

601 S. Pioneer Way, F-244  
Moses Lake, WA 98837

July 14, 2011

Washington State Redistricting Commission  
1063 Capitol Way South, Suite 16  
P.O. Box 40948  
Olympia, WA 98504-0948

Dear Commissioners,

Rather than provide another map, I am suggesting a few criteria that should be considered when attempting to evaluate the newly drawn boundary lines.

(1) Consideration should be given to the ease with which the representatives come and meet with the public. Straight line distances between locations on a map are far different compared to the distances that must be driven from one point to another. The Puget Sound and the Columbia River limit roads that can be used. There are several mountain passes that totally close during the winter. I-90 and Stevens Pass also get closed at times, and have a certain risk when open during the winter. Puget Sound has problems with ferry routes at times due to storms and accidents.

Given the geography of the State of Washington, "square, or nearly square" districts may be less desirable than "rectangular" areas where the mountains, Columbia River, and roads influence the placement of district lines.

Public meeting halls, perhaps at a college campus or high schools, or city hall meeting rooms should be available within each district.

(2) Where practical, the districts lines should attempt to correspond to county lines. This should facilitate the ability of the county (and included city) governments to develop good working relationships with the representatives.

(3) Where possible, the "new" districts should contain in whole, or in part, the corresponding "old" districts such that the working relationships between the public and their representatives remain intact. Representatives who have held a given office for a number of terms have been able to do that, in part, because they know the needs of the people they represent and have been effective.

(4) I would hope that my suggestions are in line with the Revised Code of Washington given below. Section (1) regarding having the populations as nearly equal as possible might be viewed with recognition that the State had a major population gain (over one million) during the last ten years. The distribution of people who may decide to move to Washington State over the next ten years probably will not be equally divided among each of the districts. What may appear to "equal" with respect to the 2010 census will probably not be equal in another five to ten years. Perhaps some consideration can be given to those areas that can be shown to be growing most rapidly in population.

Please note: the decennial census data when compared to prior sets of information should give an accurate picture of the prior population changes. This can then be used to predict the future changes with greatest accuracy in the near future (2011-2012), and ending with a "good guess" as to population distribution in 2020.

The mathematics of interpolation of the data from the federal decennial census using the census data from 1970 to 2010 (five sets) which would show straight lines joining each data point, or have some sort of best fit curve through the five data points, could be compared to actual annual estimates made by the respective local governments. Extrapolation, taking the data of those lines or curves, would probably provide a better estimate for the next five to ten years compared to taking a wild guess.

The RCW states that the federal decennial census data shall be used without explicit reference as to whether it is to be just the immediate prior census, or whether several of the reports should be used. The objective of redistricting is to provide equal representation in each district. It makes logical sense to think that means for the population expected during the next few years compared to the "snapshot" of the population as it existed in 2010.

No one should expect the Commission to have a "crystal ball" to make the predictions, but that should be a reason for making the best mathematical use of the data from several years to determine what makes the best choice for district lines. This thinking would be used where several alternatives seem relatively equal based only on the 2010 "snapshot" to determine which is better based on the expected population changes.

RCW 44.05.090 -- Redistricting plan. → In the redistricting plan:

(1) Districts shall have a population as nearly equal as is practicable, excluding nonresident military personnel, based on the population reported in the federal decennial census.

(2) To the extent consistent with subsection (1) of this section the commission plan

(a) District lines should be drawn so as to coincide with the boundaries of local political subdivisions and areas recognized as communities of interest. The number of counties and municipalities divided among more than one district should be as small as possible;

(b) Districts should be composed of convenient, contiguous, and compact territory. Land areas may be deemed contiguous if they share a common land border or are connected by a ferry, highway, bridge, or tunnel. Areas separated by geographical boundaries or artificial barriers that prevent transportation within a district should not be deemed contiguous; and

(c) Whenever practicable, a precinct shall be wholly within a single legislative district.

We shall look forward to seeing what the Redistricting Commission is able to accomplish. We hope that it can be done such that the citizens of the State of Washington have full confidence that the efforts have created equal representation, and that you will have been able to enjoy working together.

Thomas Fancher

509-764-4411

tfancher@p2-c2.com