

AGPA01

From: Nicolas Heidorn [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, December 14, 2010 1:10 PM
To: Voters First Act
Subject: Public Comment on the Six Proposed Members

Dear Commissioners,

I watched a portion of your deliberations on-line and am very impressed with the work you have done so far. I am particularly impressed with how respectful you are of each other and hope this collegial spirit remains strong as the line-drawing begins.

I am writing to strongly urge you to reject the tentative slate of six additional commissioners and create a new slate including Paul McKaskle. I was one of the people who worked on the Proposition 11 campaign and, in giving presentations, I would invariably point to the court-controlled redistrictings after the 1970 and 1990 censuses as an example of what fair redistricting looks like. Mr. McKaskle, of course, was the chief advisor to the California Supreme Court during those two periods and was greatly responsible for crafting those lines. The Voters First Act requires you to select the remaining commissioners to ensure diversity on the panel, but also makes clear that this decision shall be based on "relevant analytical skills." My confidence in the Commission would be diminished if Mr. McKaskle --who I think on paper can be objectively described as the most qualified applicant of the 36 finalists-- was not selected.

There is obvious inherent value in having Mr. McKaskle's expertise on the Commission which I need not go into; however, I think the Commission may not have sufficiently considered the value in having experience on the Commission as opposed to only on staff. In my experience in local government and the state legislature, I have found that elected officials are often exceedingly deferential to staff recommendations in technical areas, sometimes to the point of not even asking clarifying questions, because they feel incompetent to challenge the recommendations. Having even one person on a committee who has sufficient experience to test the assumptions of staff makes for more diligent decision-making for the body as a whole and, I've found, emboldens others to be more engaged in the process. Mr. McKaskle, I feel, could play this role. Based on the confidence each of you has already demonstrated in your proceedings, I do not fear that he would come to dominate the discussion. Moreover, I think his unimpeachable impartiality would add a lot of credibility to the maps the Commission ultimately produces.

Thank you all for taking on this public service, and good luck,

Nicolas Heidorn