

***Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission***  
***September 17 and 18, 2020 Meeting Public Comment***

**Date of Submission:** Wednesday, September 16, 2020

**Method of Submission:** SurveyMonkey 9/17/20 Public Comment Signup

**Name:** [Not Provided]

**Public Comment:** My idea on the districts: Take the number of districts needed in the state and make perfect, same size (or as close as you can dealing with the borders along the lakes) squares. Maybe have a computer do it? With perfect, same size (or as close as you can dealing with the borders along the lakes) squares, it will make it as fair as possible. Thank you!

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**Date of Submission:** Wednesday, September 16, 2020

**Method of Submission:** SurveyMonkey 9/17/20 Public Comment Signup

**Name:** [Not Provided]

**Written Public Comment:** Do you plan to hold more than the required 15 (10+5) public hearings?

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**Date of Submission:** Wednesday, September 16, 2020

**Method of Submission:** SurveyMonkey 9/17/20 Public Comment Signup

**Name:** Nancy Wang, Voters Not Politicians

**Written Public Comment:** Congratulations! On behalf of Voters Not Politicians and our thousands of volunteers and supporters across the state, we are so grateful that you have raised your hand to participate in this historic effort. Our state Constitution begins, "All political power is inherent in the people." This amendment was written of, for, and by the people of Michigan who used our power to unrig our elections and make every vote count. It was a labor of hundreds of voters to ensure that our solution to extreme partisan gerrymandering would be the best fit for Michigan. It is incredible to see our vision come to fruition. As you begin your journey, we hope you know that Voters Not Politicians will be here every step of the way, working diligently to empower communities across the state to have their voices heard through the public hearing process. We are excited, as we hope you are too, to learn more about our great state through this process, and to ensure that all voters, including those of us who have been left out, left behind, or otherwise marginalized are represented in our halls of government. Again, thank you for your commitment to this process, and we look forward to working alongside you to ensure that voters can choose their politicians – not the other way around.

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**Date of Submission:** Thursday, September 17, 2020 11:46 AM

**Method of Submission:** Email To <Redistricting@Michigan.gov>

**Name:** Alan Binkow

**Email Subject:** Public Comment for Commission meeting, 09/18/2020

Dear Commissioners,

Congratulations on embarking on this historical endeavor for the State of Michigan! I wish you all the best of luck. My name is Alan S. Binkow; I am a 59-year-old computer expert currently living in Troy, MI. I applied for this commission (and was unable to become a member), but I intend to stay involved in the process. I have been working in this arena, and toward an end to gerrymandering, for more than seven years. I apologize that I am not able to address you in person today – but I do have a job and was unable to get the necessary time off.

Assuming you are reading this at the beginning of the September 18 session, you are about to hear from expert panels. These experts, by and large, have come from a public service and public policy perspective. My focus has been different: could I, with my knowledge of computers and information technology, design a method and algorithm that is both a) a totally and completely fair method, with a completely level playing field giving no group or groups an advantage; and b) make that method and algorithm impossible to corrupt, by someone seeking to sway the balance (whether that person was a Michigan political party or an outside agent attempting to sway the election)? I am proud and honored to report that I have succeeded, and I wish to present that method and algorithm to you for your consideration.

The algorithm is designed to provide a completely level playing field, giving no political party ANY advantage over another (other than the eventual advantage of more voters voting for them). The method and algorithm are designed to be used by 13 commissioners, none of whom trust the others – and yet to be completely trustworthy to each of them. If, as it happens, you DO trust each other – singly, in groups, or all 13 of you – that is a bonus but does not influence the outcome.

The method and algorithm are designed so that no commissioner or group of commissioners can influence the outcome. (There is a provision for a supermajority of commissioners to vote to overturn the eventual map and reproduce a new one – but barring an extremely rare special case there is no impetus for the commission to do that).

The method and algorithm are designed to completely eliminate any possibility of outside forces influencing the outcome. Anyone attempting to hack into the process would discover that their efforts would have no effect on the eventual conclusion. Even I – the programmer of the software -- could have no influence on the eventual outcome, and it is designed to be easy to verify that nothing I could possibly incorporate into the software would have the slightest bias whatsoever.

It has taken me seven years to devise and test this methodology, but it DOES work. It completely eliminates the potential personal bias of any individual or group – whether that individual or group is a Michigan citizen, a commissioner, the Secretary of State, citizen of another state, or citizen of another country – from the eventual result.

Unfortunately, this forum and public comment structure does not permit me an appropriate method to share this methodology and algorithm with you; there is some complexity that requires diagramming, and I would need at least an hour of your time to explain it fully and answer all of your questions. I

would appreciate the opportunity to address you at length. If the only way to do that is to become part of your staff, please consider this statement as my request to do so. I look forward to hearing from you, and continuing this journey with you.

