



Idaho's Citizen Commission for Reapportionment

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Caldwell Public Hearing
Wednesday, June 8, 2011
7:00 p.m.
Caldwell High School Auditorium

Chairman Frasure called the meeting to order and requested that **Commissioner Kane** discuss the guidelines under which the commission will be working. **Commissioner Kane** then discussed the parameters which the commission needs to follow including one person = one vote, that each district must have a deviation less than 10%, and that there must be between 30 and 35 districts. She explained that redistricting happens every ten years due to the census, to make sure that every vote counts. She stated that the Idaho Statutes require that to the maximum extent possible traditional neighborhoods and local communities of interest be preserved, that they avoid creating oddly shaped districts, that they should avoid dividing counties, and that if counties are divided they must be adjacent to other counties and a highway needs to connect them. They also need to try to preserve voting precinct lines, make compact districts, and they can't consider incumbents or their respective parties. She explained that even though they are representing their perspective parties they will work hard for the people of Idaho to insure that one person=one vote.

Chairman Frasure indicated that the commission wants to hear the public's comments, he explained that the online Maptitude software is quite user friendly and he encouraged everyone to go onto it and make a map. With that he called **Mr. Kelly Aberasturi** to testify. **Mr. Aberasturi**, from Homedale is an Owyhee County Commissioner. He indicated that he has heard some talk of Owyhee county being split and that is not something he is in favor of occurring. He explained that he would like to see the county kept together and would like it to be combined with Elmore County. **Chairman Frasure** asked what he thought about combining it with Canyon County at which time **Mr. Aberasturi** indicated that Canyon County is more urban and he rarely goes here. He felt that by combining his county with Canyon County that it would have the effect of lowering their representation as no one from Owyhee County would get voted into office. He said they have a strong bond with Elmore County and that once you get in to Nampa and Caldwell the people are different and not as rural. **Commissioner Moses** asked if you put Owyhee County and Elmore County together would it get close to the 44,700 people needed to make a district. **Mr. Aberasturi** said that was possible if you put some people from Elmore, Owyhee and the Melba area into the district.

Next called to testify was **Mr. Chris Yamamoto**, the Canyon County Clerk. He thanked the commission for coming to Caldwell, and explained that some of his staff has been working on mapping and they do not envy the commission's job. He said they have a map that they would like to share, and what they would recommend is that the Commission use well known roads be used as boundaries, instead of cities boundaries. He explained that with GIS programs, using roads makes it easier, and that the precinct lines they now have are not clean and will need to be changed.

Mr. Brad Jackson, Chief Deputy, Canyon County Clerk's Office was next to address the commission. He indicated that he felt that school boundaries are now more meaningful than precinct boundaries and that they are planning to redraw many of their precinct boundaries, for the Clerk's office, there is nothing sacred about the current precinct boundaries. **Commissioner Moses** then mentioned to **Mr. Jackson** that the commission is in possession of a letter from **Mayor Nancolas**, available in the commission office, asking the commission to keep the City of Caldwell intact. **Mr. Yamamoto** said that he understands where the mayor is coming from however he feels that it is a mistake to use city boundaries now that the Clerk is responsible for administering all elections due to consolidated elections. **Chairman Frasure** then inquired as to why the Canyon County precinct lines have not been redrawn to reflect changes in the county. **Mr. Jackson** answered that there were several changes in personnel in 2007, and with a new voting system, and the presidential election coming up at that time, they had not had a chance to redraw the lines although they were aware of the need to do so.

Mr. Yamamoto then asked the commission when any preliminary maps will be posted. **Chairman Frasure** answered that this month the commission is taking testimony and urged everyone to submit maps. He then explained that in July they will be producing some options and these will be numbered and posted on the website.

Senator McGee, Majority Caucus Chairman, was then called to testify. **Senator McGee** pointed out that **Senator Lodge** and **Senator Smyser** were in the audience and he welcomed the commission to Caldwell. He also thanked them for their sacrifice as he acknowledged that three months to do this work can be a challenge. **Senator McGee** stated that he believes his community should be preserved. He explained that Canyon County is one of the fastest growing counties in the nation and he wants the residents to be properly represented. He said that because of the latest Census data, he thinks that Canyon County should gain another legislative seat. He now represents 45,000 people and he believes that reducing the number of legislative districts could disenfranchise the public. He urged the commission to keep communities of interest together and to keep the legislators as close to the people they represent as possible by preserving 35 districts. A copy of **Senator McGee's** testimony is available in the Commission Office.

Chairman Frasure then called **Mr. Chris Pentico** from Mountain Home. **Mr. Pentico** said that he echoed what **Senator McGee** said about keeping 34-35 districts and he also wanted the commission to keep rural counties together. He said he was concerned with putting rural and urban counties together.

