



Idaho's Citizen Commission for Reapportionment

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Boise Public Hearing
June 7, 2011
Capitol Building
Capitol Auditorium
7 pm

Chairman Andersen opened the public hearing by introducing himself and explaining that the purpose of the hearing was to take information from the public, for the commission to use in completing their plan, which is due in 90 days.

He then had the commissioners introduce themselves as follows; **Commissioner Evan Frasure** from Pocatello, **Commissioner Lou Esposito** from Boise, **Commissioner Lorna Finman** from north Idaho, **Commissioner Julie Kane** from Lapwai, and **Commissioner George Moses** from Boise. Also present from the staff were **Keith Bybee**, **Kristin Ford**, and **Cyd Gaudet**.

First to be called to testify was the **Honorable David Bieter**, Mayor of Boise. **Mr. Bieter** thanked the commission for their service and wished them well in their task. He then shared a resolution from the Boise City Council, which had met earlier in the evening. Copies of the resolution are available in the commission office. **Mayor Beiter** explained that the resolution requests, on behalf of the City of Boise, that the commission keep cities whole as they go about this process. Mayor Bieter cited several examples from the resolution of cities that are kept whole throughout the state stating there is precedent for keeping cities whole.

Chairman Andersen then called on **Jeff Almeida**, former Vice Chairman of the Ada County Democrats. **Mr. Almeida** advised that he has reviewed the maps, which have already been submitted for the commission's review, and emphasized that some of these maps illustrate the ability to keep Ada County intact, which he is in favor of. He cited historical precedent for keeping Ada County intact and stated that because of population shifts, it is now possible to unify Ada County once again. He also indicated that he believes that it is possible to build a congressional district map based on one agricultural district and one non agricultural district. He also suggested changing to an even number of legislative districts so as to not divide any legislative districts within a congressional district. He ended by thanking the commission for their efforts. At this time **Chairman Andersen** pointed out to the audience the availability of Maptitude, on the commission website, where individuals can draw maps to submit to the commission.

Next called to testify was **Phil McGrane**, Chief Deputy to the Ada County Clerk. **Mr. McGrane** advised that his office has the responsibility to administer all elections, and explained that the by product of what the commission does do will define the voting boundaries which they will have to administer. He asked that the commission use streets and other very defined boundaries as dividing lines in the legislative and congressional districts for urban areas. Using boundaries that are not major roads or other readily identifiable major boundaries causes extreme confusion for voters and has the ability to create complications to administer the election. For example, as new developments have been built, there are instances where one set of neighbors will be in different voting districts than three other neighbors. He stated that he understands that city boundaries have historically been used, however he pointed out they can change tremendously due to annexation and de-annexation over time. He recognizes there is a statute that directs the Commission to take into account precincts when re-drawing districts. He explained that the clerk's office will re-draw the precincts once the commission is done to help simplify the administration of elections, so he urged the commission not be concerned with splitting existing precincts. **Commissioner Moses** asked about splitting a legislative district with a congressional district. In response, **McGrane** stated that if you are unable to balance population between

legislative and Congressional districts evenly, then please split those districts in a different county out of pure self-interest. In answer to a question from **Commissioner Frasure** do lines really go through people's homes, **Mr. McGrane** stated that they have used major streets to define precincts because city boundaries are not always smooth and do change. He pointed out that what may have been empty land ten years ago may now be inhabited and that by using major streets it is much more reliable and will last into the future. He also pointed out that neighbors want to vote with their neighbors as people's interests lay with people from their children's schools, and their smaller communities. In answer to another question from **Commissioner Frasure** regarding the change in precincts in the last several years, **Mr. McGrane** explained that legal changes in election laws have substantially raised the cost of technology for each precinct. Due to this he said they are constantly looking for ways to improve the process to handle more voters in each precinct. Additionally, he explained that due to consolidated elections, voting becomes very complicated to administer as they can have up to 13 individual ballots in each precinct because of the various mosquito abatement districts, cemetery districts, library district etc.

Chairman Andersen then called on **Chuck Paterson**, a union carpenter. **Mr. Paterson** wanted to express his concern regarding the use of an out of state architect on a project at BSU, as he felt that we should be using an Idaho firm.

Next called was **Aaron White** from the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. **Mr. White** asked the commission to consider carefully the one person, one vote principle when making decisions and drawing lines. Please consider communities of interest in making their decisions as well.

Chairman Andersen then called on **Mr. Steve Holbrook**. **Mr. Holbrook** lives in Warm Springs Mesa, precinct 74, in Boise. He had heard that there was a possibility of moving his precinct to Boise County and Idaho City, and he was very concerned about this. He stated he would like to see the city kept whole so he has a voice in electing people within the city and the county where his taxes go.

Next called was **Dennis Tanikuni** from the Idaho Farm Bureau. **Mr. Tanikuni** explained that he did not wish to testify at this time.

James Philpott from the Idaho Legislative District 19 Democrats, was next called to testify. **Mr. Philpott** thanked the commission for their service and urged them to remember their duty to the stakeholders. He explained that we are a very divided people right now, and this Commission could heal some of the divide. Everyone is looking for government that works, and he asked the commission to help us arrive there without dissent.

Chairman Andersen then noted that although there were no others signed in to testify he would ask if anyone else wanted to present an issue to the commission.

Mr. Chris Rich, Ada County Clerk, then asked to address the commission. He advised that when he first started in the county 13 years ago, election costs ran around \$180,000 and they now run over \$500,000. As the Clerk there are a couple of cardinal rules to remember don't run out of ballots and don't have long lines at the polls, these are localized issues at the precinct level or voter. The true risk in elections is that the ballot is programmed correctly so that when you fill in an oval for the candidate of your choice, that the machine is going to count it properly. He explained that when you have overlapping boundaries (two congressional districts, eight/nine legislative districts, a couple of school district) the cost of administering elections increases exponentially. He urged the commission to consider in their deliberations that city boundaries and precinct boundaries are not the real issue when considering the administration of elections. Using boundaries that can be defined will decrease the number of ballots necessary at each precinct, and insure that the ballots can be counted correctly.

Commissioner Kane then went over the requirements that the commission must take into consideration in making their plan. She explained the one person, one vote principle, and the court cases, which came after the last redistricting, that have defined the 10% deviation. **Commissioner Kane** also explained that the Idaho Constitution states they should keep county splits to a minimum. Also there are legal requirements that the commission is to consider communities of interests, avoid oddly shaped districts, insure that the counties are contiguous, use local precincts as practicable, and if districts contain more than one county there must be roads and highways to connect those districts.

Chairman Andersen then thanked everyone for their attendance and adjourned the meeting at 8:10 p.m.