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September 20, 2011

Dan Claypool
Executive Director
California Citizens Redistricting Commission
901 P Street, Suite 154-A
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Claypool:

I have been informed that the California Citizens Redistricting Commission plans to submit a letter of support to Governor Brown regarding my legislation, Assembly Bill 420. I am grateful for the Commission's support. I believe AB 420 represents badly needed reform in our redistricting process, and I am writing to share with you specific information on why the bill reached the Governor's desk in its current form.

This information falls into three categories: data, timeline, and funding.

Data

I am aware that there is a question about the quality of inmate address information that the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation is capable of submitting to the Commission. A recent audit of the Department's records by the Bureau of State Audits found that a small amount of the information contained in the inmates' individual "C" files is inaccurate. Nevertheless, the majority of this data is complete and is not in question.

Early in the development of AB 420, my staff contacted the Department and established that a new database currently under development, the Strategic Offender Management System (SOMS), will contain comprehensive address information. We were informed by Corrections, and reported to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, that this system would be online in the women's correctional facilities throughout California by October 1, 2011, and that it would be operational statewide by January 1, 2012. In addition, a backup database called COMPAS, which is an assessment tool designed to pinpoint key factors in recidivism, also contains address information systematically taken during intake interviews at correctional reception centers when new inmates first enter prison. Between these two systems, I am confident in the expectation that the Department will be capable of electronic submission of quality address data by the year 2020. This information can be verified by contacting Leisa Rackelmann, Project Director for SOMS, at (916) 358-2201 or via email at Leisa.Rackelmann@cdcr.ca.gov.



Finally, I know there are concerns about the fact that AB 420 specifies zip code level information, and that this may not be sufficiently specific for appropriate mapping to occur. Initially AB 420 contained a requirement for street address level information, but the Department insisted that it be changed while the bill was pending before the Senate Appropriations Committee. Clearly this will need to be addressed during the implementation phase of the bill, but the databases I reference above both contain street address level information.

Timeline

AB 420 requires the Department to submit its address data within 90 days of April 1, 2020. After much deliberation, our thought was that it was prudent to provide the Department a certain range of time to meet the requirement for data submission. While it is not expressly required in the bill, it may also be prudent to require a test submission of the data at some point prior to this initial deadline. However, please bear in mind that such a requirement may increase the cost incurred by the Department in implementing AB 420 – currently the Department's cost estimate is negligible.

Funding

I am aware that the Commission's own cost estimate for implementation is about \$75,000 for mapping the inmate address data and/or incorporating it into the statewide database of Census tract information housed at the University of California at Berkeley. While I have no intention of minimizing the complexity of the task, you should be aware that my office contacted consultants who have worked on this issue in states that have already implemented this change in law, and the estimate they provided was in the range of \$40,000 to 45,000.

In summary, both Delaware and Maryland have successfully implemented an end to prison gerrymandering with legislation similar to AB 420, by counting inmates where they live, as opposed to where they are incarcerated. This policy will be consistent with our own Election Code Section 2025.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter affecting our system of government. If I can be of further assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me at (213) 744-2111.

Sincerely,



MIKE DAVIS
48th Assembly District

cc: Jacqueline Roberts, Legislative Unit, Office of Governor Jerry Brown