PUBLIC MEETING

OF THE STATE OF ARIZONA

INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING COMMISSION

YUMA CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS

180 W. FIRST STREET

YUMA, ARIZONA 85364

JUNE 11, 2001

7:00 P.M.

CHRISTINE ANNE HARRINGTON
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PUBLIC MEETING

MS. MINKOFF: Ladies and gentlemen, if I can have your attention, please. First of all, I want to thank you all for coming out and helping us do a very, very important job for the State of Arizona. As you know, we are blazing new trails. This is the first time that redistricting in Arizona has been done by an independent citizens' commission. I'm Andi Minkoff and I am the vice chair of the commission. I'm from Phoenix, Arizona.

We are beginning the first of 23 outreach meetings around the State. Our purpose is to talk little and listen a lot because mostly we want to hear from you.

Before we begin the program, I just want to give you a few logistics. First of all, there is a sign-in sheet outside. Is it going around the room? Has everyone signed in? Okay. Great. If you haven't, please make sure you take care of that.

Also, later on in the program we very, very much want to hear from you. And if you want to

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speak, we need you to fill out a yellow speaker's sheet and give it to me and then I will call on people in the order that I have received these sheets. So if you have not filled one out, please, please do so. Can we get some from outside perhaps and bring them and pass them around and you can pass them into the center aisle and we will have somebody pick them up and give them to me.

I want to introduce some people to you. Give you a little bit of an idea of how the evening is going to go and then we are going to turn it over to you.

First of all, I mentioned my name. I am Andi Minkoff and I am the vice chair of the commission. We have some of our commission staff people here with us tonight. Standing in the back, Jose Rivera, who's one of the two attorneys who's working with us to make sure that we do everything right and that we don't make any mistakes; legally at least.

Our Executive Director, who's the person with the speaker sheets, Enrique Medina Ochoa, local favorite son come back to Yuma to see you all. And Teresa Pudilo, who is one of our Outreach Coordinators.

And finally the people who are going to help us understand the numbers and draw the lines and make it meaningful to the people of the State of

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Arizona, the people from National Demographics Corporation, who are our consultants.

In the back, Marion Porch, who is from Arizona -- from Glendale -- and who's working with us.

And then our two experts from California. What makes them experts is that they are from out of state. Dr. Florence Adams and Dr. Alan Heslop. They have a presentation for you and then we are going to open it up to your comments and once again, if you wish to speak, please fill out a speaker sheet, pass it towards the center aisle. We will pick them up and we will call on you. Thank you very much.

Dr. Heslop, Dr. Adams.

DR. HESLOP: Thank you.

MS. MINKOFF: I forgot one other thing. I was asked to please acknowledge the cooperation of local Channel 73. They are doing a live telecast and they are also doing a taped delay and it's a very, very important way of helping us get the message out to the people of this area. Thank you.

DR. HESLOP: Thank you. Commissioner Minkoff has said it exactly right. The purpose of this meeting is to hear from you rather than what you hear from us.

But to start it off, to make certain that we are all on the same page, the commission has

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developed a short power point presentation, which spells out some very basic things about redistricting. We think this is a non-controversial presentation. But just in case it's a little bit controversial, maybe someone will dim the lights.

We are here to talk about redistricting, which is to do with the drawing of district lines. A very important difference between this redistricting and previous redistricting -- not only in this state, but elsewhere -- is that citizens are vitally involved in it this time. There are very few state redistricting processes that involve citizens in the way that citizens will be involved in this redistricting process here in Arizona. And I think all of us who are involved believe that this is going to improve the process, but it does depend very much on you.

As Commissioner Minkoff has said, there will be 23 of these meetings. This is the first of the meetings. So in a very real sense you are our guinea pigs. We want to see whether this presentation works for you. If it doesn't, we will improve it for other groups.

One of the things that we are anxious to do is to have some of you -- those with a special interest -- take an interest in the process by citizen

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kits. So if you count yourself one of these people who want to play a special role in the redistricting process, be sure that before you leave this evening you give us your name and we will be certain to get you a citizen kit.

So we are talking about fairness. We are talking about making the process honestly represent the needs of the people of Arizona. And what do we wish to avoid? We wish to avoid gerrymanders. Yes, it is pronounced "gerry". The original "gerry", the Governor of Massachusetts, said his name like that. But it doesn't matter how you say it, what it's about is a manipulative use of the redistricting process for corrupt advantage.

