committee, was changed to a class three committee with very little bills. In contrast, the Local Government Committee work load grew dramatically and there was a large gap in the understanding of "city" issues by Senators from rural areas.

I also encourage the Commission to be mindful of the Voting Rights Act and access to polling locations for voters in each district.

I appreciate your considerations of all the comments you are receiving and I thank you for your work

Lynda Moss
Montana State Senate
552 Highland Park Drive
Billings, Montana 59102
lyndamoss@imt.net
home: 406-252-7318
mobile: 406-690-2644

Weiss, Rachel

From: TOM STOCKTON [mbarrm@bresnan.net]
Sent: Tuesday, May 11, 2010 10:57 AM
To: Districting
Subject: Redistricting Comments

Dear Members of the Committee,

Since the last redistricting, HD 79 has changed radically. The number of people who live in the county verses the city was appropriated highly toward the city residents. Our county interests are now not represented. All decisions are based on the city's issues because there are more residents who live in a concentrated area than in the valley. In the past all residents in this House District were from the county.

Please make sure when you redistrict in the future, could you make sure that the residents of the valley are fairly represented so that their interests are known and handled in a proper fashion.

Sincerely,
Becky Stockton
HD 79, Helena

Weiss, Rachel

From: ddward@quixnet.net on behalf of ddward [ddward@quixnet.net]
Sent: Tuesday, May 11, 2010 3:29 PM
To: Districting
Subject: redistricting

I support fair non-partisan legislative districts!

*One percent or less variation in the size of districts:

It's not

fair if one representative has to represent 9400 people, and the next one up the road only has 8600. The people in the smaller district get easier access to their government.

*No political data should be used to draw districts.

Districts

should be drawn to represent people, not partisan politics

*Don't keep the current districts: The current districts divide communities in two, they have wildly varying population sizes – in general they're not unbiased.

Name: Dale Ann Ward

Address: 326 Skalkaho Hwy
Hamilton MT 59840

Date: 5/11/2010

May 13, 2010

Districting and Apportionment Commission
PO Box 201706
Helena, MT 59620-1706

Dear Commissioners,

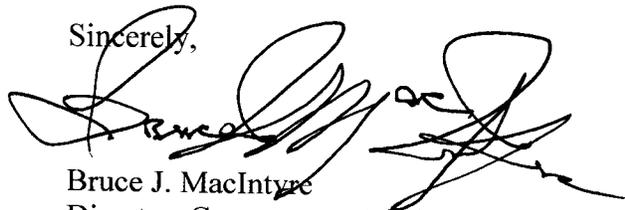
As you develop the criteria that you will use in the next redistricting, we ask that you please consider the following criteria for Billings and the surrounding areas:

- Compact Districts that reflect the similar economic status
- Boundaries that reflect boundaries of Neighborhood Task Forces
- Boundaries that consider neighborhood School Boundaries
- Boundaries that reflect City Wards

I'm sure that you are aware that we have a Senate District that runs from Briarwood Country Club in south Billings nearly to Miles City. There is no commonality in any form in this District. Residents in Yellowstone Country Club are in a Senate District that runs north beyond Roundup, and we currently have a Roundup resident representing this District. We have a House District that encompasses most of our South Side and runs through a wide swath of West Billings. There is a huge diversity of economic backgrounds, ethnicity, School District 2 boundaries and Task Force Boundaries.

These are but 3 examples that were the result of the last redistricting. We ask that careful consideration be given to a more equitable realignment.

Sincerely,



Bruce J. MacIntyre
Director, Government Affairs
Billings Chamber of Commerce



815 South 27th Street / P.O. Box 31177 / Billings, MT 59107-1177
ph 406-245-4111 / f 406-245-7333 / www.billingschamber.com

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Convention a



May 13, 2010

Montana Districting and Apportionment Commission
Capitol Building
Helena, MT 59620

RECEIVED

MAY 13 2010

Montana Legislative
Services Division

Dear Commissioners;

As Chairman of the Montana Democratic Party I wish to offer the following comments for your consideration. They are based, in part, on my personal experience as a legislative candidate in a highly competitive Northwest Montana senate district which, though geographically large, had uniform characteristics such as demographics, types of employment, and trade locations.

Setting the population deviation percentage at 5% makes sense. The Bureau of the Census has stated that in the 2000 census close to 2% of the population was not counted and another 1% was counted twice. It is not to be expected that a census of the people of Montana or any other state will be exact simply because of the number of variables that contribute to inaccuracy. The Bureau of the Census itself is anticipating problems with accurately determining the population count for the 2010 census due to several factors, not the least of which is non-compliance; many Montanans feel that the Census count is an intrusion on their privacy and may fail to participate. In areas of Montana where the population is highly mobile the possibility of inaccuracy is increased. To insist on a deviation percentage of less than 5% when the census count in some areas may itself be inaccurate by 2% or more is compounding a potential problem.

Legislative districts should, as much as is practicable, keep intact populations with common interests such as culture, geography, and trade

The current legislative districts should be used as starting points, as has been past practice. It is economical and fair.

The majority of voters in Montana vote for the person first and the party second. To this end, districts should be kept as competitive as possible such that the better candidate is not at a political disadvantage and the public is better served.

