

Subject: Pleasant Hill and the RAMON Senate District

From: [REDACTED]

Date: Mon, 8 Aug 2011 00:26:23 -0400 (EDT)

To: [REDACTED]

CC: [REDACTED]

From

David Durant

[REDACTED]
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

Dear Commission:

Back on July 20, 2011, while I was vacationing in China, I wrote (through your website) to implore you to keep the communities of Martinez and Pleasant Hill together with other Contra Costa Cities in the RAMON Senate District.

As I typed that message on my Blackberry, my thumbs hurt...

Your website told me that it was successfully submitted. But, I cannot locate it on your website, so I am including it here again, below (in quotes), with a small typographical fix in brackets.

Before I get to that, however, I just want to take a moment to ask you to look at your own graphic representation of our former and current (if you insist on retaining this structure) Senate district.

In a shocking twist, you have taken us from a Senate District that was previously fairly drawn and clearly had a community of interest (and which does not appear on paper to have been gerrymandered in any way detrimental to any interest group) and you have thrust us into a district that bears no geographic, social or cultural similarity whatsoever. While I love Calistoga and St. Helena for wine tasting, they are well beyond the traditional confines our regional interest for Pleasant Hill. While I find Fairfield, Vacaville and Davis to be interesting communities, they certainly are not suburbs or even exurbs of San Francisco or Oakland. Yet, Pleasant Hill is just that -- geographically near the center of Contra Costa County and firmly recognized as suburbs of the commercial centers of Oakland and San Francisco. Indeed, we have much more in common with the communities of Dublin and Pleasanton (south of San Ramon and Danville) than we do with the good communities that I mentioned to the north.

Calistoga, St. Helena, Fairfield, Vacaville and Davis are all heavily agricultural communities, with their own commercial cores and industrial areas, to be sure. They have some strong apparent "community of interest" criteria with eachother. And, they really have very little in common with Pleasant Hill (which does have a small operating farm of a couple of acres, but otherwise has a strong retail sales base, very little clustered office space and is predominantly a residential suburb).

With the mandate to approximately equalize the numbers of citizens in each Senate District, I cannot understand how the 70,000 residents of Martinez and Pleasant Hill, combined, make the population counts so radically unbalanced that this would require having us stripped from our core communities of interest and placed into a district with cities with which we share so very little.

As you seek to finalize the maps, I implore you again to make the modest tweak required to put Pleasant Hill back where it belongs, in the RAMON District.

Respectfully,

David Durant

From July 20 (Hong Kong time):

"Dear California Redistricting Commission:

I am on vacation in China and writing this to you on a Blackberry. Please forgive typos.

But, as you know, there is little more important to California voters than adequate and proper representation. So, I feel compelled to write about the Commission's July 14 proposed maps of State Senate districts. That set of maps proposes to move the Contra Costa cities of Martinez and Pleasant Hill from a Senate District (DeSaulnier) that has a strong community of interest -- these two cities are a vital part of Central Costa County, where we do a lot of cooperative planning (including land use and transportation). The proposal would put us (as small cities of approximately 36,000 people each) into a district which incorporates the counties of Yolo, Lake, Napa and Solano.

There is precious little that Pleasant Hill shares with our neighboring Counties to the North, and especially Yolo and Lake Counties.

There is little migration by workers from Pleasant Hill to these areas. Instead, Pleasant Hill and Martinez are Bay Area cities, heavily tied to the commercial and economic centers of San Francisco, Berkeley, Oakland, San Ramon and Pleasanton (where the vast, vast majority of our residents that work outside of Central Costa County (including in Pleasant Hill, Martinez [the County seat], Concord and Walnut Creek).

BART and other public transportation infrastructure and investments tie us to the communities to the South, West and East, but not North to Napa, Solano, Yolo and Lake Counties.

Moreover, Pleasant Hill and Martinez are geographically (physically) separated from Napa, Yolo, Lake and Solano Counties by the Carquinez Strait and Suisun Bay (as evidenced by the multiple bridges crossing from Contra Costa to counties to the North).

In Pleasant Hill, we share no specific social or economic characteristics with the four northern counties mentioned above. We are far more tied to the rest of Contra Costa and Alameda Counties. Arts, music and culture for our residents are found mostly in urban and suburban centers like Walnut Creek, Oakland, Berkeley and San Francisco, when not found at home in Pleasant Hill. We are most often referred to as a "bedroom community," as a suburb less than 30 miles from Downtown San Francisco and 16 miles or so from Oakland. Our roots and history show that we are a former agricultural community which began being more heavily populated at the end of World War II, as the suburbs moved [East] from San Francisco. To the contrary, the counties to the North have seemed to retain and perhaps even expand their agricultural roots (principally but not exclusively with grape growing).

I recognize that your task of redrawing the district boundaries for State Senate and Assembly seats, as well as congressional districts, is daunting and difficult. And, while there are no perfect solutions, I fear that our small communities will lose a voice in Sacramento by being paired with much larger areas with whom we share precious little. I strongly urge you to keep Pleasant Hill joined with our contiguous cities of Walnut Creek, Concord and Lafayette, as well as Martinez.

Very best wishes,

David Durant
Mayor, City of Pleasant Hill"

Subject: Public Comment: 8 - Contra Costa

From: Carol M Hehmeyer <[REDACTED]>

Date: Sun, 7 Aug 2011 21:15:58 +0000

To: [REDACTED]

From: Carol M Hehmeyer <[REDACTED]>

Subject: Walnut Creek

Message Body:

I am outraged, livid, to learn that Commissioner Ward, who has shown himself to be strong, principled, and devoted to the integrity of the redistricting process throughout this year, has been silenced by Commission attorneys. The Commission is required to "conduct an open and transparent process enabling full public consideration of and comment on the drawing of district lines" and to "conduct themselves with integrity and fairness." Article 21, Section 2 (b) of the California Constitution. By preventing Commissioner Ward from explaining his recent, laudable, vote against the maps produced by this Commission, a veil of secrecy now cloaks the commission processes. Clearly, this process does not reflect the standard set in Propositions 11 and 20 which enacted the Commission, that "every aspect of this process will be open to scrutiny by the public and the press." Commissioner Ward is to be praised for his courage and integrity. This Commission should not be funded for ONE DAY past August 15 as it has not lived up to the public expectation that it would conduct itself with "integrity and fairness." Instead, bias and corruption have clouded too many of its proceedings and actions. The voters will not stand for this. Lawsuits will reveal the reasons for Commissioner Ward's courageous vote.

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This mail is sent via contact form on Citizens Redistricting Commission

Subject: Public Comment: 8 - Contra Costa

From: David Durant <[REDACTED]>

Date: Mon, 8 Aug 2011 04:21:22 +0000

To: [REDACTED]

From: David Durant <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Pleasant Hill and the RAMON District

Message Body:
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