Dirty politics has often been associated with redistricting, certainly not in Arizona alone, but in many states all around the country. And one of the purposes of Proposition 106 was to reduce gerrymandering in this state.

So a word or two about gerrymandering. Here is something that if you are my age, you have probably forgotten you ever saw, but you saw it and if you are perhaps 30, you will remember seeing it because it's in every high school civics book in the country. This is the original gerrymander drawn up in 1810 --

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1811 in Massachusetts when the Federalist party was beginning to loose strength and they figured that maybe by the manipulation of district boundaries, they could save a Federalist incumbent. And that's what they did.

And the Boston Globe -- the cartoonist from the newspaper drew it up, drew that district up, added some towns to make it look like a very weird creature, indeed, and that's the salamander. Now it's the gerrymander. And all gerrymanders are about basically the same thing. They involve an attempt to waste the votes of opponents to make your votes go further and your opponent's votes count less.

One of the things that has not been said about this gerrymander is that a little while later the incumbent for whom the district was drawn got defeated. So one of the protections against old-style gerrymanders was people misguessed; they didn't figure out the facts about the district. But along come computers and all of a sudden, it's possible to be very much more precise in the corrupt manipulation of data for political purpose.

Couple of very quick illustrations. Here is the first of them. Suppose that you are the majority party and you want to get more seats than you know you can get votes. In other words, you wish to waste the votes of the opposition party.

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There are basically two techniques of doing so. The first you see on the left is the technique of dilution. Perhaps there are enough minority party voters to constitute a majority in two districts. What is the majority party going to do? Well, the best thing to do is crack those concentrations, split them so that there simply aren't enough people. Yes, you cut them among four districts and in each of those districts the minority party gets maybe 30, 35, 40, even 45 percent of the vote, but never comes close to the 51 percent necessary. So all of those votes are wasted.

The alternative technique, if you can't do that, is packing. You take the concentrations of voters and you put them in as few districts as possible so that the minority party candidate wins with a huge surplus of votes and again those votes are wasted.

Now, I can see some people in this audience who know all about this. It's a very simple process, but it's a very unpleasant process too because it means that people at the end of the day don't get a fair chance of getting representation.

Let's go on, please. There are many different kinds of gerrymanders, but another gerrymander that we need to be particularly sensitive to is the

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1 racial or ethnic gerrymander. Now what I am about to
2 say is going to offend literally everyone in this
3 audience. So I apologize in advance, but you are going
4 to hear the truth. The truth is that both political
5 parties have used racial minorities for their own
6 political purposes.
7 How does this work? Well, take a look at
8 the left-hand side of the screen. There's a
9 concentration of Hispanic votes sufficient, let's say,
10 to elect an Hispanic representative, to create an
11 ethnically representative Hispanic district. But what
12 do we know about contemporary Hispanic voting behavior?
13 We know that they're disproportionately likely to vote
14 Democratic.
15 So if you concentrate Hispanics in that
16 district on the left, what have you effectively done?
17 You have wasted Democratic votes. So in many states
18 Democrats, when in power, do not create the district you
19 see on the left. Instead, they create the district that
20 you see on the right. They run a corridor through the
21 area of Hispanic population sufficient to pick up those
22 loyalist Democratic votes, but not sufficient -- not
23 sufficient to elect an Hispanic.
24 Now that makes the Democrats sound pretty
25 villainous, doesn't it? What about the Republicans?

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Well, Republicans have their own form of racial gerrymander because perhaps they wouldn't be content with the district on the left. They would pack even more Hispanics into that district to waste even more Democratic votes. Okay? Everyone get the picture? No one is without guilt in this process.

Well, enough on gerrymandering because we are putting that behind us, aren't we? So let's move on. Voters wanted to clean up this process; that's what that proposition that you voted for in this state last year is all about. You created a new entity; the Independent Redistricting Commission. And that new entity is responsible for leading a new kind of redistricting process.

The commission, chaired by Steve Lynn, is a bipartisan commission. Two Democrats, two Republicans. Mr. Lynn is an independent. This commission representative of different areas of the state is -- and I can tell you this as I believe I'm an unbiased observer; I have been watching the commission -- sincerely committed to leading this process in a wholly different direction and to fulfill the mandate of Proposition 106.

