

California Citizens Redistricting Commission

"Fair Representation—Democracy At Work!"



1017 L Street, PMB 563 / Sacramento / California / 95814 / Phone: (916)709-6303

The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

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Dear Mr. President:

In your State of the Union speech last night you emphasized the need to change the political process. One of the improvements you proposed was changing the redistricting process from one where the politicians pick their voters to one in which the voters pick their politicians.

In 2008 the voters of California created an independent body of citizens, not legislators, to draw district lines for the State Senate and Assembly. In 2010 the voters extended that authority to include Congressional districts. The California Citizens Redistricting Commission (CRC) is specifically designed to reflect the diversity of our state while ensuring a non-partisan process.

After a thorough vetting process in which 36,000 people applied, fourteen citizens including five Democrats, five Republicans and four Decline to State were selected. The resulting line-drawing produced a transparent process free of political influence and partisan rancor. It included over 60 public hearings held statewide and some 22,000 public comments that the Commission considered while drawing new districts. The maps certified by this heretofore unprecedented method were considered not only fair but resulted in districts in which the voters could indeed pick their politicians.

The process and results have received high praise. For example, in a case challenging Senate districts the California Supreme Court wrote unanimously, "...not only do the Commission-certified Senate districts appear to comply with all the constitutionally mandated criteria set forth in California Constitution, article XXI, the Commission certified Senate districts also are a product of what generally appears to have been an open, transparent and non-partisan redistricting process..." *Vandermost v. Bowen, 2012, 53 Cal.4th 421.*

If there is anything the Commission or I can do to advance the goal of ridding redistricting of gerrymandering or to share our experiences, we would be privileged to do so.

Most respectfully,

Stanley Forbes
Chair, California Citizens Redistricting Commission
stanley.forbes@crc.ca.gov
Office: (916)709-6303
Direct: (916)441-4400