



STATE OF ARIZONA

JANICE K. BREWER  
GOVERNOR

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

October 26, 2011

Colleen Mathis, Chair  
Independent Redistricting Commission  
1100 W. Washington Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Ms. Mathis:

I write to comment on the draft Congressional-District map (Map) proposed by the Independent Redistricting Commission (IRC) on October 3, 2011. I request that this letter be made part of the IRC record.

I have many concerns about the draft Map. The concerns are so grave, that I believe the IRC has not satisfied its constitutional duty requiring it to conduct this vital electoral activity in an honest, independent and impartial fashion that upholds public confidence in the integrity of the redistricting process.

Fundamentally, the IRC's draft Map does a disservice to Arizona because it fails to recognize the important and distinct rural population in Arizona and the respective communities of interest. Arizona is a diverse state in many ways, including but not limited to, population centers, climate, terrain, industry, large metropolitan areas and vast rural sections. Instead of following the Arizona Constitution's mandate for geographically compact and contiguous districts that respect communities of interest, the draft Map's purported rural districts meander in and out of rural areas and include major metropolitan areas. For example, the proposed District 4 splices Lake Havasu and Bullhead City with the San Tan Valley and Florence in Pinal County and Fountain Hills in Maricopa County. This district is further combined with a severed Yuma County on the Colorado River. In addition, District 4 oddly veers in between proposed Districts 5 and 6, while District 1 veers toward Tucson.

Furthermore, the Arizona Constitution specifies that the IRC shall use visible geographic features, city, town and county boundaries, and undivided census tracts when drawing district lines. Despite this mandate, the IRC has cut in half Yuma and Cochise counties and disregarded other geographic features in proposing two sweeping and incongruous districts.

October 26, 2011

Page 2

Because Districts 1, 3, and 4 are patently tortured and spliced, I request that the constitutional requirements be followed to properly address and represent the vital and distinct rural areas of Arizona. The IRC should produce a map that has two rural districts wholly outside of the metropolitan areas of Phoenix and Tucson.

I believe the IRC also violated the Arizona Constitution by elevating "competitiveness" above the other goals, especially in relation to the proposed District 9 and the other districts in Maricopa County. Competitive districts should be drawn where to do so would create no significant detriment to the other goals mandated by the Arizona Constitution. The IRC, before the other districts in Maricopa County were even drawn, drew the proposed District 9 for competitiveness and abandoned the required grid-like pattern initially required. In turn, the other Maricopa County districts were drawn around District 9.

As noted, this erroneous outcome also was a result of the IRC disregarding the required initial grid-like pattern map when drawing Maricopa County districts. The IRC ultimately left a gaping hole - now well known as the "donut hole" - in the grid map for Maricopa County violating the specific process the IRC is required to follow. As the Arizona Supreme Court has determined, if the IRC fails to follow the mandated procedures then it has "clearly" violated the Constitution.

Additionally, the IRC appears to be intentionally inconsistent with its application of the concept of competitiveness. For example, the proposed District 1, a district traditionally known for its intense competition and generally considered to be a swing district, now is clearly not competitive. It is estimated that due to the IRC's glaring gerrymandering, the IRC has increased the Democrat registration edge to nearly ten percent. If one defines competitive as a district in which neither major party has an advantage over the other, a nearly ten percent voter registration differential is a significant advantage and is not competitive by any reasonable person standard.

Finally, it appears that another factor behind the IRC's proposed Map was the insistence on three districts touching the international border. While having greater exposure to border issues is of paramount importance to Arizona, requiring three border districts is not one of the constitutional criteria. To contort proposed District 1 to touch a sliver of the border at the expense of other constitutional criteria, including the severing of Cochise County and its community of interest, is improper.

The citizens of Arizona deserve better and expect the IRC to follow the straightforward constitutional requirements prioritizing geographically compact and contiguous districts and respecting communities of interest. Otherwise, the public will not have confidence in the integrity of the redistricting process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janice K. Brewer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Janice K. Brewer  
Governor