



Fwd: Public Comment: 5 - Santa Barbara

Voter <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]

Wed, Jul 6, 2011 at 2:59 PM

Region 5 - Santa Barbara
June 29

----- Original Message -----

Subject:Public Comment: 5 - Santa Barbara
Date:Thu, 30 Jun 2011 02:39:21 +0000
From:Ronald C Faas <[redacted]>
To:[redacted]

From: Ronald C Faas <[redacted]>
Subject: Testimony Prepared for June 22 Hearing at Oxnard

Message Body:

Having drawn #133, my name was not called at the CRC hearing in Oxnard on June 22. So I am submitting my testimony in writing.

I thank the Citizen's Redistricting Commission for the maps that place the entire Santa Maria Valley in same Congressional, Senate & Assembly district. While that is a great improvement over the 2001-2010 maps that divided the SMV into two Congressional districts and two Senate districts, the Commission could and should do better.

The Commission's draft maps, unfortunately, isolate the Santa Maria /Guadalupe Latino and working class community of interest into districts that do not reflect its interests. Please consider the following:

1. Preserve Santa Barbara / Ventura County Community of Interest. Santa Barbara and Western Ventura County (west of the Conejo grade) are a distinct community of interest, which has the population required for two Assembly districts that reflect the unique interests of this bi-county community. While the CRC maps currently allow for one representative, large amounts of the area's region are included in Assembly districts that have majorities in neighboring counties.
2. Santa Maria is the fastest growing and largest city in Santa Barbara County, with the greatest social service needs. Santa Maria's population grew by 30%, while the county as a whole grew just 6.1%. Santa Maria has the highest poverty rates, foreclosure rates and unemployment rates in the county. By placing Santa Maria in state districts that will be dominated by voters in San Luis Obispo and counties to the north, rather than within a Santa Barbara County-based district, the Commission weakens our city's ability to advocate for needed services.
3. 70% of Santa Maria's population is Hispanic. 40% of Santa Barbara county's population is Hispanic. None of the districts which Santa Maria is in come close to these percentages, (AD = 34%, SD = 31%), making it harder for Santa Maria's Hispanic population to be part of an influential voting block.
4. 62% of Santa Barbara County's under 18 population is Hispanic, so that within the coming decade, the Hispanic voting population of the county is likely to grow rapidly. Santa Maria should be included in Santa Barbara County-based districts so that the voting power of this emerging population is maximized.
5. Santa Maria is city which has a history of challenges to its voting procedures by Hispanic voting rights advocates. A ten-year legal struggle to create city council district elections rather than at-large council elections, ultimately resulted in the dismissal of the case. However, important barriers to Hispanic voting rights in this city-which currently has one Hispanic member on an otherwise all-white city council-were raised during this litigation period and should not be ignored by the Commission.
6. The recent conflict in which the Mayor of Santa Maria asked the Mexican consulate to cease providing services to Santa Maria is one example of ongoing discrimination against Santa Maria's Hispanic population by elected leaders of a largely Hispanic city.
7. Don't "pad" districts that will vote against the interests of immigrant populations. 99,553 total population for Santa Maria. 70,114 Hispanic population. 43,917 Hispanic Voting Age population, so over 26,000 Hispanic population (37%) are under 18. Looked at another way, 62% of Santa Barbara County's under 18 population is Hispanic. However, currently only 41.4% of Santa Maria's citizen voting age population (CVAP) is Hispanic, and only 23% of Santa Maria voters are Hispanic. This means that whichever district Santa Maria is included in will have responsibility for tens of thousands of Hispanic residents who don't or cannot currently participate in electing representatives of their choice, despite being included when the district's size is determined. It seems particularly harsh and unfair to use this population "padding" to empower districts that will clearly vote against the interests of Latino citizens and non-citizens alike.

Thank you for your attention to these concerns in drawing the final maps.

Ronald C Faas
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