

**MINUTES OF THE
REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
Wednesday, May 16, 2001 - 9:00 a.m. S Room 129 State Capitol**

Members Present:

Sen. Michael G. Waddoups, Chair
Rep. Gerry A. Adair, Chair
Sen. Ron Allen
Sen. Beverly Evans
Sen. Pete Suazo
Sen. John L. Valentine
Rep. Patrice M. Arent
Rep. Chad E. Bennion
Rep. Ron Bigelow
Rep. Jackie Biskupski
Rep. Katherine M. Bryson
Rep. Don E. Bush
Rep. Brent H. Goodfellow
Rep. James R. Gowans
Rep. Wayne A. Harper
Rep. Loraine T. Pace
Rep. Jack A. Seitz
Rep. LaWanna Shurtliff

Members Excused:

Rep. Thomas V. Hatch
Rep. Glenn L. Way

Staff Present:

Mr. Stewart E. Smith, Redistricting Team Manager
Mr. John L. Fellows, Associate General Counsel
Mr. Mark D. Andrews, Research Analyst
Mr. John Q. Cannon, Research Analyst
Mr. Jerry D. Howe, Research Analyst
Mr. Richard C. North, Research Analyst
Mr. Mark J. Allred, Technical Support
Mr. Joseph T. Wade, Research Analyst
Ms. Alicia Gambles, Legislative Secretary

Note: A list of others present and handouts distributed are on file in the Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel.

- 1. Call to Order** - Chair Waddoups called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m.
- 2. Review Input from Brigham City Public Hearing**

The committee discussed the public hearing in Brigham City.

Mr. Stewart Smith, Redistricting Team Manager, Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel, reported on publicity for the committee meetings and public hearings. He distributed a mailing list and requested input from the committee on individuals or organizations that should be included on future mailing lists. He indicated that the current mailing list of approximately 200 includes 103 radio, television, and print media addresses.

Sen. Allen mentioned that public input thus far has supported the concept of a good mix of rural and urban, but when legislative districts are discussed, the rural districts don't want to have anything to do with the urban areas. He said the committee needs to be aware of the public's conflicting philosophical ideas about how the redistricting process should work.

Mr. Stewart Smith gave a summary of the telephone inquiries received. He indicated that the calls began March 21, 2001, the day the population data was received from the Census Bureau. Mr. Smith noted that about 50 percent of the calls are from legislators, 25 percent from media, 10 percent from political parties or interest groups, 10 percent from cities and counties, and 5 percent from state agencies. He said that the redistricting phone calls relate to a variety of areas including: schedule of meetings; how to provide input; the redistricting process; and the population or demographics in a particular area.

Chair Waddoups indicated that several senators and others have contacted him giving input about their areas. He read a letter from a citizen in Rose Park indicating her desire to be included with Salt Lake City residents.

Chair Waddoups stated that it would be beneficial for the committee to be open and responsive to the public and listen as best as they can to their concerns.

Sen. Suazo spoke about the citizen that wrote to Sen. Waddoups. He stated that she feels disenfranchised because Rose Park is in a different congressional district than the rest of Salt Lake City.

Rep. Bigelow stated that the question of disenfranchisement is misunderstood. No one is ever disenfranchised, because they will always be able to vote and participate in the process no matter who is elected. Rep. Bigelow noted that it is important for the committee to keep these comments in perspective. For every one comment they hear, there are thousands or tens of thousands that the committee doesn't hear.

Rep. Pace stated that they must do their best to represent and draw the lines as fair and logical as possible. She explained that as much as the committee would like to make everybody happy, the bottom line is that each area must be represented well. She encouraged the committee to contact their constituents and be sure they feel they have a voice. Committee discussion followed.

3. Community Reaction to Redistricting

Mr. Rich North, Research Analyst, Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel, distributed a handout titled "Utah Redistricting/Reapportionment News, 1981, 1991, 2001" and presented an overview on the history of news topics for redistricting during those years. He also indicated legislation passed, vetoed, and vetoes overridden for those years. Committee discussion followed.

4. Introduction to Congressional Redistricting

Mr. North presented a map of the existing congressional boundaries from 1991. He explained the map and the lines that separate the voting districts. He demonstrated to the committee the capabilities of the computer software in drawing plans. Mr. North indicated how the redistricting process should work in conjunction with the software. He stated the importance of keeping the population deviation in each district as close as possible to zero. Mr. North demonstrated on the computer software how the counties can be shown with different levels of geography as overlays. Mr. North noted that staff's expectation is that legislators will tell them where to draw the lines.

Sen. Waddoups presented his own draft congressional plan as a starting point and to stimulate thought and illustrate how the process may work. He indicated the difficult time that he had trying to draw the lines. He stated that the process will take time and that each representative should come in and take time to draw lines for each of the areas they represent. Committee discussion followed

5. Committee Discussion of Legislative Districts

Chair Waddoups emphasized the fact that the census information is available to each committee member and to the public for a copying fee of \$10. He indicated that options can be drawn and presented to the committee for evaluation. Committee discussion followed.

