

Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission
January 28, 2021 Meeting Public Comment

Date of Submission: Thursday, January 28, 2021 6:56AM
Method of Submission: Email To <Redistricting@Michigan.gov>
Name: John Moote
Subject: Redistricting

I echo Rachel Neal's public comments to the commission on Jan 23, 2021, we live less than 15 minutes from Ann Arbor in Salem Township and are thrown into a gerrymandered republican district that extends out to Lansing. And that throws us into being represented by Walberg, let me be clear, representing me, that tried to overturn a certified set of electors in the 2020 Presidential election.

Take a look at Walberg's district. Outrageous. Please fix this. That's why we voted for an independent redistricting commission.

Regards,

John Moote

Date of Submission: Wednesday, January 27, 2021 11:32AM
Method of Submission: Email To <Redistricting@Michigan.gov>
Name: tag
Subject: Public Comment

I have been following the Commission's progress since it's inception and would like to make some suggestions:

1) Apply for an extension of the 11/21/21 deadline. It does not appear possible that the necessary work will be completed by that date. Rather than rush to judgement, adequate time is required to build this platform.

2) The meeting minutes detail many perfunctory accomplishments, but very little work or decisions on core issues. Rather than waiting for census data, it is possible to build on existing data to shape our districts and then adjust them with the new data points. Looking at all the misshapen districts we have now, it would seem to be an easy first step to follow county boundaries or some other criteria and then expand or contract the district lines. Maybe even break out into work groups of 2 or 3 and come up with solutions - divide and conquer!

3) The ratio of US House seats should match State House seats since both are a reflection of population. Michigan will certainly lose 1 or 2 of its 14 US seats due to population shifts. Should the 110 State

House seats remain the same? With only 83 counties, that number seems extremely bloated. And the House Senate?

4) Technical support is indeed necessary, but it does not supplant sound rationale and reasoning. The RFP should only assist the Commission in their decisions, not replace it. People are inherently distrustful of machine logic when they cannot question the source providing such important conclusions. And these conclusions are only as good as the programmer who wrote them.

That's it for now. Keep up the good work and I look forward to seeing your progress.

tom garvale

Carpe Diem

Date of Submission: Saturday, January 23, 2021 2:15PM
Method of Submission: Email To <Redistricting@Michigan.gov>
Name: Rmneal99
Subject: Redistricting

Hello,
My name is Rachel Neal and I am a citizen of Scio Township. I saw a tweet from Jocelyn Benson about the redistricting that is being done and saw that citizens can send recommendations. Scio township is less than 15 minutes from downtown Ann Arbor and most of us here consider ourselves Ann Arbor residents. Currently, we belong to the 7th district and our representative is Tim Walberg. Congressman Walberg does not represent our community. I feel as though we should belong in the same district as Ann Arbor. If I lived across the street, I would be in congresswoman Dingell's district who I feel represents me and my neighbors more than Tim Walberg ever will. I am tired of feeling like I am not represented because Walberg only cares about his conservative voters. If you could please take into consideration including Scio township (specifically the Scio Farms Estates subdivision) in the same district as Ann Arbor I feel like my neighbors and myself would be much better represented in Congress. Thank you for taking the time to read this email.
Sincerely,
Rachel Neal

Date of Submission: Friday, January 22, 2021 5:35PM
Method of Submission: Email To <Redistricting@Michigan.gov>
Name: Moon Duchin
Subject: Letter of Interest

Dear Commissioners, Dear SOS Liaison to the Commission:

My name is Moon Duchin; I'm a math professor at Tufts University and I run a research group called the MGGG Redistricting Lab that is at the forefront of data science work on redistricting.

I attach a letter of interest regarding support services we would like to offer the Michigan Independent Redistricting Commission.

Please let me know if this is suited to any planned RFP. I would also be very pleased to attend a commission meeting or hearing and explain some of our work at your convenience.

Best regards,
Moon Duchin

--

Moon Duchin
Associate Professor of Mathematics
Director, Program in Science, Technology, & Society
Senior Fellow, Tisch College of Civic Life
Tufts University



MGGG Redistricting Lab
Tisch College, Tufts University
contact@mggg.org

January 22, 2021

To the Members and Support Staff of the Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission,

Congratulations on the formation of Michigan's first citizen redistricting commission! Your Commission is about to embark on the intensely difficult and rewarding task of building the districts that will convert voter preferences into representation. Our Lab is extremely interested in assisting this crucial democracy work, and after attending your public hearing yesterday online, we urge you to act quickly in securing data-driven support and in elaborating a detailed timeline for your efforts.

The MGGG Redistricting Lab is a multidisciplinary group of mathematicians, data scientists, geographers, developers, and outreach specialists based at the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life at Tufts University. We engage in cutting-edge research and develop practical applications to assist in designing and upholding best practices for redistricting. The Lab is scrupulously **non-partisan** and provides research support to all kinds of stakeholders who value transparency and data-driven decisionmaking. We are **researchers, not advocates**, and we do not take a position on laws or candidates or try to impose any preferred scores of fairness.

Our Lab has developed a robust collection of tools for supporting community groups, commissions, and legislative stakeholders across the country in their redistricting-related efforts. We have numerous peer-reviewed publications on redistricting that have appeared in mathematics, statistics, policy, political science, data science, and law journals, and we have assisted in public mapping outreach in projects across the country.

