

**Testimony of Chris Stearns
Before the Washington State Redistricting Commission**

**June 14, 2011
Auburn, Washington**

Good evening Commissioners and thank you for conducting this hearing in Auburn. My name is Chris Stearns and I am a member of the Navajo Nation who resides with my wife Pamela Stearns and our children just up the hill on the Muckleshoot Indian Reservation. I serve as the Vice-Chair of the Seattle Human Rights Commission and am a Board Member of Native Vote Washington, a non-profit and non-partisan organization dedicated to empowering Native Americans through voting.

Based on the map prepared by the WA State Redistricting Commission staff, it appears that most of the major gains in the State's populations happened in the Eighth and Third Congressional districts. According to our State redistricting laws, the Commission is to draw district lines so as to coincide with the boundaries of local political subdivisions and areas recognized as communities of interest. RCW 44.05.090 (2)(a)

My general recommendation is for the Commission to draw districts so as to empower communities of color who are far too underrepresented in the State legislature and in Congress. It is time for the government of Washington to address historic institutional racism which it can start to do by more fully and accurately representing the people of our great State.

My recommendations are as follows:

Congressional District:

- Create a Tenth District that includes a majority or near-majority of minority voters from King County, centered in South King County.
- Create the Tenth District from populations from the Eighth, Ninth, and Seventh Congressional districts.
- The resulting District would represent a large number of people of color and would be more representative of Native Americans who now comprise over 35,000 and just under 2% of King County's population.
- The new Tenth District would include Auburn, Kent, and the Muckleshoot Indian Reservation in South King County.

Legislative District:

- Grow the 47th District south and eastward and shrink the 31st District so that the Community of Interest of the City of Auburn is no longer split and half and so the Muckleshoot Tribe which is the second largest employer in King County is no longer cut off from the rest of Auburn.

Thank you again for your time and consideration of my recommendations.