

From: Stan Forbes  
Date: Mon, Apr 26, 2021 at 2:20 PM  
Subject: public commet re legislatures lett

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Commission. I am Stan Forbes. I was Commission Chair from 2012 to 2017 and represented it successfully in a competition with 500 other programs at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. We were awarded a \$100,000 grant to visit other states to share the Commission's success in drawing fair, non-partisan districts. We spoke to Legislatures and the public in 12 states; I personally spoke in 8.

In each state the Commission was considered the Gold Standard of redistricting due to its transparency and public participation. But independence from the Legislature also was critical in establishing the Commission's Gold Standard credibility as non-partisan. The fact is the public doesn't trust the Legislature. It believes the politicians will game the system and it simply isn't possible to have an independent Commission. They were astounded that we were truly and completely independent, non-partisan and successfully resisted political influence.

The most important and indeed the only currency the Commission has with the public is its integrity including its perceived integrity. Once the public believes the politicians are able to influence the process, whether true or not, the public's trust in the Commission will be at risk. With the loss of that trust, the map's integrity could be in question. Integrity once lost cannot be recovered.

Therefore, I urge you to ignore the letter from the Legislature asking you to accelerate your process. The Commission needs to take the time necessary to let the public fully express their views regarding how lines should be drawn. The Commission must avoid any appearance politicians are driving or even influencing the process. I encourage you to set a timeline that meets the Commission's and the public's needs, not the Legislatures.

You represent the people of California who gave you independent power because they trust you, not the politicians, to draw fair districts. Avoid any appearance of compromising that trust.