What does Proposition 106 say? Well, it says that the districts for congress and the state

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1 legislature are going to be established not by the State
2 legislature, but by the Independent Redistricting
3 Commission.
4 The first stage of the redistricting,
5 which is where we now are in this process, is the
6 creation of an equal population grid. Districts in
7 equal population grid.
8 Proposition 106 sets out a number of
9 goals. Those goals are the rules by which the
10 commission has to be guided in its work. There are some
11 rules that were already on the rule book because they
12 are part of the federal law because they apply to
13 Arizona. And so the first of these rules that you can
14 see is that districts must comply with the U.S.
15 Constitution and the U.S. Voting Rights Act. More about
16 the Voting Rights Act later on.
17 Congressional districts shall have equal
18 population to the extent practicable, and practicable
19 means very equal indeed. And State legislative
20 districts shall have equal population to the extent
21 practicable too.
22 Districts shall be geographically compact
23 and contiguous. That means their territories must be
24 linked, again to the extent practicable. Communities of
25 interest have to be respected. And a lot more about

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that this evening because basically these hearings have to do with community of interest.

To the extent practicable, district lines shall use visible geographic features, city, town and county boundaries and undivided census tracts. And then the lest of these is to the extent practicable, competitive districts shall be favored where to do so would create no significant detriment to the other goals.

So those are the rules under which the Redistricting Commission is functioning.

There is one rule of the old process that has gone out of the window; partisanship and incumbency. The commission is told that party registration and voting history data shall be excluded from the initial phase of the mapping process. They may be used to test maps for compliance with those other goals. And the places of residence of incumbents shall not be considered in the process.

So let's go on. Obviously the reason for redistricting is the census. There are new numbers. In April of 2001 the commission got its numbers. If you wondered why we have the schedule we have, why this is so tight, it has to do with the release of the census

25 data.

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The first thing to say about Arizona -- most obvious thing -- is that Arizona has been growing. Growing extremely rapidly. Indeed, to go on, if we look here, we can see that some counties even exceed the State's own enormously prolific growth.

So the commission now has its numbers. What are its tasks? I have already briefly mentioned them, but let me now get into them in a little more detail.

Development of districts in a grid-like pattern. What is a grid? Well, the commission began by looking at different dictionary definitions of "grid". They all emphasize some kind of geometric uniformity. Squareness was one of the principle aspects of the dictionary definitions.

So we looked at some of the grids that other people were coming up with and we discovered that a Phoenix newspaper was already into the field with some grids that the newspaper didn't particularly like and so we took a look at some of the grids that the Arizona Republic condemned. I'm not going to get into the details of these except to suggest that when you look at these -- and let's move through them rapidly -- when you look at these, you can see that there are problems with

25 just about anyway in which you devise a grid system.

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So let's say grids constitute quite a problem and we think that the commission has found an ingenious approach to the solution of this grid problem. So that's task number one; the creation of a grid.

Task number two; public hearings. This is the first of the 23 that we have. Why do we want public hearings? Well, the Independent Redistricting Commission is obliged by Proposition 106 to advertise this draft map constituted around a grid and then to hold hearings on it and to get citizen input. And that's precisely what we are doing.

We believe that citizens can make a big contribution to this process. A Citizen Input Form has been developed and I think everyone has a copy of the Citizen Input Form. If you don't have one, be sure to raise your hand and we will get you one. There is a gentleman in the back; a couple more. Couple more who needs Citizen Input Forms.

There are some questions on the Citizen Input Form, but first we ask you to provide your name, address and telephone number. Why do we do this? It's not a question of Big Brother trying to develop a data base. It's simply this: We wish to communicate with you. The commission will be responding to your

queries. It will want to tell you what has been done about those queries. So we ask you to provide your personal information.

Second question: Your major concern. What is your major concern to see settled in this redistricting process?

Question number three: What boundary lines? You can be as specific as you like. Indeed, the more specific you are, the better. What boundary lines would you like to see used in your area? This area? And not only what boundary lines would you like to see, but why you would like to see them.

Four: What areas, groups, neighborhoods do you think should not be divided? Absolutely not be divided. What are those self-conscience communities of interest that need to be protected; whose integrity needs to be sheltered in this redistricting process?

And number five: What information -- what information other than the obvious would you like us to take into account in drawing boundary lines in this area?

Now, if there is something else that you want to tell us on that form, please do so. And remember, if you have a special interest in the design of a district or lines on a map, be sure to let us know

and we will provide you with the materials to do that with a citizen kit.

What can you do with this input form? Well, perhaps the best thing to do is complete it here and now and give it to us here and now. If you want to take more time, you can complete it and send it to the commission through the mail. And, finally, the commission has a website and you can access that website to make your input if you wish.