Sincerely,

Jim Elliott, Chairman, Montana Democratic Party

Weiss, Rachel

From: Rosana Skelton [rosana.skelton1@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, May 11, 2010 10:58 PM
To: Districting
Subject: a plea for the redistricting project

The last reapportionment became so terribly political, and was handled by the Montana Democratic Party in their headquarters. The Legislative services staff was pretty much ignored and their fair and balanced approach was totally ignored. My hope is that election results and the political affiliation of the voters will not be the criteria this time around. Montana's constitution stipulates equal population, and compact and contiguous districts. I feel the reason the reapportionment commission was created separately from the legislature and the political structure was to keep politics out of it and try to be fair and balanced. I felt previous commissions did that, and I hope this commission can return to that goal. I appreciate your willingness to serve on this important task.

Rosana Skelton
1921 Lodgepole Rd
Helena MT 59601

Weiss, Rachel

From: Bob Ebinger [buffalojump@imt.net]
Sent: Wednesday, May 12, 2010 7:30 AM
To: Districting
Subject: RE: Redistricting

I agree with the four redistricting criteria listed in your email. Each one is important so that representation is equal and fair. As cities and towns grow, boundary lines should be adjusted so that citizen's common interests and concerns within the jurisdictions are respected. Thanks for the chance to comment. Bob Ebinger

Bob Ebinger

Representative HD 62
Tel. 406.223.5290

Weiss, Rachel

From: Justin Roundstone [justinroundstone@hotmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, May 12, 2010 8:42 AM
To: Districting
Subject: Northern Cheyenne Tribal Council Resolution No. DOI-095 (2010)
Attachments: MX-2700N_20100512_082822.pdf

Dear Commission:

Attached is Resolution No. DOI-095 (2010) from the Northern Cheyenne Tribal Council opposing any major changes to the district boundaries and supporting the mandatory criteria established by the 2000 districting and apportionment commission. Should you have any questions, feel to call me at (406) 477-6722, ext 1008 work; (406) 592-3873 home. Representative J. David Roundstone, HD 41.

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**TRIBAL COUNCIL OF THE NORTHERN CHEYENNE TRIBE
NORTHERN CHEYENNE INDIAN RESERVATION
LAME DEER, MONTANA**

RESOLUTION NO. DOI-095 (2010)

A RESOLUTION OF THE NORTHERN CHEYENNE TRIBAL COUNCIL OPPOSING ANY MAJOR CHANGES TO THE CURRENT LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT BOUNDARIES AND SUPPORTS THE MANDATORY CRITERIA ESTABLISHED BY THE 2000 DISTRICTING AND APPORTIONMENT COMMISSION AND ASKS THAT THE CRITERIA CONTINUE TO BE FOLLOWED.

WHEREAS, the Tribal Council of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe is the governing body of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe and Reservation pursuant to the Amended Constitution and Bylaws as approved by the Secretary of the Interior on May 31, 1996; and,

WHEREAS, the Tribal Council of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe is concerned about the possibility that the Districting and Apportionment Commission will draw legislative district boundaries that do not fall within Traditional Districting Principles that include:

1. Compactness
2. Contiguity
3. Preservation of counties and other political subdivisions
4. Preservation of communities of interest
5. Preservation of cores of prior districts
6. Protection of incumbents
7. Compliance with Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act; and

WHEREAS, the Tribal Council of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe fully recognizes and supports the mandatory criteria of the 2000 Districting and Apportionment Commission that developed the current legislative districting boundaries knowing that evaluation of all criteria considerations were fair and just to the indigenous people of the State of Montana; and,

WHEREAS, the Tribal Council of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe is pleased and honored by representation of nine (9) Montana American Indians at the Montana State Legislature having six (6) Representatives and three (3) Senators, and would like to see the total number(s) increase; now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Tribal Council of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe opposes any major changes to the current legislative district boundaries, unless it increases American Indian representation, and fully supports the mandatory criteria established by the 2000 District Apportionment Commission that includes: "Population equality and maximum

Resolution No. DOI-095 (2010)

Page 2

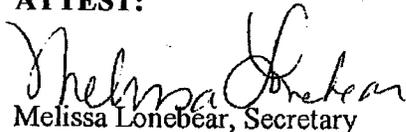
population deviation of no more than plus or minus 5%; Compact and contiguous districts; Protection of minority voting rights and compliance with the Voting Rights Act; and Race cannot be the predominant factor to which the traditional discretionary criteria are subordinate.”.

PASSED, ADOPTED AND APPROVED by the Northern Cheyenne Tribal Council with 8 votes for passage and adoption, 0 votes against passage and adoption, and 0 abstentions this 3rd day of May 2010.



Leroy Spang, President
Northern Cheyenne Tribe

ATTEST:



Melissa Lonebear, Secretary
Northern Cheyenne Tribe

Weiss, Rachel

From: Lamson, Joe (D&A Commission)
Sent: Wednesday, May 12, 2010 8:57 AM
To: 'Stan Juneau '
Cc: Weiss, Rachel
Subject: FW: redistricting
Attachments: Senate district eight redistricting.docx

Thanks Stan. I'll make sure your testimony is entered into the record.

Joe Lamson

From: Stan Juneau [mailto:stanj@3rivers.net]
Sent: Monday, May 10, 2010 10:58 AM
To: Smith, Pat; Lamson, Joe (D&A Commission)
Cc: shannonjaugare@gmail.com; Juneau, Carol
Subject: redistricting

Please accept the attached testimony as my official request for Senate District Eight to remain in its present configuration, and that the current boundaries be used as a starting point. As a registered voter in Senate District Eight I do not foresee any reason to change the current boundaries nor the criteria used to justify its original intent. Senate District Eight has reflected the population makeup of its constituency that past ten years, and it continues to address its constituencies concerns.

