



WASHINGTON STATE REDISTRICTING COMMISSION

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Chronology of 1991 Redistricting Process

Introduction

The following chronology is a supplement to the final report of the Washington State Redistricting Commission. It provides a summary of the 1991 redistricting process and recommendations by each Commissioner for consideration by future Commissions.

Public Hearings

The Redistricting Commission conducted public hearings for the purpose of promulgation and public comment of administrative rules and procedures, public education of the revised redistricting process, and public information gathering. An effort was made to gather information from across the state, and to solicit views from individuals who attended the meetings. The comments and views uncovered areas of consensus and disagreement concerning communities of interest, and the factors and considerations important to citizen's sense of political representation. Throughout this process, special outreach efforts were made to involve racial and ethnic minority group and rural citizens in the redistricting process.

The Commission conducted a total of thirty-three public meetings, twenty-two of which were held during this period of public hearings. All meetings were publicly noticed and conducted pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 42.30 RCW. Minutes and transcripts of these meetings were prepared and made available to the public as required by RCW 42.32.030. Attached to this chronology is a schedule and highlights of the Commission's public meetings. This public hearing process made it difficult to impose any pre-conceived preferences of Commissioners or others on the final redistricting plan.

Third Party

The Commission considered public involvement a critical and necessary element of the redistricting process, and invited the public to submit third party redistricting plans. Proposed rules were adopted governing the preparation and submission of third party plans. As a result, twenty-three third party plans were presented to the Commission for review and consideration.

Commissioners Plans

Four initial redistricting plans were presented in a public meeting, one from each voting Commissioner. These plans were not characterized as Commission proposals since no unified proposal had yet been established. Commissioner plans attempted to respond to specific issues raised in previous public meetings or by written comments, principally regarding “community of interest” type of issues.

More public meetings were held to accept comments by both the public and Commissioners on each of the proposed plans. Additional third party plans were submitted during this period, some in response to Commissioner plans.

Arriving at a Commission Proposal

This period of the redistricting process involved Commissioner negotiation, compromise, and narrowing of issues and plans until a single plan was proposed for each of two arenas, legislative and congressional.

Comment of Commission Proposal

The public was given additional opportunity to comment on plans proposed by the Commission during at least two public meetings.

Adoption of Plan

The Commission formally adopted a plan including both legislative and congressional district boundaries. Extensive opportunities for comment on initial proposals and the final Commission proposal were provided to the public.

Statement of Reasons

Immediately after adoption, individual Commissioners delivered statements of reasons, responding to specific comments by the public on numerous issues, including the nature of the process (i.e., changes in district boundaries were a result of both public input and negotiation between Commissioners), racial issues, and discussion of communities of interest.

Recommendations for Future Commissions

Commissioners reflected thoughtfully on the completed redistricting process. Each offered recommendations for consideration by the Legislature and for future Commissions. Attached to this report are the Commissioners’ comments.