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INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING COMMISSION
1100 West Washington Street
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Friday, July 22, 2011

Statement on attorney general's investigation:

The Arizona Independent Redistricting Commission (AIRC) operates with transparency whenever possible. Indeed, the reason Arizona voters created it in 2000 was to remove back-room, partisan politics from the drawing of congressional and legislative districts, which previously was the prerogative of state legislators.

To head off any taint of politics, the commissioners decided this year to use the state procurement process to select mapping and legal consultants. That process is designed to ensure fairness. Unfortunately, state procurement rules require confidentiality in reviewing documents submitted by candidates, which led to far more executive sessions than the commissioners desired. Once selections were made, however, the procurement file was opened to the public and the most relevant parts were posted on the commission's website, www.azredistricting.org.

The commissioners followed advice from the state Attorney General's Office in choosing its Republican and Democratic legal counsels, and those counsels joined the attorney general in advising the AIRC on its selection of a mapping consultant.

As an independent commission working in a highly partisan environment, we know that some interested observers are unhappy with the mapping and legal consultants the commission selected. Some of those critics have contacted their state elected officials. However, a majority on the commission believe that it made the best decisions to advance the redistricting process. We believe those decisions were fair and will produce equitable maps that can earn the Justice Department approval required under the federal Voting Rights Act.

It the duty of the Attorney General's Office to make certain Arizona laws are followed. Everybody working with the commission will cooperate fully with the initial investigation he has announced. In the meantime, AIRC will continue to hold public hearings around the state to find out how the citizens of Arizona want to be represented in the Congress and Legislature.

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