

**MINUTES OF THE
REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE**

Monday, November 27, 2006 – 5:00 p.m. – Washington County Commission Chambers

Members Present:

Sen. Curtis S. Bramble, Senate Chair
Rep. David Clark, House Chair
Sen. D. Chris Buttars
Sen. Sheldon Killpack
Rep. Jackie Biskupski
Rep. John Dougall
Rep. Gregory H. Hughes
Rep. David Litvack
Rep. Stephen H. Urquhart

Members Absent:

Sen. Gene Davis
Sen. Michael G. Waddoups
Rep. Ben C. Ferry

Staff Present:

John Cannon, Managing Policy Analyst
Mark D. Andrews, Policy Analyst
Joseph Wade, Policy Analyst
John L. Fellows, Deputy General Counsel
Joy L. Miller, Legislative Secretary

Note: A list of others present, a copy of related materials, and an audio recording of the meeting can be found at www.le.utah.gov.

1. Committee Business

Chair Clark called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. Sen. Davis, Sen. Waddoups, and Rep. Ferry were excused from the meeting.

Chair Clark explained the purpose of the Committee is to develop a redistricting plan in the event Utah is successful in gaining a fourth congressional seat. He stated the Committee has been considering a rural and urban mix for each district and explained the population requirements that must be taken into account.

Sen. Bramble mentioned there has been much discussion of whether population estimates should be used for Washington County since it has experienced a great deal of growth. He pointed out that the Committee must use the most accurate census data down to individual census blocks. He noted that the governor will only support dividing Salt Lake County into two districts.

2. Four District Congressional Plan – Public Hearing

Mr. Dean Cox expressed concern that after the districts are divided, certain areas will continue to experience rapid growth which will cause an imbalance in the population among the districts. He said that from his perspective, Plans I and J look good.

Chair Clark stated the Committee must comply with population and equality in numbers among the districts. The Committee must use the population data provided in the 2000 Census.

Mr. Roland Hunter, Washington County resident, expressed concern that within the 2nd congressional district, inner Salt Lake City dictates the representation of Washington County which has different interests.

Mr. Cyril Noble, Chairman of Washington County Democrats, said he perceived an unfairness in the makeup of the Committee representation. Washington County has a tremendous opportunity for growth. He asked that Plan J be taken under advisement.

Mr. Doug Alder, Washington County, argued in favor of Plan J. He stressed the need for both rural and urban areas within each of the districts. He stated that Rich and Cache counties should remain together.

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Mr. Dave Watson asked if the Committee believed that Congress would realistically consider this proposal. He recommended that in the redistricting process Iron, Garfield, Washington, and Kane counties remain together.

Sen. Bramble indicated he did not know with certainty what Congress will do. He noted that with the change in leadership after the first of the year, it has been represented that the Vote DC movement was gaining momentum. It is incumbent on the Legislature to move forward at this time.

Sen. Bill Hickman, Washington County, said he would prefer waiting until the next census before redistricting. He commented that Plans I and J do not represent the needs of rural Utah. He said it appears Plan C would be the better choice.

Mr. Larry Meyers, attorney, St. George, asked that the Committee not create a heavily Democratic district in an attempt to protect a Democratic congressman. He requested that the Legislature wait for the next census prior to redistricting.

Cochairs Clark and Bramble pointed out that Utah's opportunity is now. The number one principle in the process is equal population, single member districts. The Committee is not trying to draw a map based on partisan politics.

Rep. Michael Noel stated there is a different ideology in Salt Lake City than in southern Utah. He said there is a strong connection between Kane, Iron, Washington, and Garfield counties. Utah should put forth its best effort to redistrict and follow through.

Mr. Earl Thomas, Hurricane resident, indicated that Plan C has some merit.

Mr. Alan Gardner, Washington County Commissioner, stated he preferred Plan J or perhaps Plan C. He agreed with the concerns expressed by Sen. Hickman and Rep. Noel.

Mr. Craig Seegmiller stated that an equal mix of both rural and urban areas would be the best solution.

Mr. Kris Lounsbury, GOP member, cautioned that the Legislature not appear to be bargaining and conceding that DC needs a voting seat in Congress.

Mr. Kris Ballard, St. George resident, encouraged the Legislature to push forward in developing a 4th congressional district.

Mr. Jim Eardley, Washington County Commission, pointed out that with a 4th congressional seat, Utah would receive another electoral vote as well. Currently there are 145,000 people in Washington County. He hoped there was something that could be done to make the numbers reflect the true population.

Mr. Fellows explained constitution and federal law require that the Legislature use the best population figures available. Any attempts to use population figures other than those provided in the 2000 census would be legally challenged and the Legislature would be required to redistrict using the census figures.

Mr. Josh Warburton, Independent Publishing Company, said at this point he supported Plan J. He asked that the Committee also consider trying to divide the plans as geographically equal as possible.

Chair Clark expressed appreciation to the county commission for the use of its facilities and to the public for their comments.

3. Adjourn

MOTION: Sen. Killpack moved to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Clark adjourned the meeting at 6:35 p.m.