

Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission
February 18, 2021 Meeting Public Comment

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Subject: Still Gerrymandering?

Redistricting committee members,

First of all I would like to thank you all for volunteering to be on the redistricting committee. I know it is not going to be an easy task with so many different ideas floating around as to how you should proceed. This is something I feel very strongly about so I hope you will let me bend your ear for just a moment.

I recently ran into the following definition of Gerrymandering that I thought was very good.

Gerrymandering is the intentional drawing of a district map or plan to advantage or disadvantage a specific group.

Voters-not-Politicians has spent a huge effort in taking gerrymandering out of the hands of politicians, but it seems that they have no problem in wanting to do the gerrymandering themselves via “communities of interest” even though it may be with the best of intentions. Choosing an issue that they feel is important to an area and drawing boundaries based on that is the very definition of gerrymandering. It will also lead to district maps that are much much worse than the ones we have now.

I believe VNP got the idea of “communities of interest” (COI) from California which faced a real problem on how to subdivide a county. I would be willing to bet that if they had had townships like Michigan and about a dozen other Midwest states, they would not have invented this concept. One of the big problems with COI’s is that everyone has a different idea as to what it should be. No matter which map the commission chooses, they will be accused of bias, and rightly so.

In Proposal 18-2 COI’s rank above counties, townships and cities. I would agree with that, but only because COI’s need to be the exception to the rule and should be used VERY RARELY. The only application that I can think of is perhaps an Indian reservation because it is in effect its own unit of government and does not fit within a county, township, or city.

Subdividing the state should be by county/city and then (if necessary) by township keeping the districts nice and compact. That way no one can accuse the commission of bias.

Some people think that this redistricting is going to make all the districts competitive, but one only has to look at the county maps from this past presidential election, not just in Michigan but in almost every state, to see that most rural areas were highly Republican and cities were mostly Democrat. This is not going to change!!! The redistricting committee’s job is to slice up the state without adding any bias to the process. It would be great if we had a computer program to do this based on a set of rules.

I beg of you to please consider this proposal and really make the redistricting non-biased.

Thank You,

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