

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

Location: Show Low Interactive
Northland Pioneer College

Date: September 15, 2001
3:00 p.m.

In Attendance:

Commissioners: Joshua Hall
Daniel Elder

Commission Attorneys: Lisa Hauser

NDC Staff: Florence Adams

Some speakers endorsed the separation of the Hopi Tribe from the Navajo Reservation claiming that disputes between the two are irreconcilable. One said that the Navajo Nation is commencing "its own version of manifest destiny" on the Hopi. Examples of continuing disputes given by these speakers ranged from disagreement over land to quarrels over religious ceremonies.

The great bulk of the testimony, however, was from Navajo representatives making the case that they are united with the Hopi by "similar paramount concerns and needs" and "the commonalities which Navajo and Hopis share as rural Native Americans in Arizona." According to this view, Navajo and Hopis need a unified voice at both the federal and state levels.

A representative from the Navajo-Hopi Land Commission Office noted that "roads, highways, airports, water and electrical utility systems are all infrastructure issues for both Navajo and Hopi within our closely held land bases;" and he asserted that "the intermarriage between Navajo and Hopi people and the needs of youth who share both Navajo and Hopi ancestry" forge ties "in ways that the land dispute can never tear apart." This speaker concluded:

"Even in the most divisive areas of contact between the Navajo Nation and the Hopi Tribe the two tribes work together closely. As ancestral inhabitants of the same area, the Navajo Nation and the Hopi Tribe are bound together closely by the same land whose beneficial ownership causes the most dispute between them. The Navajo-Hopi land dispute does not provide a good and adequate reason for the division.... In fact it raises some of the best arguments why the Navajo Nation and Hopi Tribe must be placed in the same districts in both the congressional and legislative districts."

Three general themes ran through the presentations by Navajo representatives. The first was that Hopis and Navajos "share striking similarities in social and economic conditions," are jointly involved in many governmental and social programs, and are involved in many ways in each other's lives. The Hopi and Navajos have acted together, it was claimed, in several fields -- transportation, health, education, tourism, economic development, welfare, and others -- and both are best served by continuing to cooperate at both the congressional and the legislative levels. The second general theme of this testimony was that Navajo legislative representatives have a strong record of supporting and voting for issues of benefit to the Hopi: again, many examples of such cooperation were presented. The third theme was that there are constitutional and legal reasons why the Commission should not separate the two peoples: the danger of failing to meet the benchmark standard; the risk of using Census data inappropriately in determining tribal population; and the threat of perpetrating a racially-motivated gerrymander. One speaker added that, if the Commission supports the separation, "there will never be a chance for the Navajo and Hopi people to come together and be one community;" and, from such a division only further friction will develop.

Navajo representatives also urged the Commission to reconsider the Navajo Nation's proposals for Congressional and Legislative districts. There was criticism of the Commission's draft Congressional district that would link the Navajo Reservation with Yavapai County -- an area with which they feel little community and which "is more concerned with managing its growth than with our issues of economic development." Similar criticism was expressed of the linkage with the growth areas of Mohave County.

Speakers from the Eastern Arizona Counties Organization, including several supervisors, mayors and representatives, noted that county and city governments had passed resolutions in support of the Commission's draft congressional and legislative plans. Themes of this testimony included: the great symbolic and practical importance of rural representation; opposition to linkage with Maricopa County; and the need for representatives who understand issues affecting the environment, mining, grazing, and forest management. These speakers did not consider size of the draft Congressional district a major problem; although one commented that he would prefer to see it include "more of the eastern part, starting down in Pinal County, Cochise County, ... (to) be more eastern oriented." This testimony also emphasized the high degree of coordination among the eastern counties. On the issue of separating northern and southern Navajo and Apache Counties, the comment was made that service to Navajo constituents has benefited from having "two senators, four representatives, in assisting with our issues on senior citizen funding (and) transportation."

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.