

COMMENTS TO THE CALIFORNIA REDISTRICTING COMMISSION

Given by Michael McCoy, of Moreno Valley CA, May 5, 2011 at the Norco hearing

1. Michael McCoy, [REDACTED], Moreno Valley CA 92557: **Personal Background:** Retired Geographer, Urban Planner and Mapmaker. Graduated from Ohio State. Lived in California for 51 years and have travelled all over our Golden State. Was an aspirant to the Commission, but was dismissed at about 300th out of the 4,400 applicants.
2. **Ensuring that Political Data does not Influence Redistricting:** I would urge the Commission adopt and publish a very strict policy insisting that any data or maps showing partisan voter registration patterns and the place of residence of incumbent or aspiring office-seekers are not present at the workplaces of Commission members, staff and their consultants. Such information must not be allowed to influence or detract from the non-partisan character of redistricting as mandated by the voters under Proposition 11.
3. **Employ a Metropolitan-Core based Strategy for Drawing Districts:** There is often a tendency to just start at the Oregon border by gathering rural counties into a few districts and work southward until the more densely-populated Sacramento and Bay Areas are reached. I would suggest, instead, that the Commission employ a multi-track strategy that emphasizes existing governmental units and adheres to municipal and county boundaries focusing on 8 major metropolitan areas: Sacramento, San Francisco, San Jose, Fresno, Los Angeles, Santa Ana, Riverside and San Diego. The advantages of this procedure are:
 - a. This strategy realistically validates the enormous population strength of our largest cities and their deserved share of the legislative pie. We've come along way since the days when tiny Plumas County had the same number of State Senators as, say, Ventura County.
 - b. Large cities in these areas could effectively absorb new districts entirely within themselves, especially if unincorporated islands and spheres of influence were carefully included. Under this strategy, many districts would meet the Commission's criteria for adoption.
 - c. Around the largest cities, the consultants could then employ a model of concentric rings, "halos" or quadrants around the 8 centres. For example, Oakland and the 20 East Bay cities could relatively easily form several compact and cohesive districts. Only a handful of peripheral cities might have to be divided. Discredited practices such as "packing" and "cracking" would be rendered ineffective under this strategy. It's my belief that the vast majority of Communities of Interest would take care of themselves under such a plan.
 - d. Eventually the 8 core regions would coalesce. Remaining sparsely-populated exurban and rural areas would have to be gathered into some often quite large units, however even these can be tied to the nearest and most influential metropolitan core areas.
 - e. Ethnic diversity would likely be attained in most core areas under this strategy. Recent census data indicates all our peoples are dispersing throughout the state and most communities are more diverse than we thought. In Moreno Valley, a wonderfully multi-cultural city, for example, Latinos are now leading with about 38% while Asians, African-Americans and Caucasians all have around 20%. Although all proposed legislative districts must pass muster with regard to the Voting Rights Act, and will do so, I believe we that in many cases we are over-worrying about this factor. Again, maintaining governmental units as our priority

should, with careful review, meet Voting Rights standards and result in plenty of opportunities for minorities to run for elective office under the final adopted redistricting plan.

4. **Finally, Speaking for my Own City of Moreno Valley**, with nearly 200,000 people, please do not endorse any plan that divides this community again because we have been unfairly impeded and often legislatively marginalized in the past due to partisan redistricting, often resulting in minimal influence in Sacramento and Washington. We seek long-overdue relief under the new redistricting plan!

Thank you for offering me the opportunity to express my views.

Michael McCoy
Moreno Valley, CA