What are we going to get out of these Citizen Input Forms and citizen kits? We are going to get Arizona units of representation. We are going to get the ideas with regards to community of interest and those other goals that are spelled out in Proposition 106 which will enable the commission to adapt the draft grid and to make of it a scheme of really effective, practical representation for all the people of Arizona.

We don't think that this is an impossible process. We think it's a practical process. We know that it is a process that has to fit certain criteria, certain rules. We must above all make certain that we comply with the federal mandates. Mandates with regard to population equality, the Voting Rights Act. We don't -- the plan will not become law in Arizona. We cannot make the plan fly without complying with those federal

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criteria and then those 106 requirements, which I've already spelled out.

So what is the schedule here? Well, last month the commission voted to begin the development of the grid and we did so in a way to take away any kind of question. The commission acted by luck, by chance. It was essentially a luck to decide the starting point for the plan. Commissioner Minkoff can comment on it in more detail, but my perception was that no process could have possibly been any fairer than the one that was used to develop the starting point for the grid.

The commission decided that rather than re-inventing the wheel, that they would use the geometry, the geography of the state already in existence. Arizona is divided into squares. It has its own political geometry. These are townships six miles long, six miles wide.

The commission decided to instruct its consultant to develop means of aggregating these townships in a fair, systematic way all across the state. These townships could be aggregated into intermediate and then into super townships with the task of building the grid-like districts. These would be the basic building blocks for the process.

25 Townships do, indeed, provide a grid-like

pattern. But those townships have to be adapted to the other requirement of Proposition 106; namely, equal population. And the only source for equal population is census geography. Census tracts are not geometrically uniform; they are not squares. So if you are going to adapt the township grid to census geography, there have to be some adjustments and those adjustments have, to a considerable extent, already been made.

So the schedule then. First two steps are already underway: The grid-like system, public hearings. Next: The development of the plans, more public hearings, final plans and then because it's part of the law, the final plans have to be submitted to the United States Department of Justice for compliance with the Voting Rights Act.

In the distance you heard clapping because I didn't expect that anyone here would want to clap. I'm sorry to be so dull. But as you can see, it's a fairly complicated process, but it is not so complicated that ordinary citizens, people like you and I, can participate in it and that's what we would like to do. And at this stage I am going to return the microphone to Commissioner Minkoff for her moderation of the proceedings.

MS. MINKOFF: Thank you, Dr. Heslop, and I

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will clap. Okay. A couple other bits of information. First of all, in case you didn't catch it from the Power Point Presentation, I want to give you our website. Our website is an interactive website; it changes daily. And there is space on the website for you to contact us and leave any message that you would like and I will tell you from experience already that those messages are passed on to us. My E-mail box is full on a daily basis reading comments from people around the State who are concerned about what we are doing and how we are doing it.

The website is www.azredistricting.org. Please visit it often; it does change regularly.

Secondly, if you want to contact the commission, let me give you our phone number. The first is the local phone number in Phoenix, which is area code 602 364-1350. And we have a toll free number that works throughout the State of Arizona; that's 1-866-864-7569. If you have any questions, any concerns, any comments, you want to speak to any of us; please use those numbers and give us a call.

Secondly, I just wanted to emphasize one point that Dr. Heslop made very, very clearly in his

24 presentation. We have prepared an initial grid. It is

25 a grid; it is not a map. It is a starting point and

nothing else. It is a series of districts whose only criterion is equal population.

The districts that we present to you as a draft map sometime towards the middle or later part of July are going to look very, very different from the initial grid because before we develop those -- that preliminary plan, we are going to take into consideration all the other criteria that Dr. Heslop mentioned and all of the input that you and the other people throughout Arizona give us at these meetings.

After that draft is prepared, we will present them to you and we will have a second round of hearings that allows you to react to the draft before we decide on a final plan.

So that's our schedule. It's going to be a very, very busy schedule. None of us are taking very many vacations this summer, but we are committed to doing the very best job that we can do for you and for all the people of Arizona.

Now I want to thank you for your patience and I want to turn the meeting over to you. If there are any speaker sheets that I do not have, would you please pass them to the center aisle and let's get them and I am going to call on you essentially just in the order that I got them.

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I would ask you to come up to the podium and speak into the microphone because this is being recorded and we can't pick up your voice unless you speak into the microphone.

The first speaker slip that I have is Ermila Jolley.