*Starting Point: Use the existing legislative districts as a starting point for building a new plan. The current districts were draw to fairly represent Montana's diverse communities of interests. The last three elections have proven the current districts to be imminently fair. Starting with current districts provides a logical, transparent way for citizens and legislators to understand which districts are likely to grow in size and which will shrink.

W. Stanley Juneau, Montana Registered Voter

SENATE DISTRICT EIGHT

Senate District Eight should remain in its current geographic boundary because of the commonality of the communities it represents.

Glacier National Park is located in the middle of Senate District Eight and it certainly has a common history of use by both the Blackfoot Tribe and the Flathead Tribe. One of the more significant religious sites common to both tribes is Chief Mountain. "There are many historic legends regarding this mountain, the most popular being that of the young Flathead Indian brave who spent several days upon the top of the peak searching for his "medicine vision" and using a bison skull for a pillow. When Henry L. Simpson, later Secretary of State, and his companions first climbed to the top of this mountain in 1892, they were probably the first white men to do so. There they found an ancient bison skull almost entirely decomposed, giving considerable authenticity to this popular legend." (*Crown of the Continent Research Learning Center, National Park Service, U. S. Department of Interior*).

"Named "ninaistako" by the Blackfoot People, Chief Mountain is a place where particularly powerful and significant visions can be obtained through fasting and prayer. The Blackfoot People have lived near Chief Mountain for millennia and are aware the mountain holds great power and ancient knowledge. Use of this mountain goes back thousands of years. It is a sacred place. Chief Mountain is considered the oldest spirit of any of the mountains and creation stories of the Blackfoot People are linked to it. Some believe there is an old man's spirit living in the mountain. Thunder resides there and Thunder Pipe Medicine always refers to it. Brings Down the Sun received his bundle at Chief Mountain and his bundle contains the sacred power of thunder. Thunder brings an annual renewal of life to the Blackfoot People." (*Interpretive Resource Bulletin Series, June, 2006*).

In many articles and publications written about the Blackfoot Tribe and the Flathead Tribe many references are documented of their co-existence in this common area of Montana. There are many encounters documented in publications, such as, "Our Mountains are Our Pillows" where Blackfoot and Kootenai had encounters with each other while on hunting trips, religious ceremonies, moving camps, and raids from each other. This history extends back several hundred years.

Today, there are many examples of common encounters among the two tribes. The enrollment at Salish Kootenai College includes many from the Blackfoot Tribe; marriages among the tribes are now common and children with both Blackfoot and Flathead ancestry are enrolled in one tribe or the other; members of each tribe are employed on each other's reservations; many cultural activities and pow wows include participation from each tribe in communities on both reservations; federal government programs, appropriations and regulations are common for each tribe; the State of Montana and Federal Government built a highway for easier travel between the reservations and all other communities located within the boundaries of Senate District Eight; and with the internet and other telecommunications available through technology mass communications between the reservations is instant.

SENATE DISTRICT EIGHT...PAGE TWO (2)

The Blackfeet Tribal Business Council and the Flathead Tribal Council periodically meet on issues common to both tribes such as water rights, natural resource development, tribal enrollment, education, and Montana State legislature appropriations and proposed laws. Both are members of the Montana Wyoming Tribal Leaders Council, National Congress of American Indians, and other like organizations which further promotes their common interests and one more reason to keep Montana Senate District eight in its present boundaries.

Thank you for allowing me, as a registered voter in Senate District Eight, to submit this testimony to keep Senate District Eight boundaries as presently configured. There are more commonalities among the constituency than opponents may want to articulate, but the commonalities dictate no changes are warranted.

Sincerely yours,

W. Stanley Juneau
P. O. Box 55
Browning, Mt. 59417
406-338-5689
Email: stanj@3rivers.net

Weiss, Rachel

From: Roy Houseman [roy.houseman@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, May 12, 2010 12:06 PM
To: Districting
Subject: Comment on redistricting

Thank you for your time

I would encourage the legislative redistricting committee to keep the traditional plus or minus 5% populations deviation for all districts. Also I would encourage the committee to make every effort to make competitive and fair legislative districts where citizens would have competitive races to vote on.

--

In Solidarity
Roy Houseman
(406)-544-4940

Weiss, Rachel

From: aleta miller [aletaandgreg@hotmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, May 12, 2010 2:17 PM
To: Districting
Subject: criteria for redistricting

dear members, please follow the mandatory criterial that has been set up for you. the boundaries that are set up at this time in no way follow what is compact and contiguous. I live near missoula out of the city limits and my districts run east to the universilty of montana. urban and rural are not communities of interest unless you are talking about the air we breathe. Why do all of the districts here run to the university or start from there? the university is a community of interest in itself. are all of the cities in montana set up in this particular way? thanks for your consideration g a miller

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Weiss, Rachel

From: JANET STAN S [gobeavs7@q.com]
Sent: Wednesday, May 12, 2010 4:24 PM
To: Districting
Subject: Non-partisan politics, please

We support the following:

One percent or less variation in the size of districts: It's not fair if one representative has to represent 9400 people, and the next one up the road only has 8600. The people in the smaller district get easier access to their government.

No political data should be used to draw districts. Districts should be drawn to represent people, not partisan politics

Don't keep the current districts: The current districts divide communities in two, they have wildly varying population sizes — in general they're not unbiased.