Sincerely,

Alan S. Binkow

Troy, MI 48084

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**Date of Submission:** Thursday, September 17, 2020

**Method of Submission:** SurveyMonkey 9/17/20 Public Comment Signup

**Name:** Anthony Scannell

**Written Public Comment:** I would like to applaud the commission & the Secretary of State on getting this commission started-off & running on a good footing. This is one of the most essential components needed to regain control of our democratic rights; wrestling the decision-making power, as to: "Who?" gets represented and 'where & how' their power is augmented through grouping or association. That is one of the consequences of creating "Legislative districts". In common sense method, areas are supposed to be grouped-together based on geographical proximity & characteristics of community-cohesion. Rather, the previous method of drawing districts gave the power to partisans who sliced, diced, lumped & divided communities of commonality. These augmentations to obvious groups diminished power of certain voting communities, as evidenced by the disparity in percentage of Michiganders who typically vote for a Democratic Representative versus the percentage of Legislative seats which are held Democratic. And that was a result of the 2010 census + Tea party election. All this is to be said to highlight the fact that the Two-party hegemony currently dictating policy in this country is perhaps the most destructive force in society, if not just in politics, as it gives way to an endless back-and-forth of finger-pointing & blame-passing for accountability to decisions made in the course of Governance, come each subsequent election. Even the presumptions of this very commission's conception are based on the faulty pretext of a certain composition of Democrats, Republicans & Independents - as if those could accurately accommodate a country of ~330million. The next steps to regain control of our democracy are to rid elections of bottomless corporate money & to enact a form of ranked-choice or runoff voting - so that we may have the choices we deserve in Presidential, legislative & other elections. Congratulations & great work.

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**Date of Submission:** Thursday, September 17, 2020

**Method of Submission:** SurveyMonkey 9/17/20 Public Comment Signup

**Name:** Abigael Hodsdon (Age 16)

**Written Public Comment:** I understand the selection process was random however, there is no one from the Upper Peninsula on the committee nor is there representation from any of Michigan's Indigenous tribes. In listening to your introductions this morning, I heard a lot of you say that you wanted to serve all of Michigan. I wanted to know what kinds of ideas you have to make sure all of Michigan has input. I am fully aware that as an 11th grade student without the legal ability to vote that my question may not carry weight however, I am very active in my community, I understand Civics better than most, and I am keenly aware on how important district maps are in determining a region's funding and local issues. Thank you for your service. I wish you all the best on this mission. Abigail Hodsdon Ortonville Michigan

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**Date of Submission:** Thursday, September 17, 2020

**Method of Submission:** SurveyMonkey 9/18/20 Public Comment Signup

**Name:** Ryan Stewart

**Written Public Comment:** My name is Ryan Stewart, and I live in Trenton Michigan. I'm ecstatic that we've now got an independent redistricting commission. My question is to address regional distinctions, as well as competitiveness - I live Downriver, and my hope is that putting together districts with similar interests will be addressed. For example - it would make more sense to put communities along the Detroit river in a singular district because they will have similar economic, environmental needs, etc - instead of putting Trenton in a District with Ann Arbor, as we currently are. This would also provide more alignment with districts at state and municipal government levels as well (for example - our Wayne County district includes the waterfront communities), which would allow for more alignment at all levels of government to be more productive and representative of the population. I hope that you would consider factoring these sorts of considerations in when making your districts, as I think in the long run it would work to more effectively allocate government resources, reduce overlap and redundancy in spending and decision making, and allow for local regions to have more influence at a municipal level to leverage their influence and community-based agendas.

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**Date of Submission:** Friday, September 18, 2020 9:27 AM

**Method of Submission:** Email To <Redistricting@Michigan.gov>

**Name:** Robert Dindoffer

**Email Subject:** Public Comment – Commission Staff Structure

**Comment and Proposal Related to Commission Staff Structure and Commissioner Autonomy**

I am writing to explain how a purely centralized Commission staff structure could impact the autonomy of each Commissioner and propose a solution to address this challenge.

I am currently a practicing attorney, but in my former life — years ago — I was involved professionally in politics and the legislative process. I have moved on from my partisan political life but my experience with the legislative process informs my comments below.

Under the law (Const. Art. IV, §6(11)), each Commissioner will be prohibited from normal give-and-take verbal discussions with any member of the public (except their personal attorneys or at pre-scheduled public events). Even a discussion with one's spouse regarding Commission business would likely be unlawful. For a Commissioner to engage in meaningful discussion and seek meaningful counsel, she or he will be required to look solely to the other Commissioners and the Commission staff. While this is a well-intentioned restriction related to transparency, it could have significant negative impacts related to Commissioner autonomy.

In particular, if the Commission adopts a purely centralized staff structure — without providing a dedicated attorney or staff member to each Commissioner — then autonomy may be jeopardized. The centralized staff could unintentionally act as a filter of information or ideas, leading to homogenous thinking or group-think tendencies. This concern is not a partisan one. It is simply human nature for people working closely together to adopt a group identity that tends to exclude outside-the-box thinking. I believe that this tendency is the opposite of the goals of the Commission, and staff structure can be used to help guard against it.

