

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

Location: Avondale
Estrella Mountain Community College

Date: September 4, 2001
1:00 p.m.

In Attendance:

Commissioners: Steve Lynn, Chairman
Andrea Minkoff, Vice Chairman
Daniel Elder
Joshua Hall
James R. Huntwork

Commission Attorneys:
Lisa T. Hauser
Jose Rivera

NDC Staff:
Alan Heslop

A total of 196 persons attended the meeting at Estrella Mountain Community College and 13 of them addressed the Commission.

Several speakers thanked the Commission for holding a hearing in the Southwest Valley. The Mayor of Litchfield Park asked that the draft Legislative districts be kept unchanged; but he criticized the draft Congressional district for linking his city with areas with which it has little community of interest. The Mayor of the City of Goodyear also gave support to the draft Legislative map and commented on his City's lack of commonality with the Sun Cities. Other speakers took up the theme that the Southwest Valley and its cities are communities of younger families, economically vital and experiencing rapid growth; and that they have, therefore, little in common with either the Sun Cities or South Phoenix.

The Mayor of Avondale, along with several residents of his City, urged the Commission to unite his City and to link it with the other West Valley cities with which it has much in common. Avondale, he said, has been fighting successfully to overcome the "stigma" of a freeway-based division between North and South; and he claimed that the Commission's use of the freeway dividing line is a retrograde step. The Mayor, distinguishing between community of interest and the interest of the community, and referring to his City's economic achievements and its family character, noted that Avondale cooperates closely with the other West Valley cities. This point was taken up by a representative of a non-profit organization that is active in the area and by another member of the Avondale Council: the latter noted that the City works with the other West Valley communities in competing with the more urbanized areas for government funds.

In sharp contrast, a representative of MALDEF insisted that the Hispanic community of interest could be effectively represented only by dividing Avondale; and further that, like the residents of South Tolleson, the residents of South Avondale prefer to be linked to Phoenix. The redistricting chairman of the Coalition for Latino Political Action said that "community of interest" was a composite of patterns of language, culture, employment, housing and many other factors; and that this understanding meant that Avondale should be treated as two different communities. The Vice-Mayor of Avondale said that the division between the two communities in Avondale would not occur in a perfect world, but it is real and the draft district lines should be kept unchanged.

When the Chairman of the Commission asked the audience whether it was better to keep a city undivided in order to have a major share of a district or to divide it in order to double its representation, there was a clear difference of opinion: a show of hands found approximately two-thirds supporting the former position, one-third the latter. Two speakers commented that the answer to this question really depends on numbers: a small piece of a district gets little attention from its representative.

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.