MS. JOLLEY: Good evening. My name is Ermila Jolley and I'm with the Hispanic Forum here in the Yuma community. My concern is that Yuma County now is at 50.5 percent Hispanic votes in population. So that I would like to see the entire county intact. And since our concerns are predominantly with the border communities, I would like to see that the grid that you propose consider other border communities rather than to take in Mojave County because I think it's important that we continue our relationship with our International Border. Thank you.

MS. MINKOFF: Thank you, Ms. Jolley. I would like to point out to all of you who speak tonight that your comments are not only being recorded, but they are being taken down by our consultants and they will be presented to us in written form. So that we will not lose anything of what you are telling us here tonight.

The next speaker is Pete Young.

MR. YOUNG: Hi. I'm Pete Young; I am retired

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and I have no agency. I have two questions. I understood the other day that the five commissioners -- they picked four of them and then the four of them picked the fifth one. Is that true?

MS. MINKOFF: That's correct.

MR. YOUNG: Why is that?

MS. MINKOFF: That's the way --

MR. JOSE RIVERA: You know, this is a public comment period. So you are really limited to what you can say. Because we do not have --

MR. YOUNG: Will I be given an answer to my question?

MS. MINKOFF: I think you have been given an answer to your question in the materials that were passed out to you this evening. There is a copy of Proposition 106 in your folder and you will find it in there. It's very clear.

MR. YOUNG: Okay. I forgot what my other question was.

MS. MINKOFF: Okay, Mr. Young. Thank you. And if -- you know, we gave you a lot of material and I'm sure that you haven't had a chance to read it all yet, but the answers to a lot of your questions are in there. And also on our website there are some FAQ's -- some frequently asked questions that will help you and

our website is also available in English or in Spanish.

If you have a question, you know, you can give us comments, you can also ask us questions on the website and we will get back to you with the answer to your questions.

The next speaker that I have is Bill Barenholtz, is it? Did I even come close?

MR. BARENHOLTZ: Sure.

MS. MINKOFF: Good.

MR. BARENHOLTZ: My name is Bill Barenholtz. Just a couple of things I would like to say. When I first saw the original grid, it seems very fair. It seems very reasonable. And I would just hope that you folks would continue to -- as you go through this process -- continue to be fair and reasonable to everybody as again you go forward.

The Colorado River cuts off Arizona with California and Nevada. I would strongly urge you to consider the Colorado River as the growth engine to Arizona and form a district as it goes up the river to hopefully take care of the river and protect Arizona's natural resource because that is one resource that we cannot afford to tamper with.

Also the final thing I would like to say is there is a tremendous amount of illegal immigration.

As you know, we have people dying in the desert and because of that, as you look at the initial grid, it appears to me that there are two districts that will cover the border, the southern border with Mexico. I would strongly urge you to consider making that three districts; including all of Yuma County and then some part of Pima and -- well, Santa Cruz County and then the furthest county on the right.

This immigration problem is terrific and we have to have somebody in the United States government on a federal level that will look at this and try and help these folks and stop all this illegal immigration.

I want to thank you very much for your time.

MS. MINKOFF: Thank you for your remarks, Mr. Barenholtz. Next slip that I have is from Ross Hieb.

MR. HIEB: I have nothing to say at this time.

MS. MINKOFF: Well, thank you for filling this out anyway. Gee, and I thought we had so many. Some of them are blank. The next one is from William Michael Smith.

MR. SMITH: Thank you for being here and giving us an opportunity to take an initial look at the grids and what you are doing here.

A couple of comments. For most of us

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this is the first time we have seen this and it's very difficult to come in and comment on your work product having seen it for just a few minutes before we are asked to comment on it. That doesn't mean it wasn't available, but for most of us this is the first time we have had a chance to look at it.

So I would hope that we would have future opportunity to make further comments and I assume we can on your website and at other meetings that we might attend and just maybe you might come back to Yuma. We would love to have you again when we are further along in the process and we have all had an opportunity to pay a little more attention to what proposals you have.

One of the things that I have consistently heard throughout the county and I suspect it's due to the fact that Yuma County -- as some people think -- we are bit isolated. I like to think we are in the middle of everything; that we are the hub of the wheel, so to speak. But we are in the southwest corner and Yuma County is one of the original four territorial counties and I suspect our forefathers divided the State even in those days in a fashion during territorial days that represented the economic and population centers of the state as they existed then.

