

Subject: Comments urging extension of May 23 deadline for public testimony

Date: Tuesday, May 17, 2011 12:40 PM

From: Rosalind Gold [REDACTED]

To: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Conversation: Comments urging extension of May 23 deadline for public testimony

Dear Members of the Citizens Redistricting Commission:

Please find attached a letter urging the Commission to extend the May 23 deadline for the submission of public testimony that will be considered for the Commission's preparation of its first draft maps.

This letter is submitted by the African American Redistricting Collaborative; the Asian Pacific American Legal Center (APALC); California Forward; the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF); and the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Best regards,

Rosalind Gold
Senior Director of Policy, Research and Advocacy

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The NALEO Educational Fund is the leading nonprofit organization that facilitates full Latino participation in the American political process, from citizenship to public service.

May 17, 2011

Via Electronic Mail
Citizens Redistricting Commission
1130 K Street, Suite 101
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Public testimony about California's redistricting process

Dear Members of the Citizens Redistricting Commission:

We are writing to urge the Commission to extend the deadline beyond May 23 for public comment that will be considered for its first draft of maps. We believe the current deadline will prevent the consideration of relevant input from a significant number of members of the public, particularly those who are members of California's underrepresented communities.

The Commission has scheduled hearings for organized groups to present regional and statewide maps on May 24, May 26 and possibly May 27. We are aware of several community members who would like to frame their testimony in the context of those maps, or provide their assessment of them. While many of the organized groups have reached out extensively to members of the public to ensure that their maps incorporate their perspectives, some members of the public believe they can provide more meaningful testimony after they have had an opportunity to view the organized group maps and comment on them. Because a significant number of maps presented by organized groups will be presented by those who work closely with members of California's underrepresented communities, the opportunity to comment on the organized group maps is particularly critical for these community members. We believe such testimony will also help the Commission evaluate the proposed maps in a more informed manner.

In addition, the Commission's last public input hearings are scheduled for the Salinas and San Jose areas on May 22 and 23, with the San Jose hearing occurring on the May 23 deadline for public testimony. Individuals from other communities in the state where hearings were scheduled earlier in the process have had the opportunity to provide additional testimony after those hearings. In contrast, individuals from the Salinas and San Jose area will not have this opportunity. It is important that community members have the opportunity to provide testimony after public input hearings in their areas because the hearings may raise issues that require further research or response. Individuals in the San Jose and Salinas area should not be prevented from having the same opportunity to provide follow-up testimony after their public input hearing as individuals in the other parts of the state merely because their hearings were the last in the Commission's schedule.

We understand that the Commission needs sufficient time after the deadline for public testimony to assess that testimony and incorporate it into its first draft maps. We very much appreciate that the Commission is committed to doing so in a thoughtful and thorough manner. Thus, we

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recommend that the Commission extend the deadline for public testimony until May 31, which is one-to-two business days after the final hearing for organized groups to present their maps, and ten days before the Commission has indicated it will produce its first drafts. We believe this extension will provide members of the public with the time needed to provide meaningful comment to the Commission, and will also provide the Commission with the time needed to evaluate that testimony for the purpose of its first maps.

We understand and appreciate that the Commission shares our vision of an accessible and inclusive public participation process that provides all Californians with an opportunity to provide meaningful input to the Commission. We look forward to continuing our work together to achieve this important goal. Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

Erica Teasley Linnick, Esq.
Coordinator
African American Redistricting Collaborative (AARC)

Eugene Lee
Voting Rights Project Director
Asian Pacific American Legal Center (APALC)
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