

From: Peter Van Meter [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, January 30, 2011 4:32 PM
To: Commission, Prop11
Cc: Commission, Prop11
Subject: Public Comment on Outreach and Education

Please distribute the attached comments about selecting and administrating outreach and education to all Commission members. In particular, please be sure that the members of the outreach subcommittee receive these comments BEFORE their meetings (or teleconferences) with prospective consultants this Tuesday, or during the full Commission break (January 31 - February 9).

Thank you.

Peter Van Meter, Principal
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Former Council Member, City of Sausalito
Citizens Redistricting Commission Applicant

Public Comment Concerning Outreach and Education

January 30, 2011
Peter Van Meter
Former City Council Member, City of Sausalito
CRC Applicant

Dear Commissioners:

Based on my (intermittent) observation of your proceedings on Wednesday and Friday, January 26 and 29, I am concerned about public perception of impartiality, or lack thereof, from your contemplated outreach and education partners.

Although their roles were not completely clear from the discussion that I heard, it is my understanding that the following organizations are going to be involved:

Statewide Database (SWDB) - the Redistricting Database for the State of California
(U. C. Berkeley)

Karin Mac Donald, Director, SWDB, as a private consultant

Center for Collaborative Policy (CPP) (C. S. U. Sacramento)

Redistricting CA (James Irvine Foundation), and its Alliance partners:

- [Asian Pacific American Legal Center \(APALC\)](#)
- [California NAACP](#)
- [Center for Governmental Studies \(CGS\)](#)
- [Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy \(CAUSE\)](#)
- [Common Cause California](#)
- [League of Women Voters of California \(LWV\)](#)
- [Los Angeles Urban League \(LAUL\)](#)
- [Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund \(MALDEF\)](#)
- [National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials Educational Fund \(NALEO\)](#)
- [Rose Institute of State and Local Government](#)
- [The Greenlining Institute](#)
- [The Statewide Database at Berkeley \(SWDB\)](#)

It is my further understanding that the Census data will go to the SWDB and that the SWDB is the designated sole agency to provide that data to the Commission. Based upon the history and purpose of the SWDB, this is entirely appropriate.

A question arises, however, with the affiliation of the SWDB with Redistricting CA and the James Irvine Foundation. Ms. Mac Donald indicated that she has been “training” the Alliance partners for over a year, and the SWDB is itself listed as a member of the Redistricting CA

Alliance. This has the potential effect of seriously clouding the nonpartisan mission of the SWDB. Furthermore, it was not clear exactly what the role of the SWDB will be in the six Irvine Foundation funded redistricting assistance sites.

The impartiality issue arises when we look at the other Alliance partners, and what their role will be in the effort. As I emphasized in my oral comments to you on January 12, it is essential that your consultants, and in this case the outreach partners, be unbiased, neutral, and not perceived as aligned with any party or special interests.

Unfortunately, that is not the case with the majority of the Redistricting CA Alliance. Most of the Alliance partners are, or would be perceived to be, left of center and favored by the Democrat Party. This could raise serious issues later as to the fairness of the outreach process for all segments of the population of the State. Will they be equally informed of their necessity to participate in the line-drawing process?

While it would be in the best interests of the people of California to open up the bidding for outreach consultants to other organizations, I have the sense that the Commission is willing to skip this step and engage these organizations through an interagency governmental process that eliminates the competitive bidding process, supposedly in the interest of time constraints.

If the Commission skips this process, the least that it can do is to include more groups in the Alliance and perhaps more importantly in the work of the CPP to achieve a greater balance. In lieu of a single program managed by your own communications director, there must be a concerted effort to include more outreach partners, serving a broader range of interest groups and political perspectives.

While I have no first hand knowledge of any of these organizations, some that might fill this role include the Pacific Research Institute (pacificresearch.org), the American Leadership Forum (locally, alfsv.org) and The Conservative Forum (theconservativeforum.com). Surely Commission members or staff knows of other groups with public policy missions and educational outreach capability that could be interested in becoming involved.

Finally, one or more of the Commissioners broached the possibility of the Commission being a co-host with one or more of the activist groups during outreach. This must absolutely be avoided for the obvious reasons of showing preference, even if unintended.

Please exercise caution in these rushed decisions, as any perception of partiality, even if unintended through the selection of consultants, can seriously compromise the work of the Commission.