Name: Stan and Janet Seagraves

Address: 6000 Wildcat Rd Missoula MT 59802

Date: May 12, 2010

Weiss, Rachel

From: Tom Miller [tomjmiller7@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, May 12, 2010 4:24 PM
To: Districting
Subject: Redistricting

I support fair non-partisan legislative districts!

*One percent or less variation in the size of districts: It's not fair if one representative has to represent 9400 people, and the next one up the road only has 8600. The people in the smaller district get easier access to their government.

*No political data should be used to draw districts. Districts should be drawn to represent people, not partisan politics

*Don't keep the current districts: The current districts divide communities in two, they have wildly varying population sizes — in general they're not unbiased.

Name: Thomas J. Miller

Address: 1250 Carrigan Lane Dillon, Montana

Date: 05/12/2010

Weiss, Rachel

From: Robert L Hawks [r_hawks@imt.net]
Sent: Wednesday, May 12, 2010 6:03 PM
To: Districting
Subject: Comment

Montana Redistricting Commission

Please use the following criteria for redistricting:

1. Fair and Competitive Districts so politicians appeal to a broader base
2. Constitutional 5% Deviation to maintain one man-one vote provisions
3. Starting Point produces less disruption and provides better continuity
4. Uphold Voting Rights Act better protects minority voting rights

Thanks for your work.

Bob Hawks

Weiss, Rachel

From: Marcus Richard [jaredomarcus@wildblue.net]
Sent: Thursday, May 13, 2010 11:47 AM
To: Districting
Subject: Proposed changes

Please do not change something that has been working. The formula in place is fair and doesn't need to be changed.

Sincerely,
Richard L. Marcus

Weiss, Rachel

From: Sarah DesRosier [SARAHDR@center4mh.org]
Sent: Thursday, May 13, 2010 1:32 PM
To: Districting; Lamson, Joe (D&A Commission); Smith, Pat
Subject: redistricting
Attachments: redistricting letter.docx

Im the County Chair for Glacier county Democratic Central Committee. Im sending you this letter on behalf of Glacier County. Thank you.

Sarah F. DesRosier, A.A.
Adult/Child Case Manager
Center for Mental Health
Browning Office
Office: 406-338-2516
Cell: 406-470-1432
sarahd@center4mh.org

Glacier County Democratic Central Committee Browning, Montana

May 13, 2010

Jim Regnier, Presiding Officer, Districting and Apportionment Commission
and Members: Linda Vaughey, Joe Lamson, Pat Smith, and Jon Bennion

Dear Districting and Apportionment Commission:

On behalf of the Glacier County Democratic Central Committee, thank you for the opportunity to share our recommendations with you for the Redistricting Criteria

It is important to insure that the Voting Rights Act is a major part of the mandatory criteria for all districts. We have come too far to take any steps backwards. We must insure that the American Indian population retains the opportunity to participate in the political process and elect representatives of our choice.

Many of us have worked long and hard to create the opportunity for equitable representation of the American Indian population in the state of Montana in the State Legislature. The three Indian majority Senate Districts and the six Indian majority House Districts that were developed by the last Commission has accomplished this! We urge you to stay with this plan to ensure the six Indian majority House Districts and 3 Indian majority Senate Districts continue. American Indians make up 6% of the state population and they now make up 6% of the State Legislature (9 out of 150).

In fact, it was HD 16, which includes Glacier County and the Blackfeet Reservation that was one of the first districts drawn up 10 years ago.

We understand that there has been testimony opposing this district and this testimony indicated there is no community of interest between the Blackfeet and the Salish-Kootenai. We very much disagree with this position. There are many common connections between the Blackfeet and Flathead Reservation that are part of Senate District 8. In fact, there was just a meeting held between the leadership of these two tribal nations this month to look at common goals. Let me share some of the community of interest issues:

Tribal Colleges – both have tribal colleges that serve their communities and are connected by the federal programs that fund tribal colleges and especially by the students from both communities who attend college. I know there are many students from the Blackfeet Reservation who attend college at Salish Kootenai College.

The issues facing the students in K-12 schools are similar. The majority of students on both these reservation communities attend public school and face many of the same challenges. Closing the

Achievement gap for American Indian Students and increasing the high school completion rate of American Indian students are common goals of the k-12 schools on both the Blackfeet and Flathead Reservations.

There is a strong political interest that links the Blackfeet and Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes both with the State and the Federal Governments. The economic and social issues of unemployment, inadequate health care, law and order issues, and housing are some of the common political issues that bring the tribes to both the State of Montana and to Washington, D. C.

We thank you for your service to Montana.

Sincerely,

Sarah DesRosier, Chair, Glacier County Democratic Central Committee

Weiss, Rachel

From: mimi sauer [mimisauer@montana.com]
Sent: Thursday, May 13, 2010 1:55 PM
To: Districting
Subject: support for criteria

In support of the criteria proposed by Commissioners Lamson and Smith, I would note that the process of redistricting must be seen by all voters as being equitable: each vote should have equal weight in our democracy.

Therefore, using the criteria that include the 5% population deviation , scrupulously abiding by the Voting Rights Act, using present districts as beginning points and developing fair and competitive districts are crucial. I urge the Commissioners to begin their work establishing these base lines for their work.

Mimi Sauer
Ravalli County

Weiss, Rachel

From: Nike Stevens [stevenswildlife@earthlink.net]
Sent: Thursday, May 13, 2010 3:10 PM
To: Districting
Subject: Redistricting

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important political process.

