

**Summary of Public Hearing
of the
State of Arizona Independent Redistricting Commission**

Location: Phoenix
Phoenix Union High School District

Date: August 25, 2001
6:30 p.m.

In Attendance:

Commissioners:

Andrea Minkoff, Vice Chairman
Joshua Hall
James R. Huntwork

Commission Attorneys:

Lisa T. Hauser

NDC Staff:

Florence Adams

A total of 154 persons attended the meeting held at Phoenix Union High School District offices and 30 of them addressed the Commission or submitted statements for the record.

Strong support was expressed by a representative of the Minority Coalition for Fair Redistricting for both the legislative and Congressional draft maps. Adjustment to the Congressional map to exchange territory in the Biltmore area for South Glendale was suggested. Later in the hearing an Arcadia area citizen echoed the sentiment regarding the Biltmore area. The Coalition representative also requested that the legislative map be adjusted to tie El Mirage and old Surprise with District M using a strip along the Aqua Fria. The precedent of odd shapes in the proposed plans and the existence of a strong community of interest were noted as justifications for such a move. The Coalition also expressed dissatisfaction with District W and requested that the border towns from Douglas to Nogales be included in one district.

The issue of competitiveness was addressed by a representative of the Democratic Party. He stated that the Voting Rights Act does not guarantee a particular result but rather a fair process. He stated, as well, that "maximization of minority districts" is not required under the "retrogression principle" and that newly created districts do not necessarily have to be "majority-minority." He indicated that the Democratic Party supports "minority-majority districts," but that Section 5 and Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act do not require them. He also warned against packing and suggested that the configuration of the draft Congressional districts "results in some packing." He mentioned two Congressional districts and a number of legislative districts that the Democratic Party believes could be made more competitive. Finally, he questioned the

size of District C in the Congressional draft plan, stating that “a candidate is going to have to be in three, maybe four media markets...an issue...three courts took into account in the Symington case.” Following his remarks, there was a discussion of the criteria involved in establishing competitiveness. A further seven speakers stressed their hope that districts could be made more competitive. Two speakers addressed problems of attempting to achieve competitive districts: one suggested that competitiveness would be difficult to achieve given the need to keep communities of interest together and adherence to the Voting Rights Act; a second suggested that attempts to create competitive districts would lead to gerrymandering.

Several speakers addressed the issue of the southwest valley school districts, one suggesting that three districts (Murphy, Issac and Riverside) share a community of interest and that they be kept intact in one district. A speaker from Issac School District reported that a small portion of the district had been divided in the legislative plan and asked that they be made whole in one district.

A dozen speakers referred to the Westwood Village area of Phoenix and their concern that it be united with Encanto Village and the other historic areas of Phoenix. The speakers stated that the area from 19th Avenue to 23rd Avenue and between Thomas Road and Indian School represents a group of unique brick homes built by Alfred Anderson called Westwood Village. The majority of speakers believed that the logical boundary line for the western side of District O should be I-17 (the Black Canyon Freeway). One speaker stated that the western boundary actually jogs over to 24th Avenue “in a couple of spots;” therefore, the I-17 is the logical boundary line. Another speaker stated that the Westwood Village area has been represented by a district west of I-17 for the last twenty years. He stressed the need to be careful in adjusting the boundaries because areas south of Thomas and north of Indian School are minority areas and that moving them could change district N from a majority-minority district.

A representative of the Phoenix Historic District expressed appreciation that the historic districts were brought together. He suggested that a small amount of work needs to be done in the Encanto Village area and stated that he would provide one more map to the Commission.

Two speakers from the Arcadia area of Phoenix made several recommendations for trades of specific territory in and around Arcadia, citing the need to keep like communities together.

A speaker from Glendale expressed concern that the legislative district line divided his community at Maryland Avenue. He also took exception to the Hispanic Coalition’s suggestion that South Glendale be moved into a Southeast Phoenix district and that old Surprise and El Mirage be tied with southeast Phoenix.

NOTE: These summaries and excerpts were developed for the Independent Redistricting Commission by its consultant, National Demographics Corporation, and have not been reviewed by the Commission prior to posting. They are not official statements of the Commission and represent only the consultant's best effort to identify major themes and highlights of each public hearing. The excerpts were chosen by the consultant in an effort to identify common themes and especially noteworthy statements.

These materials are placed here for citizen review and with the hope that they will encourage comments. Comments can be made on the form provided.