

Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission
July 8, 2021 Meeting Public Comment

Date of Submission: Saturday, July 3, 2021 2:40 PM
Method of Submission: Email To <Redistricting@Michigan.gov>
Name: Ryan C Mulder
Subject: Public Input

Hi, I live in Grand Rapids and attended the recent meeting but did not comment in person.

I am concerned about grouping “communities of interest” or those with “shared values” together, as this seems like just another form of gerrymandering. Values and interests change, and drawing map lines to please any particular like-minded group will inevitably go against the wishes of others, and is inherently unfair.

If your mission is to create “fair” districts, please do so mathematically based on geography and population counts. The more compact the districts are, the more fair they will be to the entire state as a whole.

Thank you for taking on this awesome responsibility and actively improving our democracy!

Ryan Mulder
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Date of Submission: Friday, July 2, 2021 8:20 AM
Method of Submission: Email To <Redistricting@Michigan.gov>
Name: Tricia Denton
Subject: Public Comment from Leelanau Clean Water Nonprofit Organization

Please accept and consider the attached testimony when redrawing the district maps as they impact Leelanau County. Thank You! Tricia Denton, Chair-Leelanau Clean Water

Date of Submission: Friday, July 2, 2021 7:44 AM
Method of Submission: Email To <Redistricting@Michigan.gov>
Name: Raymooney
Subject: Public Comments

Attached are my public comments

Date of Submission: Thursday, July 1, 2021 11:18 AM
Method of Submission: Email To <Redistricting@Michigan.gov>

Name: Janice Wheelock

Subject: Eureka township, Greenville and Montcalm county

Dear Commissioners,

I thank you for your service to the state of Michigan and all its residents in trying to establish more fair and less partisan representative political districts.

I live in Eureka Township of Montcalm county which has the city of Greenville within it. Due to gerrymandering, the city of Greenville appears like a gouge on the map, extracted from the charter township of Eureka, in which it sits. Greenville was assigned to Congressional District 4 which covers the rest of Montcalm county and more than a dozen counties to the north and east of us.


The remainder of Eureka township which encircles Greenville was assigned to Congressional District 3 with Kent county and counties south and west of us. This means that the people of Eureka township barely have representation, being unattached from its county as well as its home town. When Legislative Update sessions are held in Stanton, the county seat, the representative for District 3 has not even been invited. I brought up this issue with the Update leadership, which was unaware of this lack of representation for this tiny piece of the county, an unintended slight yet to be remedied.

I am asking that Greenville and its township, Eureka, be included within the same representative district. We are linked by school system, concerns for our community, economic development, common interests and geographic proximity.

Also for your consideration, I might make you aware of the link between Ionia and Montcalm counties. With the cities of Belding and Greenville just six miles apart, we share much in common. We are linked through social services organizations such as United Way, and our children of need are served by IM Kids, a third meal program distributed through the schools for both counties. We also share women's shelter services through RAVE and services for the homeless through Have Mercy. The Montcalm-ionia Citizen Corps Program has volunteers from both counties, as does the Ionia-Montcalm chapter of FAN—Families Against Narcotics. We also share agriculture and rural community issues like health care access, farm labor, public transportation and broadband service. Both are counties with suburban areas as well, furnishing workers and adding to the economies of the larger cities of Grand Rapids and Lansing. It would seem appropriate for Ionia and Montcalm county to be linked for district representation. But since you have many things to consider in the districting process and there may be other reasons for Ionia and Montcalm not to share a district, I leave it to you.

My primary request is that Greenville and Eureka Township be included within the same Congressional District. Thank you.

Jan Wheelock


Greenville, MI 48838

Michigan Independent Citizen's Redistricting Commission

Comments

Ray Mooney

July 2, 2021

My comments include some thoughts about the gerrymandering issue and politics in general. I should note for the record that I am a registered Independent. I truly do not care who runs the state, county and local government as long as those entities are well run. I volunteered to be a member of the Gerrymandering Commission because I care and my experience shows me that politicians are not to be trusted to do the right things the right way.