In some respects that hasn't changed

very

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much. It's just gotten bigger. And Yuma County has been a -- even though we were split to some extent in half, as it were, not in population, but in geography -- what is left of Yuma County, the new Yuma County still maintains the basic historical ties throughout the county. It's a highly urbanized county. Population areas probably only make up two or 300 thousand acres. The rest is mostly federal and state lands that are sparsely populated, if populated at all.

So those of us that exist here in the county, all 140,000 or 150,000 of us, have a lot of close economic and social ties. We are a community that's changing and in some ways we have a lot of immigrants, new citizens that we are very proud of. We have a lot of concerns along the border area. Problems that are very similar to many of the other border counties.

And I'm not sure yet what's the best way to go with this, but looking at your initial draft at least as far as the congressional districts are concerned, it appears that you are attempting to split -- or at least the initial grid -- is the split of Yuma County. And if you look at the map behind you, that represents 95 percent of all the population in Yuma County. You are splitting it right down the middle and

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you are dividing our community.

I oppose that. People I have spoke to oppose it and I think most of the comments you will hear tonight would oppose that. It will divide our community regardless of whether we are Republican or Democrat. It will divide us in a way that I think will be very detrimental to the community and I would hope that that factor would have some substantial bearing.

You will find that we don't have a whole lot in common in many ways with some of the other areas that we are tied to in this initial grid. There are many, many issues in common with the other communities that are a little further east along the Mexican Border or the International Boundary, but they may be too far away to include and I guess that's okay if it can't be done.

But I would ask you at least to seriously consider keeping Yuma County intact. Whether you go east or a little bit northeast or whether you go north. However you go with it, I think you need not divide probably the third most rapid growing area of the state and a very closely-knit community that's very urbanized and splitting it in two.

It will have untold social and economic impacts that I think far outweigh the necessity of

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getting this thing in a perfect square or grid. Thank you.

MS. MINKOFF: Thank you very much, Mr. Smith. The next slip that I have is from Robert Cannell.

DR. CANNELL: I'm Representative Robert Cannell and it's nice to see you again.

MS. MINKOFF: Nice to see you and I'm sorry I mispronounced your name.

DR. CANNELL: That's alright. I put my name in just to make sure that all my thoughts were covered and many of them already have been covered. I am a State Representative at this point and first year. I'm just getting to learn my district, but I think there is a natural -- for legislative districts -- a natural community of interest between Yuma and La Paz County. We go way back. I think there are many of the county elected officials interact well. I think probably you will find out when you go to Lake Havasu how the other half feels, but there is a little bit of Mojave County in our district that's been kind of separated out and perhaps don't like that situation.

But from a state level we have a district that's competitive between Republican and Democrat. More of a bipartisan-type district and I would like to see that stay to some extent if possible.

As far as congressional districts, you know, our frustration has been trying to have more of a say in the election of a congressional candidate and how we do that. I think, the main issues that would affect us again are border issues, but also agriculture is important. And we are already separated from La Paz County in the congressional district. So I don't see that as a problem for a congressional district, but I think you need to take the agricultural factor as well as our border issue factor when you make that legislative district. Thanks.

MS. MINKOFF: Thank you, Dr. Cannell. Next slip is Lucy Shipp.

MS. SHIPP: Good evening. I am Lucy Shipp. I do serve on the Yuma County Board of Supervisors, but I want to emphasize for the record I am not authorized this evening to speak for the Board. I am speaking only for myself. I would like to welcome you to Yuma and thank you so much for starting here. It's really nice to be on the list. So often we hear that the State is going to have public hearings and they go to Phoenix, Tucson and Flagstaff. So I would like to welcome you to Yuma and thank you for coming.

I will summarize two short thoughts. One is: Please do not split Yuma County. I saw it's one

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the your criteria to honor city, town and county boundaries. Please do not split Yuma County. We need to be a whole; both legislatively and congressionally.

I concur with Dr. Cannell. Legislatively we are very comfortable where we are with La Paz County as a legislative district. But congressionally on the federal level our issues are border issues. The issues of NAFTA and trade and ports and the immigrant problem and the cost of the immigrant problem both in law enforcement and medical care and congressionally I believe we are much stronger. We need the support of our border community counties and share their problems.

And I thank you very much.

MS. MINKOFF: Thank you, Ms. Shipp. The next speaker slip that I have is Jones Osborn. Mr. Osborn.