Next called was **Mr. Barry Peterson**, Region 3, Republican Party Chairman. He proposed seven districts for the 9 southwest counties of Idaho, excluding Ada make up region 3, and outlined these districts in his written testimony, which is available in the commission office. The first district would include Adams, Payette, Washington and West Canyon Counties. The second would consist of Elmore, Owyhee and the South East Canyon County. The third would include Boise, Gem, Valley and North Ada County. The other four districts would be the balance of Canyon County. He stated that he tried to put together the other 8 counties in a way that minimizes the impact to Canyon County. **Commissioner Moses** asked **Mr. Peterson** if he would be submitting a map and he indicated he would not because he was reluctant to draw lines in Canyon County.

Senator Melinda Smyser was then called. She indicated that she did not wish to testify.

Chairman Frasure then called **Mr. Richard McMinn** who declined to testify at this time.

Mr. Tim Hix was also called and advised that he was at the meeting to listen.

Next called to testify was **Ms. Victoria Brown** from the 13th district, 60th precinct, in Nampa, Idaho. She thanked the commission for their service and said she doesn't envy their job. She indicated that everyone has a self interest and urged the commission to preserve counties and keep everything contiguous. She explained that currently district 13 is twice as big as it should be and she understands that there is probably no way to give everyone what they want in dividing that district. She expressed that the people in Caldwell and Nampa are different and should be in separate districts, however in Owyhee and Elmore counties life is somewhat the same and they should be together. She did not have an actual map to submit but would suggest keeping Caldwell separate from Nampa.

Chairman Frasure then called **Mr. Mark Briggs** from the Teamsters Local 483. He urged the commission to try to keep communities of interest in place and to try to keep politics out of the process.

Next called was **Mr. Ray Stark**, Senior Vice President, Boise Chamber of Commerce. He explained that the chamber supports keeping the Congressional Districts similar to what they are now; however suggests moving the dividing line to the west to accommodate the additional population. He then gave some historical perspective of legislative districting in Ada County. In 1981, what was telling about the redistricting plan was the incredible crossing of county boundaries. It was apparent that rural counties were coming in and grabbing population from Ada County. This practice has shrunk over the years and it is the Chamber's position to keep counties intact. He indicated that should the commission decide on 35 legislative districts, the Boise Chamber of Commerce would advocate 9 complete districts for Ada County. He also indicated that he had some experience with the website and that a friend of his was able to draw a map that did not divide Ada County. He also commented that the Maptitude software was very user friendly. A copy of **Mr. Stark's** testimony is available in the Commission Office.

Chairman Frasure then called **Ms. Rachel Raue** from Caldwell. **Ms. Raue** indicated that she felt that due to the population increase Canyon County could be eligible for 4 districts and she suggested 2 urban and 2 rural districts. The urban district would include the city of Caldwell and the urban district would contain the city of Nampa. She encouraged the commission to not favor one party over the other, and asked if she could submit a plan for just one county. **Chairman Frasure** indicated that the commission would welcome partial plans. As for congressional districts she suggested a northern and a southern district, and indicated she would submit a plan such as this.

As there were no further people signed up to testify **Chairman Frasure** asked if anyone in the audience would like to speak to the commission.

At that time **Commissioner Kane** stated that she appreciated the rural folks for coming in for the meeting. She reiterated that the commission would appreciate partial maps as the local citizens know their areas better than the commission.

Chairman Frasure then explained to the audience that the commission will be looking to switch just about 58,000 people from the 1st Congressional District to the 2nd Congressional District. He also explained that due to the increase in population in this area their legislative districts are now quite large and the commission is committed to finding the right solution.

Representative Brent Crane, from District 13, then asked the commission to keep in mind that they have been underrepresented in Congress and would like to see the congressional boundary moved west. With respect to rural and urban issues, he feels that he has been able to represent both so he does not believe that the commission has to worry that much about dividing the population into urban and rural districts.

Mr. Walt Baers, from Canyon County, District 11, expressed that the district he is in has parts of many towns in it and covers a lot of space. He would like to see a small, more compact district. **Commissioner Moses** expressed that this is a common theme with areas that are densely populated and places that are sparsely populated, and that the commission will do the best they can to insure that every individual in Idaho receive the same level of representation .

Next was **Mr. Joe Merrick**, Owyhee County Commissioner. He indicated that their current representatives have been from Twin Falls County and have represented them very well, however he agrees with the prior speakers that stated that they have more in common with Elmore County.

With that **Chairman Frasure** thanked everyone for coming, and recessed the meeting until the following afternoon.