

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

Location: Glendale
Glendale City Hall

Date: September 12, 2001
6:30 p.m.

In Attendance:

Commissioners: Steve Lynn, Chairman
Andrea Minkoff, Vice Chairman
Joshua Hall
James Huntwork

Commission Attorneys:
Lisa T. Hauser
Jose Rivera

NDC Staff:
Florence Adams
Doug Johnson

Several speakers commented on the need for increased competitiveness in the draft plans. A representative of the League of Women Voters said that the focus of her organization was on improving voter participation through competition; another said that competition would increase the quality of campaigns, forcing candidates to work harder to present their case; another said that non-competitive districts could result in stifling communities; and yet another noted that in non-competitive districts the primary, typically dominated by partisan activists, becomes the only true arena of competition, with unfortunate policy results. The comment was also made that minorities would be better served in competitive districts, because they could become influential as swing voters. A representative of the Democratic Party said that Proposition 106 did not require competitiveness to be the last of its mandates to be addressed; and he noted that the Democratic Party previously had submitted maps proving that competitiveness could be taken into account from the start without significant detriment to other criteria. Having sharply criticized draft Congressional District C, this speaker suggested changes to make draft Congressional B competitive within 5 percent, while retaining a 65 percent minority population in district D. From a different perspective, however, a Republican resident of Arcadia complained that the result of a more competitive district would be to fragment his community; and he insisted that the language of Proposition 106, which put competitiveness last, did not support such an approach.

A Maricopa County supervisor representing the Coalition for Fair Redistricting, presented proposed legislative districts "to provide for competitive districts where possible" that would also protect minority voting rights -- goals that they claimed not to

be mutually exclusive. The maps create four districts with more Republican registration, three with more Democratic registration, and one that is evenly split.

A representative of a Congressional office presented adjusted Congressional district maps that would remove the Biltmore estates from draft District D and make an adjustment in south Glendale. He sharply criticized the draft Legislative districts for central Phoenix, drawing attention to an area -- "bounded by Camelback on the north, I-17 north and south, I-10 east and west, and 48th St. to the east" -- that is heavily minority in population and that lacks community with the areas with which it has been linked in the draft map.

A citizen group, the Coalition for Downtown Competitive Districts, charging that none of the five districts in Maricopa County is competitive, presented a district to replace draft Congressional District B: it would encompass all of Tempe, downtown south Scottsdale, east Phoenix, Sky Harbor Airport, the Sunnyslope area and over to the eastern boundary of Glendale. This approach was endorsed by a Phoenix City Council member as combining Voting Rights Act protections, community of interest and natural boundaries with genuine competitiveness. Noting that the configuration reduced the minority population of draft Congressional District D from 70 percent to 65 percent, he emphasized that neighboring districts gained significantly in minority influence while also becoming more competitive. He commented, also, that the configuration would add to the influence of independent voters. A resident of Tempe supported this concept and commented that the results of a recently held election proved the community of interest between north and south Tempe.

A representative of the City of Glendale, speaking for the mayor, said that it includes three different communities of interest: north Glendale being more rural; old town Glendale having strong Hispanic ties; and the south and north central areas having links to metropolitan Phoenix. Although acknowledging that the draft Legislative map improves on Glendale's current situation, and urging no change in draft Legislative District H, he asked that the old town community be reunited; and he urged that west Glendale be put in a single district. Criticizing draft Congressional district A as in conflict with Proposition 106 criteria, he asked that this district be returned to NDC's originally presented version. One resident of Glendale commented in general support of the city's presentation; but another resident said that a united Glendale was preferable.

Several Sun City residents argued against putting all Sun City communities in the same Legislative district, arguing that it would radically reduce their representation; and, instead, they pressed for a division between two districts. In opposition, however, a resident of Sun City West claimed that the common interests of the retirement communities justified placing them in a single district.

A resident of Yavapai County, asserting that it is no longer rural, said that it should be linked with western Arizona and the northwest portions of Maricopa County, which are facing similar issues. He suggested that changes sought by the City of Glendale could assist in this reconfiguration.

Other recommendations on the draft maps included the following: adjustment of draft districts P and N to recognize that 51st Avenue will one day be a freeway linking Ahwatukee to the I-10; reunification of Yavapai County (excluding only Sedona); linkage of La Paz and Yuma Counties (by accepting a five percent deviation in population); an exchange of a small area between draft Legislative districts I and N to place the latter entirely within Phoenix; no change in draft Legislative district M (which keeps the Fowler School District together); placement of Westwood Village in draft Legislative district O, but placement of Greenway Terrace and the estates neighborhood in draft district N; and linkage of Sahuarita and Green Valley in a single Congressional District.

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.