We support redistricting based upon both the US and Montana Constitutions that creates districts to ensure one person, one vote and uphold the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

We support the 5% allowable population deviation as US Supreme Court and all previous Montana redistricting commissions have used. The 5% deviation is important to allow consideration of the Voting Rights Acts and community boundaries.

We support using existing legislative districts as the starting point for redistricting to make changes understandable and transparent.

We support consideration of communities of interest and competitiveness in redistricting and believe that the voting Rights Act must be a mandatory criterion for all districts. We believe that redistricting should not decide elections because of drawing lines that guarantee any party victories.

David and Nike Stevens
15300 Horse Creek Rd
Bozeman, MT 59715

Weiss, Rachel

From: Bruce and Pat [gopherranch@wildblue.net]
Sent: Thursday, May 13, 2010 5:06 PM
To: Districting
Subject: redistricting

Please make sure you are in compliance with the Voting Rights Act and the Constitutional 5% deviation as you consider redistricting. Current districts should be generally maintained. Any changes should be because of new information from the 2010 census, not to "gerrymander" for political results. Voters are tired of behind doors deals. Please don't. Thank you. Pat Tucker, 500 Jorgy Way, Hamilton, MT 59840, 363-7291.

Weiss, Rachel

From: BigEdMelcher@aol.com
Sent: Thursday, May 13, 2010 6:14 PM
To: Districting
Subject: Districts

Wow the way it is now is bad! We need to get rid of pies dog legs ect this is wrong and need to uses the block area to give a balance approach! West end Billings should not go to east end billings in dog legs and west end billings should not make a sliver to south side billings!

You put west against East and south against west!
Not right! Children would do a better job than that!

Ed Melcher
2331 Lewis ave
Billings, MT 59102

Weiss, Rachel

From: Leo Beardsley [lbeards@havremt.net]
Sent: Thursday, May 13, 2010 6:35 PM
To: Districting
Subject: redistricting

Dear Commission Members:

When addressing such a complex issue as redistricting it seems logical to use the current boundaries as a starting point and make as few changes as possible since one change seems to lead to many others and the whole thing becomes much more complicated than it needs to be. We have in place something that is working very well. No doubt some changes will be dictated by population changes but much effort has gone into developing districts that comply with the required criteria ie, communities of interest, competitiveness and equal opportunity of representation.

The population deviation of + or – 5% seems very workable. Anything less than that creates the possibility of prolonged and unnecessary deliberation and possibly litigation.

Thank you for your attention.

Leo Beardsley
265-2901
Havre

Weiss, Rachel

From: Wayne Stanford [wstanford@cybernet1.com]
Sent: Thursday, May 13, 2010 8:38 PM
To: Districting
Subject: Redistricting Criteria

Dear Redistricting Commissioners,

The four points that you made about redistricting are very, very important considerations. We need not deviate from them. I was very distressed during the 1993 Legislative Session when the Commission and the Legislature reached common ground only to have the county clerk and recorders disregard the Commissions hard work. Please follow the criteria you have set without deviation.

Thank you,
Wayne Stanford

Weiss, Rachel

From: Gerry Jennings [ggerger1@bresnan.net]
Sent: Thursday, May 13, 2010 10:38 PM
To: Districting

I agree that the following points should be considered when adopting legislative redistricting criteria. The most important consideration is fairness to the electorate. Thanks.

Sincerely,

Gerry Jennings

317 Fox Drive

Great Falls, MT 59404

Points to Consider When Adopting Legislative Redistricting Criteria:

The past three Montana Redistricting Commissions, Republicans and Democrats, have all adopted very similar mandatory and discretionary criteria that uphold constitutional and traditional redistricting principles. They are based upon both the US and Montana Constitutions in order to create districts to ensure one person, one vote and uphold the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

Here are points supporting the use of different criteria:

- **Population Deviation:** One of the first tasks the commission will do is to divide the total 2010 Montana Census number by 100 to establish the "ideal" legislative house district population. The allowable population deviation is the percentage a legislative district can vary from the ideal and still uphold the principle of one person, one vote. US Supreme Court and all previous Montana redistricting commissions have established an allowable deviation **plus or minus 5%** for the drawing of legislative districts. The 5% deviation gives the commission the flexibility to draw districts that can accommodate city and county lines, uphold the Voting Rights Act, and provide the opportunity for Montana's diverse communities of interests to elect legislators of their choice. The GOP is pushing for a 1% deviation to reduce the commission's flexibility. It could set up a potential legal challenge if the plan goes beyond that deviation in

order to meet the requirements of the Voting Rights Act, to accommodate the boundaries of cities and counties, or other discretionary criteria.

- **Starting Point:** Previous commissions have always considered how the new census numbers may require changes to the existing legislative districts. Some districts will gain, while others will lose population. Using existing districts as a starting point provides a logical and transparent way for citizens and legislators to understand which districts are likely to grow in size and which are likely to shrink.

- **Communities of Interests:** The 2000 Commission adopted as one of its discretionary criteria the consideration of keeping communities of interests intact. Communities of interest were based on trade areas, geographic location, communication and transportation networks, media markets, Indian reservations, urban and rural interests, economic interests, occupations, and lifestyles.

- **Competitiveness:** Districts should be drawn to maximize the number of districts where a candidate of either political party has a reasonable opportunity to take their issues to the voters and win elections. The statewide plan should be drawn in a manner so that one political party dominates control of either legislative body.