I propose that the Commission allow each Commissioner to retain an attorney or other staff member to provide counsel solely to that Commissioner (in addition to a centralized administrative staff to handle centralized functions). The Commissioner's staff member would be a counselor and sounding-board for the individual Commissioner and have no divided loyalties. This will help to empower each individual Commissioner to make independent decisions by providing valuable perspective that may differ (or agree) with that of the centralized staff. It would also give each Commissioner access to staff labor that prioritizes that Commissioner's ideas first, rather than solely prioritizing the ideas of any majority bloc that might form on the Commission.

While the ultimate goal of the Commission is consensus, that consensus should be built by fully-advised, independent Commissioners. Independent staff will promote this outcome.

Please also note that the Commission is a legislative body according to our Constitution. Just as with any other legislative office, each Commissioner can be guaranteed some level independence by hiring a limited staff for her or his office.

From a legal standpoint, I am convinced that this structure could be accomplished through the use of a conditional motion that complies with Subsection 12 of Art. IV, § 6 of the Constitution. Under such a Motion, the Commissioners could agree to the hiring of each Commissioner's independent counsel or staff and allow each Commissioner to set their own staff's hours (within some reasonable maximum limit). Under such a motion, if a Commissioner wished to replace her or his attorney or staff member, she or he could cut the staff member's hours without technically dismissing that staff member (i.e., without the requirement of further approval from the other Commissioners).

Finally, I note that I am not blind to the costs that this might impose. I am a taxpayer and have a young family to care for and my goal is not to increase costs unnecessarily. However, the increased staff costs will likely lead to dramatically better outcomes for the people of Michigan.

Thank you for your time.

If you should have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

-Bob Dindoffer

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**Date of Submission:** Friday, September 18, 2020

**Method of Submission:** SurveyMonkey 9/18/20 Public Comment Signup

**Name:** Toni Corley Wilson

**Written Public Comment:** Hello. I am a volunteer for Voters Not Politicians from the very early days of its formation. I watched both sessions of the Boot Camp yesterday and would like to say how great it is to meet the Commissioners and how blessed we are with a wonderful representation of Michigan. Thank you for serving and bringing your valuable perspectives to the table. One suggestion: When you deliberate about choosing a chair, why not also consider a rotating chairmanship? This would give everyone a turn to have this responsibility, would keep the whole group on equal footing, and would prevent any individual from being targeted as it appeared Colleen Mathis from the Arizona commission was targeted when she withstood an attack by someone trying to remove her as chair. It also presents some of the less-experienced Commissioners with a growth opportunity. Thanks for considering this suggestion, and have a fruitful and productive meeting today. You cannot imagine how thrilled all of us at Voters Not Politicians are to see you beginning to be a functioning Commission. Best of luck to you all.  
Toni Corley Wilson Voters Not Politicians-Volunteer Advisory Council

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**Date of Submission:** Friday, September 18, 2020 11:29 AM

**Method of Submission:** Email To <Redistricting@Michigan.gov>

**Name:** Toni Wilson

**Email Subject:** Public Comment for 9/18/20 meeting

Hello. I am a volunteer for Voters Not Politicians from the very early days of its formation. I watched both sessions of the Boot Camp yesterday and would like to say how great it is to meet the Commissioners and how blessed we are with a wonderful representation of Michigan. Thank you for serving and bringing your valuable perspectives to the table.

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Thanks for considering this suggestion, and have a fruitful and productive meeting today. You cannot imagine how thrilled all of us at Voters Not Politicians are to see you beginning to be a functioning Commission. Best of luck to you all.

Toni Corley Wilson

Voters Not Politicians-Volunteer Advisory Council

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**Date of Submission:** Friday, September 18, 2020

**Method of Submission:** SurveyMonkey 9/18/20 Public Comment Signup

**Name:** Abigael Hodsdon (16)

**Written Public Comment:** I was listening in again today and I was thinking about the experts that gave their opinion. Since I am going to vote using the map drawn by you, I feel that your process needs to really be Made in Michigan. The experts from California and Arizona did right by their citizens, and the model and methods you choose needs to represent us. As a part of my school project, I noticed that there were a lot of people that did not agree with redistricting at all. Many of those people are from areas that have no one on your commission from their part of Michigan. Telling those people that you are following the path different states followed on their behalf will hurt. I know my opinion does not matter because I will not vote until 2022 but, I thought you should think about it. Thank you for what you are doing.

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**Date of Submission:** Friday, September 18, 2020

**Method of Submission:** SurveyMonkey 9/18/20 Public Comment Signup

**Name:** Unanimous

**Written Public Comment:** Professor Levitt directed the commission to avoid racial packing in districts, can you explain how that can be avoided while maintaining the minority-majority mandate in the voting rights act?