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From: LAWSON_BRIAN [REDACTED]

Sent: Friday, January 14, 2011 10:47 AM

To: Commission, Prop11

Subject: posting copies of public comment by Lawson Jan 12 and 13

Dear Voters First Act at the Secretary of State's Office:

You may already be in the process of posting the pages which I handed out when I made public comments January 12 and 13. Just in case it would be helpful I have attached electronic copies of the handouts to facilitate posting.

If you could post either the electronic copy or a scan of the hard copies which I gave to staff at the hearing to the voters first act website (under the section "Read Written Public Comments Submitted for the January 12, 2011 through January 31, 2011 Meeting Notice and Agenda") I would appreciate it.

Thank you for the work the Secretary of State's office is doing during this period.

-- Brian

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January 13, 2011

TO: California Redistricting Commission (Commissioner Aguirre)

FROM: Brian Lawson

RE: Designing the Process for Hearings and Public Comment

The Commission is likely to carry out two types of hearings at different times. Before maps are drawn, in February, March and April the Commission will probably carry out hearings throughout the state to identify communities of interest. After the Commission has produced a map they are required to make the map available for at least 14 days before the commission can vote on a map. Below are suggestions about these two types of hearings.

1. Hearings and Public Comment on Communities of Interest

- (a) It would probably be best if these hearings were held by population. In other words, given that the initial census numbers showed that California has approximately 37 million people if you held 37 hearings then you should try to hold those hearings so that each hearing would cover a different one million people. Obviously, you could not exclude people from attending more than one hearing, but you could encourage people to let everyone have a chance. In more sparsely populated areas you might hold hearings at more locations – if you have the money for that.
- (b) It would be helpful to prepare these hearings in a way that gives participants the best understanding of how their comments can be useful in redistricting. In parts of the state which are sparsely populated the issue may be – which counties should be stitched together? In parts of the state which are densely populated the issue may be – how should cities and counties be divided so as not to divide communities?
- (c) As some of the trainers mentioned it's not helpful if people give impassioned statements about their neighborhood or community of interest, but then don't spell out what geographic area they are talking about. The best case scenario would be if participants at the hearings had access to computers so they could identify the census block or tract and certainly city they live in. But just basic information about streets would be helpful.
- (d) Identifying every community of interest in the state of California is probably close to impossible, so you need to find a way to prioritize your efforts. One way to prioritize this is the following three levels of importance: first, identify communities protected by the Voting Rights Act; second, identify communities of interest which are likely to be divided (those that cross city and possibly even county lines and communities of interest within large cities which might be divided); third, identify all other communities of interest. This is just one example of how you might prioritize collecting information.

2. Hearings and Public Comments on Proposed Maps

- (a) Once the Commission is ready to vote on a map you will need to develop a process to receive input on that map.
 - (b) You might want to reflect on the usefulness of comments received on the initial slate of 6 final commissioners put out for public comment on December 10th. If the comments did not seem that useful to you one reason might be that most of the comments promoted or criticized only one individual. Even those who put forward a full slate did not explain why their slate was preferable to the Commission's proposed slate.
 - (c) You might lessen this problem in the future by giving guidance about how people can make useful public comments. For example with regard to public comments on maps you might suggest that public comments that simply criticize or propose a change to a single district are not that useful. Instead, you might let people know that their comments will be more useful if they not only describe what they dislike about a district, but go on to propose how the district should be changed, how they would change the districts touching that district to accommodate their concerns and reasons why their proposed changes are an improvement.
3. The number of hearings of both types which you could hold may depend on how much money you can get from the legislature and the governor. One way to encourage the legislature to provide funding would be to show what they would get for their money. More money would result in more hearings; in other words opportunities for hearings in more legislators' districts. Less money would mean hearings in only a few districts.
 4. In addition you will almost certainly want to design a process to supplement hearings with written and electronically submitted public comments.
 5. The clearer you frame your requests for information the more useful the information you will receive. The more you think beforehand about how the information from the hearings and the public comments will be processed, the better. You will hire experts to process the information from the hearings and written and electronic public comment. Make sure your experts are responsible for designing an effective process on the front end. Don't just take their word for it – think about what a trial run of the process they propose will yield.