

From: **Charles** [REDACTED]

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Subject: (Nor-Cal) Redistricting Comment (Please DO NOT unify the three northern-most regions of California! Just say "NO" to Unification!

To: votersfirstact@crc.ca.gov

When I attended the Redistricting Forum in Redding, last April 9 2011, I was altogether unsure as to what to expect. I wanted to consider the possible positions, to weigh them in the proverbial balance. I wanted to be sure as to the position I was about to take on the issue. I noticed that several had taken the position that the three northern-most regions in California should be essentially united into one, with the southern boundary thereof moved upward to bring the population numbers into conformity with requirements. They claimed that such a move will more accurately represent the people of the northern-most region of the State, & that this change will bring about additional highway improvement & public transit funds into the region. At first, the argument was quite seductive. Those who attempted to counter the "Unification argument," with the fact that the three regions that comprise the northernmost region of California are, in fact, three distinct regions (for purposes of determining "community of interest" questions), were responded to, by some supporters of the "Unification argument", with accusations of being tools for the political establishment. In the course of all this, a question had occurred to me. It was a question later posed by the panel, itself, as the Forum drew to a close. A paraphrase of the question goes something like this.: "Which is to be preferred above the other? Shall it be a unified district whose ONE Assembly Member, ONE Senator, & ONE Congressperson are exclusive to the region? OR, shall it be some variant of the three regions currently extant, whose THREE Assembly Members, THREE Senators, & THREE Congresspersons represent both the northern-most regions of California & parts of those adjoining?

Given the sparsity of population in many parts of the northern trio of regions,

when a theoretical southern boundary was drawn, at the Redistricting Forum @ Redding (using certain map making software), the southern boundary of the possible unified northern region was not very far north of the existing southern boundaries of the three northern-most regions. And the cost of that unification would be an effective loss of representation to the tune of two thirds, for the region, as a whole. What about all that supposed highway funding that supporters of Unification seem to think will be forthcoming in the event thereof? With ONLY ONE representative in the Assembly, ONLY ONE representative in the Senate, & ONLY ONE representative in the U.S. House of Representatives, for the whole region, the people here will be in an even lesser position to compete for what funds remain. Likewise, the same will be true of public transit monies. Competition for appropriations will decide the fate of what is promised, and what is delivered will fall short of what is promised. More importantly, it will be even easier, than now is the case, to trample under foot the rights of people living in the Unification.

Consider the fate of those in Siskiyou County who attempt to utilize their senior water rights to, inter alia, grow their own food. Consider the fate of law abiding citizens in Shasta County who are forced to endure the consequences of so-called "Realignment," an arrangement under which felons are unceremoniously "dumped" (for want of a better term) on the collective doorstep of one & all, with all the attendant consequences of such "dumping," all because: (a) about 10 yrs ago, or so, the CCPOA insisted on ever increasing compensation levels; and (b) one proposed emergency measure after another was strenuously resisted by the CCPOA, all at the same time that lawyers arguing on behalf of some of the inmates were arguing for levels of health care quality & access that are unheard of amongst the fighting men & women of the U.S. Armed Forces! Seniors on Medicare & veterans on Tricare can only dream of the level of care being demanded for felons, all at the expense of ability to maintain proper capacity levels. CDCR's solution, back in 2007? The statute known as AB900; legislation calling for, among other things, so-called "re-entry facilities" to be erected in residential neighborhoods, including one originally proposed for siting in south-west part of Redding, in residential neighborhood, in close proximity to elementary school, housing felons in the final year of their sentence, & additionally serving as way stations for felons being released into Shasta County general civilian population. CCPOA was strongly in favor of the concept, at the time, as was CDCR.

