

Excerpts From the Independent Redistricting Commission Public Hearing at the South Mountain Community College, Phoenix, AZ: September 4, 2001

1. Representative Debora Norris: "The Arizona Democratic Party has looked at the current maps and have come up with five competitive districts in the state. And that's a concern to us, because we believe that one of the primary reasons for having a Proposition 106 is so there would be a more competitive nature and be the possibility of either party having a majority in the Legislature. This is a concern to us. During this last session, we had a rather balanced Legislature. We can see our priorities in the Legislature have changed for the benefit of most Arizona. Our focus has been moderated. In that way, we believe we have come to serve Arizona better. We really don't want to see the state of Arizona less competitive. We think that would be counterproductive.... As for specifics, I think some of the districts look really good. I have to compliment this Commission with staying true to the Constitution in getting minority-majority districts and super minority-majority districts. That's where we may cross the line between maximizing the vote."

2. Representative Debora Norris: "The focus is how to get the voice of the minority vote most heard, how to get it loudest. You are not going to do that if you stick them all in one district. I don't think I can stand and say limit it at 55 percent, 60 percent. There might be regional differences. The Tucson standard for minority-majority might be different from the Phoenix standard. I urge you to look at it. I don't have a lot of information the Commission here has access to. I do know you shouldn't have one size fits all. Maybe that's what the result is here. I don't know exactly what you based your numbers on. Again, the information is maximizing the voice of communities."

3. Mel Hannah: "Basically, the Urban League supports a plan, if you will, submitted at the earlier hearing at the Pointe South Hilton the 8th, 9th, 10th. The Legislative Districts, in particular (are the) ones we have observations on. Basically, our recommendation is this plan will allow you to be in compliance, if you will, with all the processes of the Constitution and the Voter Rights Act, Proposition 106.... I commend you on the enlightening and encouraging process. The Urban League feels certain elements in 106 really are kind of what we focus on, the reason to support the South Mountain Central Phoenix Plan. One, to suggest and allow you to abide by man-made boundaries, particularly the western portion of what is now District P to allow you in our view of I-10 as it flows north and extends westward. We feel, utilizing that as if a man-made mountain boundary, if you will, it does allow communities of interest and creates an element of competitiveness consistent with what some guidelines ask you to do. The second important thing is the ability to be competitive. Competitive in terms of traditional political sense has meant the ability to have major parties equally or to some degree of equality compete for district seats. I'd submit some districts make sure there may be competitiveness between the majority and minority groups in those districts."

4. Leah Landrum Taylor: "The South Mountain plan presented on the 9th of August at the South Mountain Resort, (is) a plan we very much support. That plan, here currently in the P section, is something that, it's definitely a good start in the right direction. Our concern is it's still in the northern portion of the district. It did go between the 10 and 17 freeways. We'd not necessarily veer off into the area at the very far east, almost hitting into the Scottsdale, Tempe area, making sure the cities are staying together. That's one of the big concerns we had about the current district, the head of the little terrier dog there.... Look at it that the populations be able to match and jibe. The map we in turn support, South Mountain Central Phoenix community. The one we wanted to touch on, the one mentioned earlier, we'd like to make sure the Commission adheres to it. You guys are moving in that direction. We'd like to make sure we do have competitive districts."

5. Riann Balch: "I commend you for recognizing and accommodating the minority populations. I think as somebody that represents people living on low incomes, we'd favor making competitive districts above anything else. It is so important that elected officials be responsive to constituents in whatever district they're in."

6. Mark Fleisher: "On the Congressional map, there are eight to deal with rather than 30. Congressional map, A, is more competitive, taking in part of district, let me look, part of District D. F part, take in part of G, make it more competitive. East Valley is very solidly Republican. That doesn't make it fair in saying the other 100,000 or 80,000 voters never voted when you create a district like District F. I hope you look at these adjustments when adjustments are made. If not competitive, bring down the number so you don't have districts with 29 percent, or 20 percent, or 18 percent. Get to the seven, eight, nine, 10 percent range."

7. Mark Fleischer: "I'd say competitive eight, nine where someone can win. 12, 13, something like Grosscoff, something could happen out of control. Seven, eight is within reach with a good candidate running.... If you can make this adjustment, the community of interest adjustment for Hopi, which the Commission deemed necessary, which violated the idea of compactness, then the old District 20, Surprise, go up to Surprise, this is almost the same thing."

8. Councilmember Cody Williams: "Particularly when we talk about majority-minority districts, ethnicity does not translate into efficacy.... But I will challenge you to appreciate the fact that the strong Democratic -- the strong Republican voting population is a different kind of voting population than you find in the southern part of E. And I'm suggesting that the population that makes up Ahwatukee and Tempe has shown a dramatic voting difference, a different kind of individualism.... Grab your mind around, for instance, what South Scottsdale, from its downtown to the Tempe border, and Tempe's downtown area, that they are more similar than South Scottsdale is with North Scottsdale. And I think if you looked at the percentages of individuals there, if you looked at the issues that they are facing, and they then become more like the City of Phoenix's downtown urban efforts with the historic property related efforts, redevelopment, also similar to the area in Glendale. So if there was a district where B,

for instance incorporated, took into consideration those areas of B, D, and F that made up a body of voting opportunities, you would be very close to that 50-50 competitive opportunity. You would also be taking some of the numbers in a packed B and spreading them around and creating within an urban metropolitan area an area of opportunity to have the very competitive districts."

9. Councilmember Cody Williams: "What I suggest certainly is, first, competitiveness, and then, two, communities of interest, and then, three, the geographic realities you might try to figure out from one line to another.... Any of the things I've suggested to you, with the exception of what might be the B format, would not necessarily lead you to divide Tempe in half, for instance. The point I make about that commonality is that I see a greater relationship with the southern half of E and it's the rest of the bottom half of E by itself that can be fit to B, D, F, any other place you place it. When I look to the relationship to the northern half of B, I see it less than I do partners, neighbors to the west or east of it. I'm not suggesting take Tempe and start dicing it into four quarters. I'm suggesting that that cohesive body represents a finite, literally, as Ms. Minkoff indicated a finite number. We don't have to worry about, start worrying about growth with some numbers. If we're able to capture Tempe, Ahwatukee, and part of Chandler, whatever, and find a way to look at those areas, that might not be as complicated as to divest North Phoenix. That's a suggestion."

10. Levi Pace: "To get politics back to where it's fun, to where you feel like running out and being active, you have to have competitiveness. And another thing is have younger people in this in the mix."

11. Jeanette Fish: "The far reaches of the county, Maricopa County, if I could. Looking first at the Buckeye area, that would be draft Legislative District L and D. And the area there, it looks as if L and D splits right about through the middle of Buckeye. Buckeye, the few remaining areas, there's a lot of agriculture. I'd like to suggest the line on the western end, Legislative L, move up to I-10. The agricultural land there on the south side of the freeway, Goodyear, Avondale, I don't think the freeway line makes much difference once past Cotton Lane, Jack Rabbit Trail. The major difference is farming land and the area north of the freeway. In fact, the area in Buckeye is annexed, a very large area north of the freeway.... If I had my druthers, the other end of the county, the east end, District U, would extend to the east side and still have farming rather than on the west side. As I see that farming land disappearing under rooftops all across the area, I'm not sure it can make a big difference if you made a change."

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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