

From: **Margaret Okuzumi**

Date: Sat, Sep 18, 2021 at 9:45 AM

Subject: Non-geographic specific comments to the commission

To: <[votersfirstact@crc.ca.gov](mailto:votersfirstact@crc.ca.gov)>

Hi, I submitted the following via the webform yesterday, but I realize that the webform doesn't ask for my name so I am submitting via email to ensure that this gets submitted to the CRC Commissioners. - Margaret Okuzumi, Sunnyvale, CA

Some general comments in response to today's meeting:

I've been struck by how relatively few public comments have been submitted for this 2020 redistricting compared to 2010. I have a few theories about this, other than because of the US Census data being delayed and general exhaustion of groups and the populace due to the pandemic at keeping up with everything.

The first is that I believe that most people are generally content with the existing district lines, and believe that the lines will probably not change much (not thinking too hard about how we are losing a congressional district), and I'd like for Commissioners to keep this in mind, that for the most part the reasons for district lines (and all the comments) from last time mostly still apply, and for the most part community characteristics haven't changed drastically from 2010.

As a political person I've noticed that public comments have frequently been made by people with ulterior political agendas for someone-in-that-area's political career, and I hope that the Commissioners are sophisticated enough to recognize this, and will scrutinize the reasons given for a COI and probe whether or not they really hold water, rather than merely accepting the suggested COIs at face value.

And yes, it's unfortunately true that many even political people still don't quite know how to provide comment to the commission, or feel that they have any useful information to provide, when they have a lot of valuable, valid, completely nonpartisan input to provide regarding their COIs.

[NOTE: Submitted COI maps that are missing a parcel in the middle are likely because the drawing tool is a little quirky, and unincorporated areas may be not included in the city/town selection, and if the person doesn't know to switch it to "tracts" to select the unselected parcel and figure out how to select it, they may have decided the map was good enough, and that it would be obvious that the wholly interior parcel should be included.]

I read the letter from the LA County Counsel, and I see that there are good reasons why the primary election cannot be delayed to accommodate an extension of the redistricting timelines. This is concerning, because it takes a lot of time to draw good lines. I was a principal line drawer for the Sierra Club's comments to the CRC in 2010, working on the computers provided to the public by the Rose Foundation in Berkeley in the same offices as CRC line-drawing staff. From what I observed there, I can tell you that the process was overly compressed last time, which was

probably why the law was changed to give CRC more time to draw the lines this time around. Unfortunately this extra time has been negated by the delay in the US Census releasing the data.

In 2010, CRC staff were frequently pulling a string of all-nighters, sometimes in tears and under great pressure as they worked to turn around maps under too-short deadlines. I was there along with them witnessing this while drawing lines for the Sierra Club, and felt terrible for them. If the CA Supreme Court doesn't permit an extension to the redistricting timeline, which there are really good reasons for them not to do that, then it's going to be extremely rough going this time around. I saw the CRC + staff not able to take the time to optimize the lines to prevent neighborhood or city splits, and it was painful to watch. In particular, I felt the LA area lines got short shrift as the commission ran out of time, as well as the congressional districts generally speaking.

So I urge this CRC to be quicker to make decisions that shape the major bones of the lines and to be more specific in directing the line drawers accordingly so that there is more time for the public to react and the lines to be refined, rather than merely asking "what might that district look like?"

For example as I mentioned today, does it make sense for any of the SF districts to jump across the bay to Oakland or not? That will have a domino effect for much of the bay. It won't do for you to spend time asking the line drawers to explore district scenarios that require district(s) to jump across the bay and then later ask them to change things around so that they don't, or vice versa. There frankly isn't a lot of time to piddle around with exploring a lot of different scenarios before settling on the major framework if you want to get done by the statutory deadline. For exploratory scenarios, be really specific about what you want to see can be accomplished or not. For example, is it possible to make 2 districts in the approximate area of CD 17 & 18 that are both plurality Asian CVAP, since this seems to be a concern (putting aside the actual ethnic breakdown within "Asian" of the different areas)? Try to come to early consensus as a commission as best you can (given the paucity of input this time around), which areas/regions should definitely be together, and which can go either way?

If it's possible for the demographers to provide maps showing in which tracts population has increased and where they have decreased compared to 2010 (and the relative % increases or decreases, that would be helpful, and similarly with the various CVAPs. This could help the CRC to better visualize and conceptualize major or minor adjustments to the districts compared to 2010.

I do have specific comments about specific COIs, which I will submit separately. Am a bit late weighing in this time around due to personal life issues beyond my control.

You have an enormous task ahead of you to draw lines for our whole gigantic state of 39.5 million people to best serve democracy. Please be mindful of the statutory deadlines, and thank you for your dedication and service.