- **Voting Rights Act:** The reaffirmation of support for the Voting Rights Act needs to remain a mandatory criterion for all districts. No district or plan is acceptable if it affords members of a racial or language minority group less opportunity than other voters to participate in the political process and elect representatives of their choice.

Weiss, Rachel

From: John Meakin [jmeakin@bitterroot.com]
Sent: Friday, May 14, 2010 1:51 PM
To: Districting
Subject: Comments on the 2010 redistricting criteria

Redistricting Commissioners -

I am writing to request that you maintain the criteria that will be used this year to redraw Montana's legislative districts. The criteria must be consistent with the 1965 Voting Rights Act. In particular, the allowable 5% population deviation must be adhered to. Changing to a 1% deviation that some have suggested is unacceptable. That suggestion is contrary to the spirit and intent of the Voting Rights Act and only serves to discourage minority participation in our democratic process.

The criteria you use should be fair and equitable in all districts: gerrymandering should not be tolerated and no one political party should dominate control of the legislature merely because a political party successfully influences the new "map" of redrawn districts.

I strongly support the redistricting criteria proposed by Redistricting Commissioners Lamson and Smith and urge you to do the same.

John Meakin
Stevensville, MT

Weiss, Rachel

From: Arleen Boyd [arleenboyd@montana.net]
Sent: Friday, May 14, 2010 3:06 PM
To: Districting
Subject: redistricting comments

To: Montana Redistricting Commission
From: Arleen Boyd
3 Deer Trace Trail
Fishtail, Montana 59028

I am offering a few comments on redistricting. I try to follow political and other issues carefully and to understand an issue before I comment on it. In this case it has been difficult to understand what is going on, why changes in districting are happening, who makes the changes, and how they relate to federal districting and the Voting Rights Act requirements. In fact I believe that most people do not understand and are commenting because of encouragement from their political parties.

Most of us understand our current districts and would need to understand any reasons for changing them. From a local point of view I encourage the commission to continue to emphasize:

- Compactness
- Contiguity
- Preservation of counties and other political subdivisions,3
- Preservation of communities of interest
- Preservation of cores of prior districts

It seems clear to me that keeping a allowance of 5% district population deviation is the correct, flexible policy to maintain. In rural areas like mine a 1% deviation is hardly great enough to call for redistricting when it would require a large geographic area to add or subtract that number from our district.

The criteria outlined in the Montana Constitution calling for protection of minority voting rights and compliance with the Voting Rights Act are clear and sound and should be upheld.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Arleen Boyd (406-328-6645)
3 Deer Trace Trail
Fishtail, Montana 59028

Weiss, Rachel

From: Taylor Brown [Taylor@northernbroadcasting.com]
Sent: Friday, May 14, 2010 3:19 PM
To: Districting
Subject: Public Comment on Redistricting Criteria

May 12, 2010

TO: Members of the Montana Districting and Apportionment Committee

FR: Senator Taylor Brown, SD 22

RE: Public Comment on the Redistricting Criteria

First let me express the appreciation of all us in Eastern Montana, for your holding of the Public Meetings in April around our state. We know that you worked hard to gather input from our Citizens, and I think the strong turnout was evidence of how important this issue is to them.

Here are my own comments on the Redistricting Criteria:

Inappropriate Consideration to Political Party Affiliation

Though I have actively lived and worked in ranching and small business in Montana for 50 years, I am new to the political process. I ran for office for the first time in the last election, and this is the first time I have held public office. Yet I can tell you that overwhelmingly, the citizens of my District do NOT want their system of representation to be driven by partisan politics. Montana does not require political party registration, and the large majority of our citizens want all officials to do what they think is right, not what some political party might dictate.

That is why it is unconscionable, if not actually illegal, that our last Commission allowed the District boundaries to be drawn based on locations where voters had a particular political voting history. The current District boundaries, which were based on computer models of voter preference, drawn up and provided by the Democratic Party, need to be completely re-evaluated. You need to do your job, and fix this error, or else I fear the result will be expensive court battles and possibly even a long, drawn-out fight to change our Constitution. You have a chance to fix this huge inequity, and save our state a lot of needless expense. Please do that.

I realize that you have heard testimony from Democrats who praise the current boundaries, mostly because they have resulted in a State Legislature that is almost evenly split between the two parties. Of course, that was the goal of the Democrat plan that changed these districts in 2004. They know it is not right, but they believe the political end justifies the means.

It is not your job to balance the Legislature evenly between political parties. That is up to the voters to decide.

Compactness and Communities of Interest

As you heard from many in your public testimony, my district is a good example of one where "Compactness" has been totally ignored, and "Communities of Interest" have been ripped apart.

Senate District 22 is 140 miles long, and at a point near the center of it's population is it only about 5 miles wide! SD22 is the product of a calculated scheme designed to include three strong labor union towns in the same District; but the result is that it rips small pieces out of four different counties, so that none of them feel that they are fairly represented as a compact community of similar interests.

Clearly, the affluent urban country-club estates along the private Briarwood Golf Course south of Billings, have very little in common with the remote rural cow ranches along the Powder River...140 miles away. There is one thing these far-flung residents do agree on though. They both know that the interests of their respective communities have been purposefully ignored by the Montana Districting and Apportionment Committee.

Geographic and Jurisdictional Boundaries

There are a myriad of reasons why it is important that, for the societal good, the legislative districts be drawn along existing recognized jurisdictional and geographic boundaries. The people of Montana are not well-served when the representation of small towns is split in two, for no other reason than just so that one political party has an advantage over the other.

