



March 24, 2011

Via Electronic Mail
Citizens Redistricting Commission
1130 K Street, Suite 101
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Members of the Citizens Redistricting Commission:

We write to provide the Citizens Redistricting Commission (Commission) suggestions regarding the CRC Draft Meeting Schedule posted on March 22, 2011. We appreciate the Commission's plan to set out a schedule that will reflect its activities through the end of the redistricting process. And we appreciate that the staff has revised the schedule to include weekend hearings. However, we have concerns with some of the scheduling and proposed locations and ask that you take our concerns into account when reviewing the revised schedule.

- 1. The Commission should provide all Californians, including those residing in the state's most populous regions, with the opportunity to have their voices heard.**

As reflected in the joint letter of March 15, 2011, we believe that the Commission should hold multiple input hearings in the most populous regions in order to give residents of those regions an equal opportunity to engage in the redistricting process. Our joint letter of March 15, 2011 noted that, based on the 2010 U.S. Census data, nearly 40 percent of California's population resides in three counties. Taking this statistic into account, we had suggested in that joint letter that the Commission hold at least two hearings in the Los Angeles (Region 4), San Diego (Region 1), and Santa Clara (Region 7) regions during each phase of public input and that at least one be held in the most populous city. Under the current proposal, the Commission would hold multiple pre-map hearings in Region 1 and 4, but would hold only one in Region 7. We note that the Region 7 hearing is proposed to be held in Salinas, not San Jose, the third largest city in California. While we understand the desire to reach Californians in rural areas, it should not be done at the expense of the most populous areas. We, therefore, ask that an additional hearing be held in San Jose during the pre-map stage in order that all residents of Region 7 are provided an equal opportunity to voice their views.

We also ask that the Commission holds multiple hearings in these three regions after the release of the two draft maps. While hearings are scheduled for each region after the first draft map is released, only Region 7 (Santa Jose and Monterey) has two hearings. And no hearings are scheduled for Region 1 (San Diego) or Region 7 (Santa Clara) after the second draft map is released. Although it is understandable that multiple post-draft map hearings cannot be held in each region after each draft map is released, we believe the Commission can be strategic in ensuring that the largest number of Californians is able to voice their views by holding at least two hearings in these three regions at each stage (before the maps are released and after each draft map is released).

If the Commission determines that it can hold only one hearing in the three most populous regions, we ask that those hearings be held in the most populous cities, namely Los Angeles, San Diego, and San Jose.

2. The Commission should provide all Californians with the opportunity to have their voices heard at each stage of the input process.

We believe that at least one hearing should be held in each region during the three phases of public input (with multiple hearings in the three most populous regions as noted above). Currently, some areas have multiple hearings during one phase but no hearings during another phase. The Commission will receive far more comprehensive input and feedback if hearings are distributed more evenly. For example, we believe a pre-map hearing should be held in Region 5. If the Commission does not hold a pre-map hearing there, the Commission will be drawing Region 5 districts with very little community of interest input. Moreover, since all Region 5 hearings are currently scheduled immediately following the release of the first draft map, residents there will be limited to providing in-person input at only one stage of the process while residents in other regions have multiple opportunities for input.

With regard to the hearing schedule after the draft maps are released, we believe a hearing should be held in Region 6 after the first draft maps are released and that hearings should be held in Regions 1, 3, 5, 7, 8 and 9 after the second draft maps are released unless it is clear that no hearing is needed in a particular region. We understand that it is logistically easier to hold multiple hearings in the same region than to cover all nine regions in each round, but we urge the Commission to make comprehensive public input a priority. If each region does not have adequate opportunity to provide input at each stage, the Commission will have difficulty drawing maps that properly reflect the interests of all Californians.

Thank you for taking our suggestions into consideration.

Sincerely,



Deanna Kitamura
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Asian Pacific American Legal Center,
a member of Asian American Center for Advancing Justice