- 1.) I think it is disgraceful that it took a citizen voter initiative to get the issue of gerrymandering voting districts on the ballot. The politicians like gerrymandering. That needs to be considered and recognized by every voter in our good state. It seems shameful that we, the people, have to protect ourselves from the selfish interests of those we elect to, allegedly, serve us... but history shows we clearly do.
- 2.) I think the line from the ads in favor of this voter initiative were right on when the ad said that this initiative was intended to enable voters to pick their political leaders instead of allowing gerrymandering to enable politicians to pick their voters.
- 3.) I would like everyone, good citizens and the political elite, to take note of the margin by which this voter initiative passed. I don't recall the exact numbers but I think and the other recent voter initiatives on the ballot have passed by more than 60% margins.
- 4.) I find it distasteful that each political party, when they gerrymander voting districts claim: "Well the other side did it when they had power". That sounds stunningly immature. The old two wrongs make a right from supposedly political leaders is troubling.
- 5.) I think voter initiatives are the only way to get anything meaningful done in Lansing. I believe this to be the case because of the power of lobbying, campaign contributions and the corruption that follows. Politicians simply care more about their political donors than they do about the voters. Gerrymandering was a major example of that entire process.
- 6.) Given the simple reality of the corrupt nature of politics in this day and age voter initiatives are the only way for the regular people to be heard in Lansing.
- 7.) I think we need three new voter initiatives:
 - a. A law that requires full financial disclosure by all elected officials. For obvious reasons we cannot rely on the political elite to regulate themselves.

- b. A law that bars taxation without representation at the local level. Big Rapids is one town that taxes people who have no voting rights or voting power in town. Non residents who work in Big Rapids pay a city tax. Gov. Whitmer supports President Biden's effort to make Washington, DC a state. One of the President's arguments is that the citizens of DC are taxed without representation. If the Governor supports that principle shouldn't she support changing state law to eliminate cities taxing nonresidents who cannot vote? Seems simple to me.
- c. A law that eliminates campaign contributions being a "slush fund" for politicians. Trump is using campaign contributions to pay his legal bills. Whitmer has used her campaign contributions for personal travel. It seems to me campaign contributions are for.... wait for it...campaigns.
- 8.) I think term limits are a very good thing. Mandatory in my mind.
- 9.) I offer the situation with the Unemployment Department as an example of all that is wrong in Lansing when it comes to basic managerial competence. Under Gov. Snyder thousands of innocent citizens were targeted for investigation. Why? The Unemployment Dept.'s systems were messed up. Snyder's political response was to remove his appointed Commissioner. But all he did was transfer her to a pretty much made up job at her same \$172,000 salary. So, Gov Whitmer takes office knowing the Unemployment Dept's systems are deeply flawed. But she does nothing and, as we all saw, the covid crisis resulted in thousands of people waiting and waiting while the messed-up system Whitmer inherited but never addressed or fixed failed to handle their claims.
- 10.) Gov Whitmer was deeply critical of Trump's border wall. I get it. But she had a wall erected around the governor's mansion. I get that too. I would have done the same thing to protect my family. But the issue should have been free of political hypocrisy in order to be credible.

In closing I would like to offer mt personal thanks to every member of the Gerrymandering Committee. I suspect you worked hard and you deserve the thanks of every Michigan citizen and voter.

Respectfully,

Ray Mooney

Public comment to the Michigan Independent redistricting Committee from Leelanau Clean Water, Leelanau County

Please accept this comment as representing Leelanau Clean Water (LCW), a nonprofit collaborative entity formed under the auspice of Leelanau County, to promote the preservation and protection of our shared waters. I am Tricia Denton, chair of the LCW Board of Directors, and wish to thank you for your work to improve representation of our communities of interest within the State of Michigan. Toward that goal, I encourage you to look at representative communities in a fresh fashion, not simply tweak existing district maps.

Leelanau County demographically, environmentally and economically is more alike with regions around our shared water resource, specifically Grand Traverse Bay. We are a community connected by water! The Greater Grand Traverse Bay Watershed drives our economy as a climate factor in local agriculture and as an attraction for our largest economic engine, tourism. Communities surrounding the bay have similar issues:

- Balancing development and tourism within a beautiful natural region and preserving housing, agriculture, and year-round communities.
- Protecting the clean waters promoted in “Pure Michigan” from the destruction of over development, storm runoff, and wastewater, septic pollution and other environmental threats.
- A more politically and ethnically diverse region due to the appeal of professionals and retirees relocating for our region’s quality of life.

Current districting lines place our bay communities with more rural regions which are not as influenced by the unique nature of Leelanau County and its environmental needs and cultural and economic drivers.

Thank you again for your consideration and for your willingness to serve the people of Michigan.

Sincerely,

Tricia Denton
Chair, Leelanau Clean Water