Just look at the way the towns of Hardin, or Havre, or Butte, or Missoula have been splintered, purposefully ignoring normally accepted boundaries that for decades have efficiently and fairly served voters who share similar issues. It is easy to understand why the residents there now feel disenfranchised from their elected leaders. You have heard their stories of frustration, time and time again, in these Public Meetings.

Consider Senate District 16 that runs from Box Elder to Brockton. This unworkable District is 250 miles long, yet at one point in the middle it is less than two miles wide! Even to the most casual observer, this is a ludicrous transgression.

An even better example is the 160-mile long Senate District 8, that runs from Arlee to Sunburst. Not only are the two ends 160 miles apart, but one half is completely cut off from the other, by 30 miles of uninhabited mountain Wilderness. What callous disregard for the needs of the citizens who live in this district!

You now have a chance to set things right

Frankly, under the travesty of this process six years ago, the system here in Montana was grossly abused, and the law was inappropriately twisted, for selfish political gain.

You can choose to either ignore all the testimony that you have heard through this process, and allow that unfairness and inequity to continue, or you can decide to do something about it. The people of Montana have empowered you with many tools, and placed significant resources at your disposal, just to allow you to do this correctly.

The eyes of Montana's citizens are upon you, and they are going to closely watch this process. What will you do to make sure they are treated fairly and equitably? The people that I represent do not want you to allow unfair political advantage, and sweetheart deals for partisan gain.

They just want you to do what is right.

Thank you for your service in this important work for the people of Montana.

Taylor Brown

Senator Taylor Brown

SD22

775 Squaw Creek Road

Huntley, MT 59037

ph: (406) 252-6661

fax: (406) 245-9755

taylor@northernbroadcasting.com

Weiss, Rachel

From: Janine Pease [JPease@fpcc.edu]
Sent: Friday, May 14, 2010 4:45 PM
To: Districting
Subject: Criteria for Redistricting

Dear 2010 Districting and Apportionment Commission:

There are several key points that must be made on the Redistricting Criteria:

First, the districts as they exist were designed with principles of equity in mind. The nature of Montana is reflected in the district lines as they are drawn right now---

1. American Indians are 6+% of the population, and maintaining their opportunity for representation in the House and Senate is a matter of enfranchisement for these First Nations in our State. Making changes to these districts would be rolling back into the past when our American Indian Montanans were DISenfranchised. The progress we have made in Montana is precedent setting; we have had the voices and perspectives of American Indian in our legislature, to the great benefit of our Montana American Indians and to the benefit of all Montanans. Our elected American Indian legislators have brought special expertise, wisdom and knowledge to the legislature.
2. The 2000 Criteria served several issues well. While some expected a landslide impact for one party or the other, the Plan resulted in a close division of the House and Senate. This represents the manner in which our at-large state-wide elections have resulted in the past several key elections. We see both Republicans and Democrats acquiring office in our Great State. Districts that have a swing quality provide a platform for the best candidate, not the tyranny of the party in control. The Montana legislature has a great opportunity for dialogue and collaboration when neither party has the overwhelming majority (as the 1990 plan provided).
3. The 5% population deviation gives the Commission a flexibility that will clearly be needed. The eastern sector of the state has been on a demographic slide downward, and with the 5% flexibility, plus or minus, this slide can to some extent be minimized. Our state has a shifting demographic pattern, one that make our state nearly two places---or I should call it "in the boot" and "outside the boot". I reside "outside the boot" and can see the advantage of this 5% flexibility for the very rural and sparsely populated areas, like Roosevelt County.
4. Voting Rights is of great concern to me. I have been a plaintiff in the Windy Boy v. Big Horn County Voting Rights litigation from the mid 1980's. The capacity was have to elect American Indians in this state simply does not happen by accident or historic and demographic drift. The opportunity for representation is a matter of serious civil and human rights---we must seize the opportunity with intent, to design districts that will protect the language minorities of our state, the American Indian people. Further, the principles of voting rights protections recognizes that American Indian population as far younger and therefore applies the demographic flex to account for more children in American Indian blocks. We have been on the forefront of Voting Rights litigation, and must be instructed from our immediate history in making the lines work within the standards of the voting rights protections. Montana does not deserve to slide into the "hot bed of voting right violations" along with South Dakota. American Indian individuals and organizations have been vigilant in acquiring and protecting the precious right to vote. This commission surely needs to stand for the protections given in 1982 for language minorities, our American Indian Tribes in Montana.

Finally, Commissions, you must resist referring to the American Indian Districts in this very area where I live with an animal label. It is possible to find other similarly shaped districts elsewhere in the state. Those who persist in this labelling exercise display their biases and prejudices. This label shows a blatant and derisive intent. Bias and racism should be discouraged in this exceedingly important matter.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments and perspectives on the criteria. Best wishes for your deliberations. I recall the tenor of these last round, and know you will provide the leadership and insight that our State requires and expects.

Most sincerely,
Janine B. Pease, voter in Roosevelt County, resident of Poplar Montana, Crow Indian Tribal Member

Plaintiff in the Windy Boy v. Big Horn County and
former Presiding Officer, 2000 Districting and Apportionment Commission

Weiss, Rachel

From: John Milem [milemjohn@comcast.net]
Sent: Friday, May 14, 2010 4:48 PM
To: Districting
Subject: Use of political data in redistricting

In the discussion of the forthcoming redistricting in Montana, I have noticed some suggestions that the Commission should not take political data into account. This seems to be connected with a belief that the redistricting done in the previous decade was biased in favor of one major party and against the other (as to which, I am not expressing an opinion in this comment).

