

**MINUTES OF THE
REDISTRICTING PUBLIC HEARING
Thursday, July 12, 2001 - 12:00 p.m. S Courtroom, Price**

Members Present:

Rep. Gerry A. Adair, Chair
Sen. Ron Allen
Sen. Beverly Evans
Sen. Pete Suazo
Rep. Patrice M. Arent
Rep. Chad E. Bennion
Rep. Ron Bigelow
Rep. Jackie Biskupski
Rep. Katherine M. Bryson
Rep. Don E. Bush
Rep. James R. Gowans
Rep. Wayne A. Harper
Rep. Loraine T. Pace
Rep. LaWanna Shurtliff
Rep. Glenn L. Way

Members Excused:

Sen. Michael G. Waddoups, Chair
Sen. John L. Valentine
Rep. Brent H. Goodfellow
Rep. Thomas V. Hatch
Rep. Jack A. Seitz

Staff Present:

Mr. Stewart E. Smith, Redistricting Team Manager
Mr. Jerry D. Howe, Research Analyst
Mr. John Q. Cannon, 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 public hearing to order at 12:05 p.m.

2. Introduction to Redistricting

Mr. Mark J Allred, Technical Support, Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel, presented an overview on the redistricting process including the 2000 census results and population shifts with an emphasis on the southern counties. He also presented the Senate Plan.

3. Public Input/Comments

Mr. Tom Matthews, Carbon County Commission, stated that in order to represent and serve the rural people fairly, legislators need to live close to their areas. He indicated that the landfill issue in Carbon County is a good example of not having a representative living close enough to work on that issue. He stated that if the House seat is divided, they will be better off going towards Emery County because of their common interests.

Sen. Mike Dmitrich, Senate District 27, said that if true rural representation is wanted the committee must leave the Wasatch Front Counties out of the issue. He indicated that Carbon and Emery County have common issues and will always stick together. He also indicated that Senate

District 27 needs less than 5,000 people to make it whole. He said that the committee could bring in Washington City or Ivins and Torquerville to bring it into balance without disturbing Senate District 27. He requested that the committee strive to have the least amount of disruption. He also said that it would be very unfair to divide Carbon County and ask a senator from Carbon or Sanpete Counties to represent both counties. He indicated that the solution may be to take part of Washington County. He concluded that Carbon County has had one senator since statehood and they would like to keep one forever.

Rep. Bigelow asked what the reason would be for keeping Emery and Carbon County, rather than Washington and San Juan counties. He asked what criteria the committee may use to decide which county gets divided. Sen. Dmitrich indicated that the power and resource production, and mining industries would be a good reason for keeping them together. He indicated that the industries are very similar in Emery and Carbon County, unlike the other rural counties in the state.

Rep. Bush stated that it isn't horrible to have your county split, because having 2 representatives fighting for your issue is better. He said that having two voices is better than one voice. Sen. Dmitrich said that a Sanpete senator could not fairly represent the interests of Carbon and Emery County. He stated that they are a very unique rural area to the state. Rep. Bush stated that he rejected the idea of assuming that a certain senator will not represent certain areas. He indicated that it is an unfair way of thinking.

Rep. Bigelow inquired of the difference between a county and a city line. He stated that people must be represented, not areas. He asked Sen. Dmitrich if he would accept not honoring a county line. Sen. Dmitrich said that in these small counties, that need 5 - 7,000 people, he believes the counties do not need to be divided.

Mr. Dennis Willis, Price resident, said that it will be virtually impossible to split some counties. He stated that travel and tourism are major issues for southeastern Utah with a whole host of challenges that need special representation. He requested that the committee consider looking at community planning concepts and economic geography before drawing the lines.

Mr. Jim Robertson, retired Carbon County sheriff, echoed Sen. Dmitrich's comments about splitting Carbon County. He mentioned the landfill issue in east Carbon County and requested that the committee listen to the remarks made previously. He said that it only seems fair to include east Carbon, Sunnyside, and Kennelworth areas with Senate District 27.

Mr. Bill Krompel, Carbon County Commissioner, stated that Carbon and Sanpete Counties have dissimilar economies, but indicated that Carbon and Emery County are the energy centers of the state. He asked the committee to do the most they can to keep Carbon and Emery County together.

Mr. Mike Milovich, Carbon County Commissioner, echoed the comments of Sen. Dmitrich and stated that if Carbon and Emery County are split, a tremendous disservice would result. He encouraged each of the committee members do what is right for the citizens in the communities of the state and suggested that those with similar economic and social interests be put together.

Mr. Bruce Funk, Emery County Clerk/Auditor, reiterated the comments of Sen. Dimitrich and indicated that there are pros and cons to each situation of keeping a county intact. He said that they have had excellent representation over the years, but asked the committee to take into consideration the issues of rural citizens and the representation they will need. He asked the committee not to combine urban and rural counties because the same depth of understanding of the rural issues does not exist in urban areas.

Rep. Pace emphasized the importance of not dividing precincts and the problems associated with that. She also indicated that a mix of urban and rural areas can be beneficial to everyone. The issues are different, but each representative is committed to their areas and work together to accomplish their goals.