6. Public Input

Ms. Pat Ingram, Juab County Clerk, expressed her concern about splitting voting precincts. She requested that the committee keep Juab County together in the same congressional and other districts. She indicated that it becomes very difficult for county clerks when districts are split, as well as expensive and confusing for voters.

Ms. Pearl Nelson, citizen of Rose Park, presented a petition signed by citizens of Rose Park requesting that they be joined again with Salt Lake County. She asked the committee to do what is right for the people.

Ms. Marlene Gonzalez, President, Utah Minority Bar Association, Staff Attorney for Multi-Cultural Legal Center, Coalition of Filipino Citizens, indicated that the minority population has increased 138 percent in the last year. She requested that minorities who have the same interests, who are faced with the same problems, be kept together so that they can have a voice in the state. She explained that when they are separated into different districts so that each district has a minority voice, they are not represented because there are too few minorities in the state.

Responding to a question from Chair Waddoups, Ms. Gonzalez indicated her preference for minorities to be kept together in drawing all districts, not just congressional districts.

Chair Waddoups asked Ms. Gonzalez how the committee could identify the minority areas she referred to. She stated that she would like to work with the committee to indicate where the minority populations exist.

Rep. Pace asked how communities of interest are being defined by the committee.

Sen. Suazo stated that it is difficult to keep communities of interest together and provide these areas with one voice. He indicated how Rose Park has been separated by the manmade barrier of I-15 which has created a physical barrier between Rose Park and Salt Lake City as well as a mental barrier because they are not included when city issues are concerned. He reiterated the feelings of citizen Pearl Nelson, that they are separated fully from Salt Lake City and have felt that separation for ten years.

Rep. Pace stated that the committee will not be able to solve a city problem. Sen. Suazo indicated that the committee can solve the inclusion of Salt Lake City within one congressional district, rather than three. He indicated that Salt Lake City is certainly a community of interest which should not be split. He stated that Brigham Young, the master planner of the last two centuries, would never have considered splitting up the capitol city.

Rep. Bigelow stated that no matter how the population is divided, somewhere at least one senate district must be split, depending on the demographics. There is absolutely no way to align each boundary perfectly.

Chair Waddoups indicated that the committee did not pass a community of interest principle and expressed his hope that as the committee hears testimony and discusses the issue, they might present a community of interest guideline. He reread the motion from the last meeting and requested that the committee think about the issue.

Mr. James Neel, Multi-Cultural Legal Center, requested that the committee be sensitive to the fact that the multi-cultural community in Utah is a politically sensitive minority group that is politically cohesive. He indicated that the interests represented in some congressional districts are very dispersed, which makes it hard for minorities to be heard. In fact, according to Mr. Neel, the most dense Latino population is reaching 16 percent of the population. He suggested that when the committee considers community cohesive groups of interests that they consider that the minority population is a cohesive political interest group that is not represented well by less populous minority regions.

Chair Waddoups asked Mr. Neel if he could help the committee identify where the minority areas exist. He indicated that downtown Salt Lake City is the hub for minority residents in Utah and submitted a handout indicating the distribution of minority groups within Salt Lake City, and existing congressional districts. Committee discussion followed.

Mr. John Fellows, Associate General Counsel, Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel, asked Mr. Neel to elaborate on how minority groups are politically cohesive. Mr. Neel stated that from the information they have gathered, minority groups in Utah, particularly in Salt Lake City, tend to vote Democrat: specifically, they believe that 75 to 85 percent of minority populations vote Democrat. He indicated that research is being done right now through sampling and statistical analysis to have more information about the issue.

Mr. Fellows indicated to the committee that race cannot be the predominant factor in drawing district boundaries. He stated that, if there is evidence that race is the predominant factor, the plan is subject to being challenged and struck down by the courts. Mr. Neel indicated that they do not want race to be a predominant factor, but an important factor.

Ms. Lorna Vogt, Utah Progressive Network, stated that they are mostly interested in public involvement of the redistricting process. She indicated that they are strongly encouraging the committee and the legislature as a whole to give the public as much information as possible. She indicated that the public generally does not understand what redistricting means and how the process works. She encouraged the committee to adopt the communities of interest as a guiding principle for the process so that people feel that they are being represented.

7. Committee Questions

Sen. Evans acknowledged staff for the work they have done and the effort that has been made to try and make the redistricting information public. She stated that if the public chooses to be informed, there are many ways for them to receive information and become educated and involved in the process. She expressed her appreciation to staff for their efforts in making all the information available on the website.

Rep. Adair presented the appointments for House subcommittees.

Rep. Bennion expressed his appreciation to staff for their work. He expressed his desire that the committee stick to the principles they have adopted so that plans are as fair as possible.

Mr. Smith presented staff and their specific assignments indicating how they are available to help the committee and the public in the process.

8. Adjourn

MOTION: Rep. Bennion moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Sen. Waddoups adjourned the meeting at 10:50 a.m.