

MINUTES
Approved by the Commission
Commission for Reapportionment
Wednesday, October 06, 2021
7:00 P.M.

Wood River Room, Earl R. Pond Student Union Building
Pocatello, Idaho

Members: (Commissioners) Cochairs Bart Davis and Dan Schmidt, Commissioners Thomas Dayley, Nels Mitchell, Amber Pence, and Eric Redman; (Commission Staff) Paul Boucher, Elizabeth Bowen, Keith Bybee, and Todd Cutler

Absent/Excused: None

Also present (Signed in): Shelby Andrus, Kevin Andrus, Tamara Cell, Jordan Cheirrett, Bob Christophersen, Jennifer Clark, Lon Colton, Jason Dixon, Ken Eliason, David Finkelburg, Ardice Fogelsong, Julie Hancock, Jeff Hugh, Kathleen Kangas, Bill Lewis, Jim Marieni, Elmer Martinez, Mark Mathews, M. Nye, Dan Rainey, Nancy Renn, Nathan Roberts, Jennifer Rodriguez, Donna Roe, James Ruchtj, Eric Stewart, Ann Swanson, Terrel Tovey, Scott Workman

The meeting was called to order by Cochair Davis at 7:00 p.m. A silent roll call was taken.

Opening Remarks

Cochair Davis explained the purpose of the Commission for Reapportionment. The commissioners introduced themselves.

Public Testimony

Cochair Davis invited the public to testify.

- Jason Dixon, the county clerk of Bannock County, testified against Plan L014. He cautioned the commission that too many county splits would create difficulties for county clerks and lead to mistakes in future elections. He also stated that too many county splits/different ballot styles would significantly raise the costs of running an election. He asked the commissioners to keep in mind the importance of election integrity as they go forward. Commissioner Mitchell pointed out that the county clerks in Ada and Canyon Counties were planning to redraft their precinct boundaries due to population growth. He asked Mr. Dixon if he wanted the commission to respect Bannock County's current precinct boundaries. Mr. Dixon said that it would be possible to redistrict while maintaining the current precinct boundaries.
- Bob Christophersen, an Oneida County commissioner, testified that he wasn't in favor of the commission's maps. He stated that Bear Lake, Franklin, Caribou, and Oneida Counties shouldn't be connected with Cassia County because the distance would make representation difficult. He asked that these four smaller counties be kept together because they shared rural and economic interests, and he suggested part of Bannock County could make up the rest of the needed population.
- Jordan Cheirrett testified that he would like Bear Lake, Franklin, Caribou, and Oneida Counties to stay together because they shared common rural interests. He stated the difficulty of travelling from Bear Lake County to Teton County in the current district, suggesting that these counties shouldn't be grouped together. He asked the commission to keep Bear Lake, Franklin, Caribou, and Oneida Counties together to protect their interests from being overpowered by urban interests. Cochair Schmidt asked Mr. Cheirrett how a community could lose fair representation when the legislative districts were divided evenly among the population. Mr. Cheirrett responded with the example that Bonneville County has had greater representation in his district for the last eight years because its larger population has allowed a representative from that county to be elected. Commissioner

Mitchell reminded Mr. Cheirrett that the district would still need to pull a significant population from Bannock County.

- Terrel Tovey, a Bannock County commissioner, summarized information that his county commission had gathered in preparation for the redistricting process. He testified concerning Plans L01 and L014. He stated that the cities of Pocatello and Bannock were separate entities with different interests, and therefore, Pocatello should have its own legislative district. He referenced Plan L014 and said that the urban population of Pocatello would overrun the rural population and representation would be unfair. He pointed to similar issues in Plan L01 regarding Chubbuck overpowering Franklin and Power Counties. Cochair Davis asked if Mr. Tovey wanted Pocatello to remain a "donut hole." Mr. Tovey responded that it was unavoidable because Pocatello was a single community of interest. Cochair Davis stated that Pocatello's district needed to be extended and asked Mr. Tovey if he would prefer the additional population to come from the Chubbuck area or from the Highland area of Pocatello. Mr. Tovey said that it made more sense to keep the city of Pocatello intact. He recommended the southern area of Bannock County be split off and added to Oneida and Franklin Counties. Cochair Davis reminded him that the entire state had to be considered when drawing new boundaries.
- Kathleen Kangas testified in favor of Plans L01, L053, C036, and C025. She approved of keeping Pocatello's district as a "donut hole" and asked the commission to avoid splitting any counties when drawing the congressional map.
- Lon Colton, the county clerk of Oneida County, testified that he would like Bear Lake, Franklin, Caribou, and Oneida Counties to remain together because they shared common interests and so that they wouldn't lose fair representation. He acknowledged that an elected representative could equally represent constituents regardless of where the representative lived within a district, but said he wasn't sure of the likelihood.
- Elmer Martinez, a former representative of the state legislature and former commissioner of the second 2011 redistricting commission, testified in support of Plan L053. He stated that the city of Pocatello's population was slightly over the desired size for a single legislative district and pointed out that the Mink Creek area of Pocatello could be moved to District 28 in order to balance the population difference between Districts 28 and 29. He argued that most of Mink Creek was outside of Pocatello's city limits and asked the commission to consider this adjustment.
- Representative Kevin Andrus stated his concern that urban communities diminish the voice of rural communities when combined into a single district. He also echoed earlier statements that Teton County and Bear Lake County shouldn't be part of the same district.
- Nathan Roberts testified in favor of Plan L053, which he submitted to the commission. He stated that the intent of the map was to correct the population difference between Districts 28 and 29. He reiterated that Pocatello should be part of its own district.
- Mark Matthews, a Caribou County commissioner, testified that he would like Bear Lake, Franklin, Caribou, and Oneida Counties to be kept together to maintain rural interests. He also said that these rural communities vet their candidates and know them very well before they run for office.
- Ann Swanson testified in support of Plan L053. She also referenced Plans C036 and C025, requesting that the commission keep the counties whole.
- Dan Rainey testified that he had concerns regarding Plan L01. He said that the number of external splits in Ada County was problematic as well as the odd shape of District 27. He recommended that District 27 be redrawn to avoid the "donut hole" shape. Cochair Davis agreed that L01 needed some "smoothing out," and he pointed out that the shape of existing precincts affected the boundary lines of proposed districts. Mr. Rainey expressed his desire for the Legislature to update county boundary lines that were established in the 1950s or earlier, which were now the basis for creating the legislative districts.

- Ken Eliason, an Oneida County commissioner, testified that Oneida and Cassia Counties shouldn't be combined in the same district because they weren't closely connected to each other. He would like Bear Lake, Franklin, Caribou, and Oneida Counties to remain together.
- Ardice Fogelsong referenced the legal criteria the commission was required to follow, specifically regarding communities of interest. She stated that Pocatello was a community of interest and asked the commission to keep that in mind through the redistricting process. She also reminded them of the legal criteria to not divide communities in order to protect a political party or incumbent. Cochair Davis responded by saying the commission was doing its best to be fair.
- Scott Workman, a former county commissioner for Franklin County and the district republican chairman, advised the commission not to separate districts that had been existing and working well for years. He said that Bear Lake, Franklin, Caribou, and Oneida Counties (District 32) had been a great working group for years and should stay together. He said Franklin County had nothing in common with Bannock County. Commissioner Pence stated that the four counties didn't have a large enough population to form a district. Mr. Workman agreed that part of Bannock County would be needed to meet the requirement.
- David Finkelnburg testified that he supported keeping Pocatello whole. He stated his approval of Plan L053, which kept most of the city together. He also referenced C01, which splits Ada County, and said he would prefer a map that didn't split any counties.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.