

**MINUTES OF THE
REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE**

Thursday, June 10, 2011 – 6:00 p.m. – Snow College, Richfield Campus

Members Present:

Sen. Ralph Okerlund, Senate Chair
Rep. Kenneth W. Sumsion, House Chair
Sen. Gene Davis
Sen. Benjamin M. McAdams
Sen. Kevin T. Van Tassell
President Michael G. Waddoups
Rep. Roger E. Barrus
Rep. Melvin R. Brown
Rep. Gage Froerer
Rep. Neal B. Hendrickson
Rep. Don L. Ipson
Rep. Brian S. King
Rep. Todd E. Kiser
Speaker Rebecca D. Lockhart

Rep. Merlynn T. Newbold
Rep. Christine F. Watkins
Rep. R. Curt Webb

Members Absent:

Sen. Stuart C. Reid
Rep. Francis D. Gibson

Staff Present:

Mr. Joseph T. Wade, Policy Analyst
Mr. Mark D. Andrews, Policy Analyst
Mr. Art L. Hunsaker, Policy Analyst
Ms. Emily R. Brown, Associate General Counsel
Ms. Kimberly A. Heiner, Legislative Secretary

Note: A list of others present, a copy of related materials, and an audio recording of the meeting can be found at www.le.utah.gov.

1. Committee Business

Chair Okerlund called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

Members of the Committee introduced themselves and indicated the areas of the state that they represent.

2. Overview of Redistricting

Mr. Andrews gave a presentation on what redistricting is, why it is done, and the redistricting principles that were adopted at the May 4, 2011 meeting.

Mr. Wade gave an overview of the redistricting public website, RedistrictUtah.com. Mr. Wade also demonstrated the online redistricting tool that allows the public to create redistricting plans.

3. Public Comment and Committee Discussion About Redistricting

President Waddoups introduced a Senate plan entitled "Senate 1% Plan" and explained his rationale. He responded to questions from the Committee.

Rep. Sumsion presented two house plans, entitled "State House Plan - Sumsion Proposal A" and "Utah House Plan - Sumsion Plan B." He explained the differences between the plans and illustrated the ripple effect on other districts as lines are drawn.

Rep. Sumsion explained Commissioner Cox's House plan, entitled "House Plan - Commissioner Cox," presented at the Ephraim meeting.

Rep. McIff presented three House Plans entitled "Utah House Plan - McIff Option A," "Utah House Plan - McIff Option B," and "Utah House Plan -- McIff Option C." He also passed out copies of those maps with additions to the plan. He explained that his plan maintains county lines and keeps county interests intact. Rep. McIff responded to questions from the Committee.

Rep. Sumsion presented a congressional plan entitled "U.S. Congressional Plan -- Sumsion Plan C, Statewide." He explained that the premise of this map was to keep all the military installations in one congressional seat.

Mr. Gordon Topham, Sevier County Commissioner, said he liked the rural and urban components of Rep. Sumsion's congressional plan proposed today. He said the six surrounding counties could have a stronger voice in rural Utah if they had someone representing them. He said he realizes that it may not be possible to have all six counties staying in the same congressional district, but asked that the committee do everything they can to keep them together.

Rep. Watkins asked Mr. Gordon for clarification on which six counties he was referring to. Mr. Gordon explained that the counties were Millard, Juab, Sanpete, Sevier, Piute, and Wayne.

Mr. Tom Nedreberg, Eureka City Council, said he liked Senator Waddoups plan on keeping the counties together in the southern part of the state. He also liked Rep. McIff's third plan. He also liked Rep. Sumsion's congressional plan allowing for congressmen to come from parts of the state other than Salt Lake City.

Mr. Rick Blackwell, Piute County Commissioner, asked the Committee to keep the needs of rural counties in mind when drawing district boundaries.

Mr. Mike Turner, Richfield City Council, said he agreed with Rep. McIff's plan to keep rural interests represented.

Mr. Michael Orton, citizen, asked the Committee if there was an intent to protect the interest of Rep. Bishop in drawing congressional maps.

Rep. King explained that protecting incumbents is not a redistricting principle adopted by the Committee.

Sen. McAdams said that the focus of the committee is the voters and the needs of the people. He also said that while protecting incumbents is not a driving force in decisions of the Redistricting Committee, it is something that the Committee can legally take into account.

Mr. Orton asked Rep. Sumsion to respond to a newspaper article quoting him as protecting incumbent seats.

Rep. Sumsion explained the context of his comment. He explained that he was cognizant of where incumbents live, but the numbers drive the seats. He said he respects Mr. Orton's concern, but said there would be republicans put in new house boundaries because the population shifts have been so great. He said he is trying to be fair to both parties.

Ms. Brown said that in the 1997 *Abrams v. Johnson* case, the U.S. Supreme Court recognized that protecting incumbents is a traditional and legitimate districting principle.

Chair Okerlund said that the Committee is doing everything they can to give people the opportunity to be involved in this process through multiple meetings throughout the state and an online redistricting tool.

Ms. Charice Black, Sevier County Democrats, said she appreciated Rep. McIff's efforts to take into consideration traffic flow and believes those are the kind of issues that need to be taken into account in redistricting. She said she was concerned about the congressional map presented today and said that travel distances are inherent to rural versus urban issues. The way Salt Lake County is split may cause a

representative to focus on the urban issues, at the expense of rural issues. She also asked if there would be a way to aggregate all this information to get the best options.

Mr. Wade showed the redistrict Utah website and stated that the website will have a place where the public can provide comments on submitted plans.

Mr. Richard White, Snow College, said he believes people in the urban areas of the state try very hard to understand needs of rural Utah, but can not fully appreciate the challenges of rural living until living there. As a general principle, he would like the Committee to have representatives from areas they represent, versus people from urban areas trying to represent rural needs.

Rep. Kiser asked the public in attendance if they considered Washington County to be rural or suburban.

Mr. Topham, said in working with commissioners from Washington, Iron and Utah Counties, he believes Sevier County shares more issues in common with Washington and Iron County than they do with Utah County.

Mr. Tom Edberg, Juab County, said Juab County would share nothing in common with Washington County.

Mr. Kris Allred, Richfield City Council, said that Richfield is the center of the state and that Sevier county is by far the largest of the six surrounding counties. He would like the Committee to consider this in drawing redistricting lines.

Rep. McIff said that public lands are an important issue in Utah and that it is difficult if our Washington team is not unified on those issues. He also said he did not try focus on incumbencies when he prepared his maps, but instead focused on communities of interest and avoiding fragmentation. He also commented on Washington County being a little bit rural and urban.

Sen. Okerlund said he was impressed with the public comments received in the day's meetings. He said that while we may not all agree on the outcome, we will be able to say we gave everyone who wanted to speak the opportunity to comment.

4. Adjourn

MOTION: Rep. Ipson moved to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Okerlund adjourned the meeting at 8:06 p.m.