Mr. Larry Ross, Duchesne County Commissioner, stated that Duchesne County has very specific and genuine interests. He indicated that they are very accustomed to working closely together with the cities and expressed his concern that Duchesne County or the Uintah Basin may be put with part of the Wasatch Front. He also indicated that the economic demands and issues are much different. Duchesne County is an agricultural community and more comfortable being involved with groups in rural Utah. He asked the committee to give serious consideration about including rural communities with metropolitan areas. He indicated that they prefer not to be divided politically or any other way. He concluded that he supports the comments of Sen. Dmitrich.

Mr. Willie Drawhon, Carbon County resident, discussed the issue of energy. He stated that with Carbon and Emery County being an energy hub for the state of Utah there are certain specific challenges ahead of them. He asked that the citizens be given the best opportunity to assist the interests of the nation in the issue of coal and oil development. He said that county residents feel very strongly about the development of laws that must be passed to protect the county. He asked that the committee consider all of their constituents and the possible effects redistricting would have on Carbon and Emery County by segregating them. He requested that the committee let them maintain their relationship with Emery County to effectively deal with the economic development issues and interests in the area.

Rep. Bush stated that a lot of legislators have rural roots and can represent them by learning about their specific problems.

Mr. Durwood Carter, Chair of Carbon City Republican Party, reemphasized the comments of Sen. Dmitrich. He discussed the water conflict between Carbon and Emery County and stated

that someone from Sanpete County will not be able to be impartial on that issue. He indicated that it would be an extreme conflict.

Rep. Max Young, House District 71, said that each of the counties he represents are impacted by the same issues. They have many common interests and encouraged the committee to realize the importance of maintaining the cohesiveness of these counties. He said that the support they receive from the Wasatch Front is vital and that they would like to continue receiving that support and maintaining the relationship. He said that splitting the counties would diminish their ability to address their common interests.

Rep. Gordon Snow, House District 54, said that he has spent the last ten years trying to make sure his district stays whole. He requested that his district be left alone.

Rep. Brad King, House District 69, indicated the distinction between Carbon and Emery Counties that although they are rural, they are not primarily agricultural. He said that just because they are rural does not mean they have a lot in common with other rural areas. He indicated that there are no natural boundaries or barriers between Carbon, Emery, and San Juan Counties, which is a good reason to keep them together. He suggested combining the communities of Hunnington, Casteldale, and Orangeville into District 69 to make it whole. He also suggested that combining Ferrin, Emery, and Clausen would make Max Young's district whole and make sense geographically. He asked the committee to look at communities of interest while redrawing the lines and expressed his hope that the final decisions be made in the best interests of the state and not the best interests of a political party.

Mr. Guy Thayne, Duchesne County Commissioner, expressed his concern for the congressional district realignment. He stated that if they end up with parts of Salt Lake City they will have lost representation because they will not have the votes to pass anything. He requested that the committee consider the remarks of Rep. King and thanked the committee for their efforts.

Ms. Fran Townsend, Grand County Clerk/Auditor, requested that when the committee makes the final decision that they contact the county clerks to make sure precinct lines are not crossed which will make the voting process easier.

Chair Adair stated that they will make every effort they can to not split precincts, but in some areas it will be inevitable.

Ms. Jackie Anderson, Sun Advocate reporter, asked the committee how a predominantly Republican state can defend dividing and diffusing one of the only Democratic strongholds in the state.

Rep. Bush said that the makeup of the committee has been decided by the voters of the state which is the balance of the political parties in the legislature. He indicated that the issue of dividing a county is something they must face all through the state. He indicated that divisions must be made regardless of party affiliations.

Rep. Bennion said that the committee does not have control of where people move or live, but they are entrusted to make certain that each person has a vote. He said that counties are divided because of the need to equalize population. He said that there is no way to make everyone happy, but that they are going to do the best they can to make certain that each community is represented.

Rep. Bigelow said that by the very question, both sides are justified. He said that if a district is maintained simply because it is Democrat, the opposite action is justified. He indicated that a good reason for keeping a county together is because of its common interests, not because a county is primarily Democrat. Rep. Bigelow said that people are represented by individuals, not by parties. They are represented by who they elect. He also said that the key to elected politics is that if the legislator does not represent their area, regardless of their party, they will not be reelected.

Sen. Allen said that one cannot justify a political reason for keeping or dividing a county because of the problems that will inevitably follow. He said that the committee is taking into consideration communities of interest.

Chair Adair said that Utah has a Republican form of government, which means the right of the minority to be heard and the will of the majority be done.

Rep. Pace indicated to the audience that a lot of counties are severely short of people based on the state average growth.

Mr. Lou Setrick, Emery County Commissioner, echoed Sen. Dmitrich's comments. He said that water is their number one factor and that he did not think Emery and Carbon County would mix well.

4. Adjourn

MOTION: Rep. Bennion moved to adjourn the public hearing. The motion passed unanimously with Rep. Biskupski absent for the vote. Chair Adair adjourned the meeting at 2:25 p.m.

