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April 16, 2011

TO: CALIFORNIA CITIZENS REDISTRICTING COMMISSION

FROM: EDWARD J. McINTYRE



Dear Commission members:

I have lived in Cathys Valley, Midpines and Madera for the last 50 years. I graduated from UCLA with degree in Political Science and returned to the Valley. I was taught to take my civic responsibility seriously. I have been involved the campaign politics since at an early age. I walked door to door, worked on phone banks etc.

We are fortunate to live in a participatory democracy. However, participation has been steadily declining for a number of years, in our community and our state. The repeated lament of voters everywhere is “my vote won’t make a difference” and “elected officials don’t represent the interests me”, those who voted for them. With depressing frequency, the laments are prophetic.

Why? Of the many reasons that voters don’t engage is that candidates with gerrymandered districts allow much campaigning in their local communities. The way the districts have been drawn, communities of interest have been separated, a classic divide and conquer tactic and the lay-out and geography make election contests inordinately expensive, thereby removing many of the traditional outreach efforts that would engage voters. Candidates can’t afford to spend time in far flung districts and must rely on television, direct mail and other expensive techniques to reach voters. The priority now is raising huge amounts of money, more than local communities’ ability, especially in this region of the state. The void is filled with special interest financing. Special interests are now paramount in campaigns but too often have no common interests or even presence in the community that elects the candidate. It is no wonder that most voters are alienated and cynical.

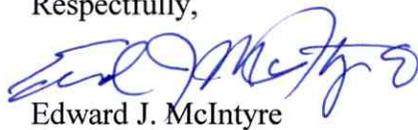
You can rectify this situation. Above all, respect communities of interest. I define communities by the standard definition but also by the communities’ economic interests. For example, in Madera County, the foothill/mountain region has an economic distinct from the valley region. The foothill/mountain region now depends on the tourist/hospitality industry while agriculture dominates the Valley region. I therefore request that you consider grouping the Foothill/Mountain region of Madera County with

the Foothill/Mountain region of Fresno County and with Mariposa, Tuolumne and Calaveras Counties. These communities have common economic interests. Likewise, consider grouping Madera's Valley region with Merced County and Fresno County's Valley region. Representatives at the state level, I think, would find districts formed this way easier to represent. This will give local elected more influence and voters who are civically inclined will become more engaged, a healthy development for our democracy.

Finally, it is a good idea to embed two Assembly Districts into one Senate Districts as was done in the 1970s by the judicial panel that creating districts. This too, would accommodate constituents and representatives, all sharing common interests.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Edward J. McIntyre", is written over the typed name.

Edward J. McIntyre