

**Subject: Marin & Sonoma Redistricting**

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**Conversation:** Marin & Sonoma Redistricting

**DICK SPOTSWOOD \* THE SUNDAY MARIN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL A column on government and politics published Sunday, May 14, 2011 #352 © A copyright of the Marin Independent Journal.**

## **REDISTRICTING: MARIN & SONOMA'S COMMUNITY OF INTEREST**

THE ISSUE of California legislative redistricting is rapidly coming to a head. The Citizens Redistricting Commission will announce its first draft of the state's new legislative and congressional district boundaries on June 10. The final version will be released in mid-August.

The commission's road show is coming to the North Bay for "public input" on May 20. The session starts at 6 p.m. at Santa Rosa City Hall.

Implications for Marin and Sonoma are huge. For decades, the region enjoyed its own Assembly and congressional districts, though its state Senate representation is diluted by inclusion in the gerrymandered San Francisco-dominated 3rd Senate District.

Whether you support or oppose **Rep. Lynn Woolsey**, D-Petaluma, it's hard to deny that she's been accessible and brought home the bacon for Marin and Sonoma. Since Woolsey will likely retire soon, there is legitimate concern about the future of her Sixth District.

Most Marin and Sonoma residents concur that there is an historic interest joining the two counties. It's not just their north-of-the-bridge geography, but also a similar suburban-rural culture.

Now, with most Marin and Sonoma residents both living and working north of the bay and far fewer commuting to San Francisco, the links are stronger than ever.

With "community of interest" and geographical cohesion being mandated factors that the nonpartisan Citizens Redistricting Commission must consider, why should we worry?

Powerful San Francisco and East Bay Democratic politicians and allied special interests are terrified of redistricting. Since population changes demand that one of the Golden State's 53 congressional districts be shifted from Northern to Southern California, something has to give.

It would be easy to "collapse" the North Bay's prized congressional district by diverting Sonoma County to the North Coast and Marin to San Francisco or even Contra Costa County.

The resulting domino effect would be particularly beneficial for Bay Area Democratic congressional incumbents fearful that their seat could be the one eliminated.

Expect liberal ethnic and labor groups to serve as unidentified surrogates for these incumbents. They will testify at the Santa Rosa session contending that Marin's community of interest is really with intensely urban San Francisco or, bizarrely, across the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge with Contra Costa County.

Marin and Sonoma voters need to counter this move by making themselves heard at the May 20 meeting.

It would be a powerful message if the North Bay were united. However, Marin Supervisor **Susan Adams**, with delusions of a congressional career, has gotten in the way of a unified North Bay.

Due to **Hal Brown's** illness and **Charles McGlashan's** death, there are only three voting Marin supervisors. With three votes needed to do business, Adams used her one vote to block a resolution urging the Redistricting Commission to respect the North Bay's community of interest.

Maybe Adams has concluded that she can't be elected to Congress from a Marin-Sonoma district and that she stands a better chance if Marin is joined to San Francisco or the East Bay.

If Marin combines with The City, the liberal Adams will be in the same district as House Minority Leader **Nancy Pelosi**. In a Pelosi-Adams contest, Adams would be crushed. Were Pelosi to retire, Adams would likely run against state Sen. **Mark Leno**. In a SF-Marine district, Leno easily wins that race given that San Franciscans make up two-thirds of the district's population.

A Marin-Contra Costa district implies it would be Adams vs. the lion of the left, the enormously popular **George Miller**.

Anyway the pie is cut, Adams is not going to Washington. Better for her to face reality and help craft a unified North Bay message: Keep Marin and Sonoma in the same congressional district.

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**OTHER THOUGHTS:** "You know you are no longer CEO when you get in the back seat of your car and it doesn't move." **Warren Buffet**

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