MR. OSBORN: Thank you for hearing me tonight. I am Jones Osborn, a registered voter in Yuma County and a member of the Yuma County Redistricting Committee. But I am not speaking on behalf of the Redistricting Commission tonight. I am speaking only for myself.

Most of what I intended to say has already been said. One is I hope that it will not be necessary to split Yuma County. Yuma County now has 160,028 residents, according to the 2000 Census. That's

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very close to a legislative district. It's short about 10,000. So I would think that Yuma and all our parts of La Paz would make a natural legislative district.

As far as community of interest is concerned, you have already heard -- and I am happy to repeat -- our interests lie along the border. There is the social economic interests of the employment, the agriculture, the maquiladoras, the border crossing and those problems you've already heard about.

So we are comfortable in our present congressional district and we hope that it will not be necessary to split us up in any fashion.

Thank you very much.

MS. MINKOFF: Thank you, Mr. Osborn. The next slip I have is from Russ Jones.

MR. JONES: Hello. My name is Russ Jones. I live in Yuma, recently annexed, but I have my place of business has always been down in San Luis and south county.

My concerns -- and I was noticing your presentation about those two subjects -- packing and dilution. And wouldn't want to dilute our emerging Hispanic population in this area, which splitting the City of Yuma in half would do, or possibly packing by concentrating our Indian population who we need to

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consider in the southern part of the way you are proposing your redistrict.

I know that you are to be congratulated on your grids and the ingenious approach to taking -- to dividing this with the benefit of modern technology and computers, but I don't think you can do that in a vacuum without taking into consideration the full context of the history that an area has.

And I would contend that we are an emerging, evolving community. Initially our interests in common would be the Colorado River, water rights. Water is gold and we have a lot of things in common having to do with water, and our farming is still 30 or plus percent of our economy in this area. And the emerging Hispanic population, particularly with proximity to Mexico and maquiladoras and the growth and the issues down there.

So I think you have to take both of those things into consideration. And the only way I differ really from some of the others speakers is that you should maintain that continuity either along the Colorado River or along the southern border because we have both of those interests and it's a common interest we have with those immediate areas and our voice then would be a lot better or more strongly heard, we feel,

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in Washington.

Thank you.

MS. MINKOFF: Thank you, Mr. Jones. I have just one more speaker slip. Before I call on that individual, I just wanted to make sure there is no one else. Two more speakers. Is there anyone else who has not filled one out? Okay. Alright. Thank you.

The next speaker is Phil Townsend.

MR. TOWNSEND: My name is Phil Townsend and I am a resident of Yuma County. I also serve on the Yuma County Redistricting Commission. So I can appreciate what you have gone through to get to a starting point and come up with a preliminary rough draft.

Again, like most everybody here tonight, I would like to urge you not to split Yuma County. Yuma County has always been kind of a stepchild of every district that we have ever been in and we would like to have a little larger voice than what we have had in the past.

We have got a lot of diverse interests in Yuma County; not of which the least is agriculture. This current first draft I noticed divides several irrigation districts and agricultural interests that are in Yuma County and dilutes their ability to have a united voice as well as it divides the minority

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interests of Yuma County. And I would urge you to take that into consideration as you are doing your work.

Water is our most critical issue in Yuma and to keep as a voice that understands the Colorado River issues would be very important to us.

So thank you very much.

MS. MINKOFF: Thank you, Mr. Townsend. The next slip that I have is from Enrique Castillo.

MR. CASTILLO: First of all, I would like to welcome you to Yuma, the greatest part of the state. If you haven't been here before, you have a lot to see yet and I urge you to go drink a little water from the Colorado because I guaranty you'll come back.

We would like to -- I think many of the issues today have been addressed as far as the needs -- the agricultural needs, the water needs. I am here to deal with an issue that's very close and sensitive. Since 1912 in Yuma County the Hispanic population has never been represented. It is only in recent history that we have begun to feel our muscle, our voting muscle being exercised. And to split the county would certainly push us back to 1912 and I don't think there is an Hispanic in this community that would want to be back there in 1912.

So I would urge you to please not split

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the county. You have seen the many issues that we have at hand dealing from business to agriculture to the proximity of the river, La Paz County. But a big issue that we have is that we have finally begun to feel that we are represented both at the state -- local and state and federal level and we sure would hate to lose that now.

Thank you.

MS. MINKOFF: Thank you, Mr. Castillo. Okay. Now I have just one more speaker slip. Are there any others? Alright. Thank you then. Monsignor O'Keefe.