There are several services we can provide to support the Commission's important work, and we can help design a realistic and detailed timeline for doing this work in time to comfortably meet your November 21, 2021 deadline for final map delivery, which requires major decisions to be made by Spring.

1. Specifying criteria – recommended for February and March

Michigan's new Commission is working at an advantage relative to line-drawers in many other states: the state constitution provides a framework of districting rules and criteria ([Article IV Sec 6. \(13\) \(c\)](#)). But there is still important work to be done in making those criteria concrete and actionable, so that they can be used to evaluate maps in comparison with one another. For example, the Commission's maps must "reflect consideration of county, city, and township boundaries." But this is open to interpretation: should we prefer a plan with the highest number of intact counties? Or where counties are cut into the fewest number of pieces? If the Commission sets a fixed interpretation for each of its principles in advance, it is creating the



conditions for a smoother and more successful process of evaluating plan proposals in its later work.

To take another example, districts must not “provide a disproportionate advantage to any political party,” but this too is open to various possibilities for measurement. Commissioners may want to know whether placing a high priority on drawing *competitive* districts would come at a price to the other listed criteria, such as electoral opportunity for minority communities that is guaranteed under the federal Voting Rights Act. These are the kinds of questions that a good math modeling team can help clarify.

2. Communities of interest support – recommended for February through June

In Michigan, taking communities of interest (COIs) seriously is not a choice, it’s a legal requirement! But this requires both community outreach and data science support. Our Lab can help collect input through our online mapping tool, districtr.org, and we can assist the Commission by curating the collected map data from that and other platforms into a synthesized and aggregated format. Thousands of individual submissions will be compiled into a manageable “heatmap” collection of zones and neighborhoods that reflect the places, and narratives, compiled around the state. This will let commissioners see a distillation of public input within a mapping interface, enabling COI consideration in a way that was not possible in any previous redistricting cycle.

3. Plan evaluation – recommended to start in Spring and fine-tune with new Census data in Fall

Drawing plans while taking a long list of criteria and priorities into account is a massively complex task. We propose to assist by providing two to three cycles of plan evaluation for the Commission’s draft maps. We will compare draft maps to millions of alternative plans drawn by randomized districting algorithms—used here for comparison *only*. Plans will be compared according to the quantitative criteria refined in Stage 1 (including COI preservation) as well as electoral effectiveness for minority voters in Michigan. With this feedback, the Commission can prepare subsequent draft plans. We propose to conclude the partnership by supplying a quantitative report on the Commission’s final plans to promote public understanding.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to assisting the Commission in this exciting work.

Sincerely,

Moon Duchin

Associate Professor of Mathematics, Tufts University

Senior Fellow in Tisch College of Civic Life

Principal Investigator, MGGG Redistricting Lab (mggg.org)



Selected experience for Moon Duchin and MGGG Redistricting Lab

This small selection illustrates that the scale of our projects varies from city- to county- to state-level mapping and analysis.

March 2020 – Lab provides public mapping support for City of Napa, CA in California Voting Rights Act redistricting. ([link to city site](#))

January 2020 – Lab provides public mapping support and racially polarized voting analysis in Yakima County, WA in the course of Washington Voting Rights Act challenge. ([link to materials](#))

October 2019 – Lab provides public mapping support in City of Lowell, MA in ranked choice vs. districts debate, supporting city during first-ever move to districts. ([link to materials](#))

January 2018 – Duchin named expert consultant on partisan balance of proposed maps for Governor Tom Wolf of Pennsylvania in remedial phase of *LWV v. Pennsylvania*. ([link to announcement](#))

2018–19 – Duchin honored for work in geometry of redistricting with fellowships from Guggenheim Foundation and Radcliffe Institute. ([Guggenheim](#) / [Radcliffe](#))

Selected publications

Daryl DeFord, Natasha Dhamankar, Moon Duchin, Mackenzie McPike, Gabe Schoenbach, and Ki-Wan Sim, ***Implementing partisan symmetry: Problems and paradoxes***. *Political Analysis*, to appear.

Daryl DeFord, Moon Duchin, and Justin Solomon, ***A computational approach to measuring vote elasticity and competitiveness***. *Statistics and Public Policy*, Vol 7, No 1 (2020), 69–86.

Daryl DeFord and Moon Duchin, ***Redistricting reform in Virginia: Districting criteria in context***. *Virginia Policy Review*, Volume XII, Issue II, Spring 2019, 120–146.

Amicus Brief of Mathematicians, Law Professors, and Students in Support of Appellees and Affirmance, Robert Rucho, et. al., v. Common Cause, et. al., U.S., (2019), No. 18-422, 2019 WL 1216250 (principal co-authorship: Moon Duchin and Guy-Uriel Charles)

Moon Duchin, Taissa Gladkova, Eugene Henninger-Voss, Ben Klingensmith, Heather Newman, and Hannah Wheelen, ***Locating the representational baseline: Republicans in Massachusetts***. *Election Law Journal*, Volume 18, Number 4, 2019, 388–401.

Moon Duchin, ***Gerrymandering metrics: How to measure? What's the baseline?*** *Bulletin of the American Academy for Arts and Sciences*, Vol. LXII, No. 2 (Winter 2018), 54–58.

Mira Bernstein and Moon Duchin, ***A formula goes to court: Partisan gerrymandering and the efficiency gap***. *Notices of the American Mathematical Society* 64 No. 9 (2017), 1020–1024.