In the redistricting process, every decision has political consequences.

The suggestion not to take political data into account is a suggestion that the Commission be blind to the political consequences of its decisions.

Partisan bias (I use this term because the term gerrymander includes the notion of districts with odd shapes -- partisan bias can be present even in a plan composed only of compact districts) in a redistricting plan is an interference with the ability of the electorate to produce the outcomes which it desires. No one in America can imagine that we would pass laws which would say that each Democratic (or Republican, take your pick) vote should be marked up by 2% and that each vote of the other party should be marked down by 2%. However, in an effective gerrymander this is about what happens.

The suggestion that the Commission has an obligation of willing ignorance of political data seems to me to flow from one of two sources.

It is possible that those who argue for this are making the perhaps unconscious assumption that voters of the two major parties are equally advantageously distributed among the electorate. Were this the case, one could safely draw districts without being concerned about unintentionally introducing political bias into the result. However, it is rarely the case that voters of the two parties are equally advantageously distributed throughout the electorate.

The other possible source is a clear understanding that voters of the two parties are not equally advantageously distributed combined with a willingness to try to use this disparity to the benefit of the party whose voters are more advantageously distributed.

This matter is complicated by the obligation of the Commission to ensure that its plan complies with federal Voting Rights law. It is often the case that the redistricter must, in effect, pack minority voters into districts in order to assure compliance with that law. To create a district which will be effective in assuring that minority voters will have the opportunity to elect their candidate of choice often means that the district is likely to be heavily Democratic.

During the period in which the current redistricting plan has been in effect, there have been sixteen statewide election contests which had both a Democratic and a Republican candidate. The six AIAN house districts have in every case been more Democratic than the state. In twelve of the sixteen contests, the least Democratic AIAN house district was at least ten percentage points more Democratic than the state (taking into account only votes for Republican and Democratic candidates). This supports a conclusion that the creation of AIAN majority districts in Montana packs Democrats, to the disadvantage of that party in legislative elections.

In addition to this, it is also the case that Democratic voters in Montana in districts other than AIAN majority districts are less advantageously distributed through the electorate than

are Republican voters. In the race for president in 2008, fifteen districts (including four AIAN districts) were more than eighteen percentage points more Democratic than the state, but only five districts were more than eighteen points more Republican than the state. This same pattern repeated with variations in the numbers of districts for every two-party statewide contest beginning with 2004. The numbers of districts more Democratic than the state by more than eighteen percentage points ranged from six to fifteen. The numbers of districts more Republican by that margin ranged from zero to five. In every case the Democratic number of districts was not less than three times the Republican number of districts.

Comparing the most Democratic district in the state with the most Republican in each of the sixteen races and making the same comparison of the eleventh and twenty-first most Democratic and Republican districts, in forty-five of forty-eight cases, the variance from the state in the Democratic district is greater than the variance in the comparable Republican district. The three exceptions occur in the 2008 races that involved Senator Baucus and Governor Schweitzer, races in which the Democratic statewide percentage of the vote was so high that it constrained the upper possibilities for variance for the most Democratic districts.

The conclusion to be drawn from the observations in the two preceding paragraphs is that, in those house districts least similar to the state in two-party vote percentages, Democratic voters are not distributed as advantageously as Republican voters for purposes of legislative elections. Of course, one could also conclude that the Republicans drew the plan, which isn't true, or that the Democratic majority on the Commission didn't serve their party well, which, as far as I've been able to tell from my observations so far, isn't true, either.

This data suggests that a districting plan drawn to comply with the Voting Rights Act but drawn in ignorance or disregard of political data is likely to be a natural gerrymander for the Republicans. Marking up of the value of Republican votes and marking down of the value of Democratic votes is equally objectionable whether it is the result of intention or accidents of demographic distribution. A Commission which draws such a plan will have taken the risk, when the state is closely divided, of substituting its own choice of party for legislative control for the choice of the electorate. Commissioners, that ought not to be.

You devalue the votes of the voters when one can review the situation and say, this party is in control of this house of the legislature, not because the voters want it that way, but because of the way the Commission constructed the districts.

The conclusion of all of this is that the only way to avoid creating partisan bias in a redistricting plan, intentionally or unwittingly, is to take account of political data and to structure the districts in such a way as to maximize the opportunity for the voters, rather than the Commission, to be the ones who decide which party will control the legislature.

--

John Milem
Vancouver, Washington, USA
milemjohn@comcast.net

Weiss, Rachel

From: Dave McAlpin [mcdave94@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, May 14, 2010 6:00 PM
To: Districting
Subject: HD94 feedback

To Whom it May Concern,

In serving three terms to represent HD94 in Missoula, I feel the district is fair and well represents the constituents of the district. I believe the district provides a continuity and uniformity of constituent with similar interests throughout the district.

Having walked the entire district several times during the campaign season, I know the residents of HD94 share common values and interests that make this district a good model for future redistricting.

Based on this belief I encourage the commission to use present districts as a basis for drawing the new districts.

Finally, I do support maintaining up to 5% flexibility to draw districts. While it may not be critical in HD94 it is important for the Commission to have this tool, as they have in the past under control by both party influences, to draw the best plan possible.

Thanks for your consideration.

Rep. Dave McAlpin, HD94