MONSIGNOR O'KEEFE: Thank you very much for giving us the opportunity to address you tonight and to listen with interest. My name is Monsignor O'Keefe and I am the pastor of Immaculate Conception Church and I'm also one of the founding members of the Yuma Interfaith Group.

And there was a very, very key component that has been left out here tonight. We have two marvelous Department of Defense installations. We do not need them split. If I looked at one of those districts, I see that one is in one district and the other would be in the other district. And I would appeal to you to continue to leave Yuma County as a unit. And I think that the 10 or 15,000 that we need to

make that congressional district can be picked up.

This community is coming together. This community has made great strides. If you split us again, it's going to do untold damage to the psyche of a lot of people and especially to the emerging Hispanic population.

So I would urge you consider those things and most especially consider the two outstanding Defense Department installations that are key components for the security of this country.

Thank you very much.

MS. MINKOFF: Thank you, Monsignor O'Keefe. Is there anyone else who wishes to speak? Well, let me just -- I want to thank you all, all of you who spoke tonight for your comments. You were very clear, you were very concise, very easy for us to understand what your concerns are. Those concerns have been recorded; they will not be left in this room I can promise you. I am only one commissioner. There is another meeting going on tonight in Lake Havasu City and another member of the commission is there. I obviously cannot hear what they are saying there and he cannot hear what you are saying here and so our consultants are going to put all of the input together and share it with us and I thank you for making yours so clear, so concise and so

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easy to understand.

After we complete the 23 meetings, we will then be drawing draft districts for legislative and congressional districts. And I really want to remind you that the grids that some of you have seen, they are not draft districts. Those are just groups of equal population, townships and/or census tracts. That's it. Nothing else was taken into consideration in drawing up those districts. And we recognize that changes have to be made and your comments tonight let us know what is important to Yuma County and that's very important to us.

We will be drawing a draft plan for the congressional districts and a draft plan for the legislative districts and those will be ready probably sometime the middle of August. If you want to keep updated, please check our website. As we develop draft maps, before we even approve the final draft, we are going to have some draft maps that are going to be posted on our website. You will be able to look at them. You will be able to tell us whether that looks good to you and why; or if it looks bad to you and why and we really need your input. So sign onto that website early and often and please look at what we have there and if draft maps are posted -- and obviously they

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1 won't be for awhile because we are still collecting
2 input -- but please give us comments on those draft
3 maps.
4 After we adopt one draft plan for the
5 State for both congressional and legislative districts,
6 I want to remind you that we are going to be doing this
7 all over again. And at that point we really need you to
8 get down to the nitty-gritty and to be very specific.
9 This line is drawn in the right place, this line is
10 drawn in the wrong place. You have met the needs of
11 this community of interest, you have not met the needs
12 of this community of interest. And please come back to
13 our second round of meetings and tell us whether we have
14 done a real good job with our draft. Because if you
15 tell us we have done a real good job, that draft plan
16 may become a final plan. And if you tell us that we
17 missed some things, then there is still time to change
18 it before we adopt a final plan in August.
19 So, please, as they say in the Western
20 Union commercials, keep in touch. Yes, sir.
21 MR. SMITH: Just by way of comment -- and this
22 is not intended as a criticism, but maybe a suggestion
23 or an inquiry. On the draft maps that you produce, I
24 assume they will be similar in -- something similar to
25 what we are looking at here and you have the townships

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here. I know what your intent is in putting in some numbers as far as range and townships so people can more easily follow where your lines are. I'm not looking for specific legal descriptions, but at least some reference by range and township that we normally see on a quadrangle map or some larger map that the government puts out. So most folks are familiar with those range and townships so that we can clearly see where the lines are drawn.

That's all I have.

MS. MINKOFF: Thank you.

MAYOR MARILYN YOUNG: If you are concluded, I would like to say again thank you for coming to Yuma. We appreciate your effort on our behalf and we look forward to seeing you again in July.

MS. MINKOFF: Thank you. We will be back. Thank you for all for coming, really.

(The meeting was concluded at 8:05 p.m.)

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I, CHRISTINE ANNE HARRINGTON, having been duly appointed as official court reporter herein, do hereby certify that the foregoing pages numbered 1 through 40 inclusive constitute a full, true and accurate transcript of all proceedings had in the above matter, all done to the best of my skill and ability.

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CHRISTINE ANNE HARRINGTON
CERTIFIED COURT REPORTER
ARIZONA CSR #50128