

Excerpts From the Independent Redistricting Commission Public Hearing at Mesa Community College in Mesa, AZ: August 30, 2001

1. Philip Amorosi: "I live in Tempe. I reviewed the latest district map for Tempe. Last time I spoke for a united Tempe, one district. I see Tempe is still split.... This is unfortunate given the community of interest in the new District Q. Mainly Tempe would be fairer in voter registration.... I still don't understand why the district has to jog north-south. Can't it go straight across Osborn and Thomas in the north, southeast, go across Guadalupe or Elliott?... and also, that the district kind of jogs out at 64th Street in the north side instead of going straight up 64th Street?... Has anyone looked into flopping the two southern portions west so the side drops down to Elliott on the east side of Guadalupe? Does this bring the two major parties closer in competitiveness, even to the slightest things, closer in competitiveness?"

On the Congressional side, things are dismal. The difference, five percent in the state, the two parties, I wish every Congressional District were that close. The average difference in the current plan is 19 percent. In Congressional District E, it is 18 percent. Only two out of four, I'd agree, out of eight Congressional Districts, are competitive. That's not fair."

2. Councilman Joe Durbala. "I'm representing the City Council in Apache Junction. We're very thankful you at least took the consideration to keep us in one district. We're a little upset at having to go way down to the Cochise County part of the area. We'd still overemphasize most of the residents attended Pinal County. It's large enough, diverse enough, they have their own agenda, being a rural community, being stuck together instead of being split up.... If still short on population numbers, people recommended we look at taking part of the unincorporated part of Maricopa County up to Sossoman, adding that for population into our area."

3. Eric Emmert, Vice President of Tempe Chamber of Commerce. "Contrary to what the media claims are the wishes of Tempe, the Chamber believes Tempe should be split into two districts. Further, the Tempe Chamber believes the dividing line should be US-60 as the dividing line between the north and south districts."

4. Jerry D. Walker. "I want to express the great pleasure with the district map you've given us for the Legislative District draft map marked area S. I think it's extremely appropriate, and we're rather happy with what you've done. I ask you to please keep it the way it is."

5. Mark Thompson. "Incumbents are virtually guaranteed tenure in one district of Tempe.... Consider the lines of August 10th. Tempe's interests are south of highway 60, west of 101.... You can't get to North Tempe from South Tempe."

6. John McComish, President of Ahwatukee Foothills Chamber and Ahwatukee Foothills Planning Committee. "And speaking for Ahwatukee, the Foothills Committee, our

primary goal was to remain whole. We are a community of interest. So far in the various iterations I've seen on maps, you have kept us whole. We are very pleased with that. We're in what is labeled District T on the map. I have only one suggestion for refinement. That is if any changes are to be made in District T, I ask you to consider the Kyrene School District.... It comes close to encompassing the Kyrene School District. I think its a good thing. If the maps are to change, I ask you to consider moving the line, the Tempe line north so it would be somewhere north of Guadalupe, which would then require the Chandler line to be moved a little west which would be around Price Road, which somebody earlier spoke of as the 101 Freeway."

7. Kevin Adam. "It's our hope if there are, again, aren't major revisions done (affecting Mesa), if there are, the major concern is the population of 38,000, proposed District U, as well as 40,000 in District V, aren't diminished any. If you are going to make any changes, it would be our desire that those are increased slightly, possibly at the expense of the Mesa population, and that's where we have a very strong majority. The same could be said for the Congressional Districts as well. We are very satisfied with the lines that were drawn for that."

8. Dale Despain. "I have a record in the Tempe Elementary School District for government relations. The board has discussed this matter and have a consensus that the Tempe School District should be in one Legislative District. Legislative District Q, as you have defined this, does this very well. There has been some discussion of the Kyrene School District and Tempe School District, the border between those two districts is Guadalupe Road. If you were to make divisions in Tempe, Guadalupe Road would be the road to sever the elementary districts, I believe. So we would hope you would consider that as you make your decisions. If you were able to move up the freeway, then that would split the elementary district and put us into two districts and we would not be able to have the support that would be necessary within the Legislature."

9. State Representative Laura Knaperek. "I just need to bring to your attention one issue, and that is where you actually divide Tempe on the south side at Rural, you have divided three different schools."

10. Dean Anderson, Chandler City Councilman. "The Commission will be making decisions soon about changes to Legislative Districts in other areas of our state. I hope that these changes will not cause you to alter the proposed districts in Chandler. The Commission has found an excellent solution to the very difficult problem of dividing our community."

11. Fran Emerson. "I hope you will maintain the proposed districts as you finalize the redistricting plan. If you do have to make changes, I hope you will not push the dividing line between our eastern and western Legislative Districts back to Price freeway. That wouldn't put enough Chandler residents in the western district."

12. Fritz Tuffli. "I think you listened to the input and have taken into account the human interests and made good decisions in terms of changes.... This unites communities of interest much more so than the original map, no question about it. We're much more closely associated in demographics, language, income levels, and everything else."

13. Bill Regner. "If you can, (regarding Tempe District) drop the southern boundary to Warner Road. If you can, or if you must, not if you can, lower the northern boundary no lower than McDowell. If you can't do that, don't do anything else, leave it the way it is, the way you have it now. It's not perfect, but it certainly, you know, gives us a lot more as a community of interest than the previous plan that was being proposed."

14. Eileen Fellner. "So I would like to say that keeping the minority districts unified has its advantages in some way, but protecting minority voting rights is not going to have an effect on the overall direction the state will go, because just those areas that have minority majorities, there's not enough of them to have real clout on a statewide basis. So it would be as much in the interests of the minorities to have more competitive districts as it would for the state as a whole."

15. Carol Owens. "Mr. Durbala of Apache Junction suggested moving Legislative S west of Sossoman. I disagree with that. Since I live in the area, I feel any shift, if made, should be to the east and include Apache Junction LD S to make the area more politically competitive. And we're dealing with politics here."

16. Gary Christensen. "I do agree US-60 should be the dividing line. I point out while I fall on the Q side south of Baseline, therefore I share several districts, V, S, and R. In particular, I'd have very minor changes where US-60 and Baseline seem to be kind of convoluted there. There's quite a disparity when you are just across the freeway and you are only three blocks that are in a district that -- on the north side or south side of the freeway and to move the line to the freeway just makes more sense. It's a natural geographical barrier that divides the neighborhoods and interests."

17. Kirk Adams. "To turn a district, Legislative District S, into a competitive district is equivalent to turning water into wine. It's just not going to happen. But my intention tonight is to encourage the Commission to continue to stand by the goals outlined in Prop. 106, that is I ask you to disregard, I'd ask you not to give into those that would have you disregard the clearly-stated priorities of 106 and thus submit to intimidation of one self-interested set of voices.... So I urge you not to be swayed by the ranking editorials, belligerent threats of lawsuits. Your job is to draw the lines, not to artificially politicize the landscape. Those that elevate the competitiveness to highest factor in the process are not interested in the law or welfare of the process but are interested in their own self-interest and in gaining more power. In essence, these critics are asking you for a handout. They simply want you to give it to them, to guarantee their political success."

18. Dennis Cahill. "Community of interest? Competitiveness? I believe if you have competitiveness, you will rely on community of interest to elect your officials. I believe that strongly."

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.

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