And now we are faced with possible "Unification," an arrangement under which the three northern-most regions will effectively be deprived of two thirds of their representation in the Legislature & in the U.S. House of Representatives. What will the *état d'affaires* of the people in the three northern-most regions be, then? Let us consider now, for a moment, whether the three northern-most regions

constitute a single community of interest, or not. The region inclusive of Humboldt & Mendocino Counties have a culture all their own. Geographically, Humboldt & Del Norte Counties are separated from Siskiyou, Shasta, Tehema Counties by chains of mountains that run from western Siskiyou County down through western Trinity County. The two main east-west State Highways running through Trinity County are scarcely passable through the better part of the winter season, most years. Often, these same roads become totally impassable due to rock slides. Summer 2008 was no picnic, either, for the wildfires of that year forced major routes to become ad hoc bases of operation for fire crews. And mountain passes connecting central Siskiyou County with western Del Norte County can frequently, during the winter, become impassable. Even when they are not, winter travel is not for the faint of heart. Needless to say, the regions comprising Congressional District 1, Assembly District 1, and Senate District 2 are as separate from those comprising Congressional District 2, Assembly District 2, & Senate District 4 as any two can be while also being north of Sacramento. And this is not to mention the flow of communications & of commerce flows considerably more often north-south than east-west. Needless to say, the two regions cannot be identified as a single community of interest. What about the north-east region? Can it be combined with the north-central region as a single community of interest? Not exactly. The major east-west routes between north-central & north-east are all two-lane roads, though they nominally be identified as State "Highways." The major corridor of commerce & of travel in the north-east region is U.S. Highway 395, a route that circumnavigates the mountains that it does as it passes upward toward the Oregon border. Culturally, Modoc County has more in common with its neighbor to the south than with its neighbor to the south-west. Likewise, Lassen County is similarly separate from Shasta & from Tehema Counties, owing in part to the location of Lassen Volcanic National Park & its proximity to & intersection with State Routes 44 & 89. The most principal community in Plumas County, Chester, is considerably isolated from those along major routes of travel & commerce in the north-central region. All that, while the major routes of north-south travel & commerce in the north-central region are Interstate Highway 5 & State Route 99. Needless to say, the three regions of the North State, the north-west, the north-central, & the north-east, cannot be combined into a single "community of interest" for redistricting purposes.

And what about those districts in the Bay Area & in Southern California? Looking upon them, one can only deduce from the nonsense & jigsaw-puzzle nature of the boundaries of the legions of districts in Southern California (especially those in the Los Angeles region) that they have been designed, not so much to coincide with any communities of interest, but to protect the electoral fortunes of politicians & of political parties. Note well Cal. Const. Art. XXI, § 2(d)(4), "The

geographic integrity of any city, county, city and county, neighborhood, or **community of interest** shall be respected to the extent possible without violating the requirements of any of the preceding subdivisions. Communities of interest shall not include relationships with political parties, incumbents, or political candidates." Note also Cal. Const. Art. XXI, § 2(d)(5), "To the extent practicable, and where this does not conflict with the criteria above, districts shall be drawn to encourage geographical compactness such that nearby areas of population are not bypassed for more distant population." As was seen in the demonstration at the Redistricting Forum @ Redding, the attempted unification of the three northern-most regions into one will actually serve to make the new districts more expansive than currently extant, given the cutting off of the most populous portions of the three northern-most regions, thus failing to comply with Cal. Const. Art. XXI, § 2(d)(5), not to mention failing to comply with Cal. Const. Art. XXI, § 2(d)(4). So what about those districts in the Bay Area & in Southern California? Again, given what is known of the aforementioned Constitutional provisions, one can certainly make the argument that they must be made as compact & as square-shaped as is possible, within the limits provided for in the Federal & State Constitutions.

And another thing to mention is the fact that the three northern-most Assembly Districts geographically overlap with the three northern-most Senate Districts as well as with the three northern-most Congressional Districts. Because of that, constituents in the northern-most regions can more efficiently get their points across to their elected representatives than otherwise would be the case. Thus, representatives to the different legislative bodies do not work at cross-purposes, insofar as their constituents be concerned, for the person representing the people, in a given one of the three northern-most regions, in the Assembly represents the same people that are represented by the Senator that represents the people from that self-same region.

In conclusion, Unification of the three northern-most regions of California is most certainly NOT what is in their best interests, under Cal. Const. Art. XXI, § 2. Just say NO to Unification! Thank you.