



William C. Velásquez Institute

June 4, 2009

Ms. Barbara Paget
Bureau of State Audits
555 Capitol Mall, Suite 300
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Ms. Paget,

As it drafts regulations concerning the selection of the Citizens Redistricting Commission, the William C. Velasquez Institute (WCVI) urges the Bureau of State Audits to draft the regulations to ensure that Proposition 11's mandate that the Commission reflect the "State's diversity, including, but not limited to, racial, ethnic, geographic, and gender diversity" is met. That can be accomplished in two ways, both of which relate to the requirement that each subpool of applicants "shall be created on the basis of relevant analytical skills, ability to be impartial, and appreciation for California's demographics and geography" (Gov. Code, § 8252(c)). First, the sentence implies that each subpool should consist of applicants that reflect the State's geographic and demographic diversity. The regulations should therefore require the Applicant Review Panel ("APR") to select the subpools in a manner that assures that each subpool reflects California's diversity, including that its members are from different regions of the State and are representative of communities of interest reflecting the State's diverse demographics. Second, the definitions of qualifications being sought in a commissioner should be defined to encourage Californians of all backgrounds to apply and be part of the Commission. We believe the following definitions of those qualifications accomplish these goals:

1. "Analytical skills" are those critical thinking skills that enable a commission member to identify pertinent issues, raise important questions, deal with competing interests and values, sift through information, and set appropriate priorities. Analytical skills do not require any particular level of education or type of life experience, and may be the product of life experience, education, intelligence or combination thereof.
2. "Impartiality" is the capacity to set aside one's preferences, prejudices, predispositions and alliances when necessary in order to adhere to the legal standards for redistricting. Impartiality is also the ability to accept and process information, proposals and ideas with an open mind.
3. "Demographics" means the diverse characteristics that may serve to identify a community of interest, including, but not limited to social, economic, industrial, political, cultural, language, racial, ethnic and age.
4. "Geography" refers to the diverse areas and geographic features of California that serve to unify and separate communities and people, including, but not limited to characteristics such as urban, rural or suburban, features such as the coast, mountains, valleys, deltas, bays, rivers and deserts, and agricultural areas of various types.

The redistricting process is a complicated process, with potential to do harm to California's most disenfranchised communities. We feel these definitions will make the subpools as strong and diverse as possible. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Steven Ochoa, at [redacted] or via email at [redacted]

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Antonio González". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Antonio González
President
William C. Velásquez Institute

Steven Ochoa
Vice President of Public Policy and Research
William C. Velasquez Institute

CC: Michael Salerno