



**MICHIGAN
LEAGUE OF
CONSERVATION
VOTERS** | *Ed. Fund*

Tuesday, February 3, 2022

Subject: Process Feedback

To the honorable members of the Michigan Independent Redistricting Citizens Commission,

I write to provide feedback on your process as requested. Please find our feedback broken out into three specific baskets below. This feedback is based on engaging with and observing the Commission since it began meeting in the fall of 2020.

Thank you for your attention to these critical matters as we work together to improve this fundamental institution for the next decade. We would be happy to provide additional detail as well as answer any follow up questions your team may have.

Sincerely,

Mark Payne

Elections Systems Manager - Democracy For All Team
Michigan League of Conservation Voters Education Fund

I. Ensuring public access to user-friendly, timely and updated information:

- The ballot measure was passed in 2018, so there should have been ample time by the Secretary of State to prepare a Public Comment Tool earlier than May 2021.
- The website was difficult to navigate and could have been more user friendly. There also needed to be a clear sign-up link, instead of going through the website.

- There were problems with links being posted in a timely fashion. The 24-hour notice – which was used often – should have been at the very bottom of the scale. To increase public participation, links should have been posted at least three days in advance.
- The times for public speaking and the duration each speaker is given should be kept consistent. The Commission switched from 1 minute to 1 ½ minutes throughout the process.

II. Necessary process improvements for future Commissions:

- Must begin mapping with a focus on dense population areas that require the most time and detail then move out across the state from there. On June 30, 2021, there was a recommendation passed not to start in Southeast Michigan. This proved to be an error and a time crunch, which caused the state House mapping process to be rushed.
- Mapping that used a regional structure was counterproductive, took away precious time from the overall process itself, and caused the commissioners to box themselves into early decisions.
- Enact an attendance policy from the start in order to not lose quorum. The Attendance policy wasn't adopted until July 13, 2021, after an instance where the Commission had multiple absences and/or couldn't make quorum.
- Establish a clear definition of Communities of Interest from the start. The Commission never had this as a guidepost. Dr. Moon should have been called in more for education on COIs.
- There should have more involvement from the Secretary of State or the General Counsel in terms of saving time and keeping to the agenda. A lot of time was wasted having the General Counsel repeat motions and to go through process questions.

III. Improvements to resources that inform Commissioners' mapping work:

- Reports on specific demographics – prison gerrymandering or transient students – should be provided to the Commission to avoid valuable time being wasted debating over how to handle them. Reports outlining both were never published by the General Counsel with no explanation.
- The History of Discrimination in the State of Michigan and Its Influence on Voting was given Oct 26 and the Voting Rights Act document was given to the Commission Oct 14 after the Mapping.

- Data from primary elections for state house should have been utilized by the Commission, especially in Detroit. County clerks as well as the Secretary of State, could have aided with this information.
- There should have been more education in terms of the state of Michigan, its geography, terrain and population shifts. There should have been more education about Michigan's Political History. This would have helped with COI development and overall mapping.
- Dr. Handley gives the Commission Voting Patterns of Select Minority Groups in Michigan Nov 1, 2021, after the mapping.
- The Commission should have hired someone (or delegated the task to their staff) to catalog and organize all public comments by topic or map, so Commissioners didn't have to guess what was said during meetings.