



North Carolina General Assembly
Senate Chamber
State Legislative Building
Raleigh 27601-2808

Senator Malcolm Graham
40th District

TO: Mecklenburg Leaders and Activists
FROM: Senator Malcolm Graham
DATE: April 27, 2011

RE: A PUBLIC HEARING ON REDISTRICTING SCHEDULED FOR SATURDAY, APRIL 30, 2011
AT 10:00 AM.

On Saturday, April 30, 2011, a public hearing about redistricting will take place at Central Piedmont Community College in the Richard Hagemeyer Learning Resources Center, Room LR305. Every ten years, when results from the United State Census are released, our State is required to draw new boundaries for Congressional Districts, State Senate Districts and State House Districts. This hearing will provide members of the public an opportunity to express comments and concerns relating to the redistricting process. Unfortunately, there will not be any proposed redistricting plans available to review and the lack of plans is an issue that you may want to comment upon during the hearing. Most importantly, you may want to comment on how redistricting plans for Congressional Districts and Legislative Districts should be developed or drawn. Plans should be developed with consideration being given to local neighborhoods and communities of interest. I have attached a brief summary of information that may be helpful relating to comments you may like to provide.

There are certain federal laws which must be followed in the redistricting process. However, the majority party will likely seek to place high concentrations of Democratic and minority voters in certain districts (packing), divide minority districts into multiple districts (cracking) and/or (stack) districts with non-voting minority populations (inmates/noncitizens). These methods seek to weaken the impact of minority and Democratic voters. These are issues you may want to address during the hearing as well.

Please participate in this hearing and express your thoughts and concerns. In the event of litigation, there will be a record or transcript of all comments made during the hearings, which will be reviewed by the Courts. You may sign-up for the hearing online by going to the following website:

<http://www.Ncleg.net/applications/rts/Redistricting.aspx?id=3>.

*The online sign-up period is already open; however, it ends on Friday, April 29, 2011, approximately twenty four hours before the hearing. You can also sign up to speak the day of the redistricting hearing, but you must sign up on-site at least one (hour before the hearing. Each person who signs up will be allowed up to five minutes to speak. Please sign-up and speak out on this important issue.

Questions and Answers

What is the goal of my testimony?

The goal of your testimony is to provide the committee with an idea of how you would like your respective districts to be drawn and the reasons for supporting your proposal. Fundamental to this process is the principle that the people that best understand how communities identify and operate are people that actually live in the communities. Testifying before the committee is an opportunity to share this very personal insight.

Are there specific factors that I should focus my testimony on?

The Constitution provides a list of factors that the committee must consider when drawing the lines. Two factors you might want to consider are a “local neighborhood” and “local community of interest.” Your testimony should be focused on identifying local neighborhoods and local communities of interest for the Committee.

What is a local neighborhood?

The law is silent on the definition of a “local neighborhood.” This is why it is so important for members of the public to provide testimony before the committee as to how the community itself views itself and defines its local neighborhoods.

What is a community of interest?

A community of interest can be defined as: A contiguous population which shares common social and economic interests that should be included within a single district for purposes of its effective and fair representation. Examples of such shared interests are those common to an urban area, a rural area, an industrial area, or an agricultural area, and those common to areas in which people share similar living standards, use the same transportation facilities, have similar work opportunities, or have access to the same media of communication relevant to the election process.

Should I provide the committee with maps of my local neighborhood and community of interest?

Visual presentations are sometimes the easiest way to convey information regarding local neighborhoods and communities of interest. While there are a variety of computer and mapping products available, providing a simple printed map where you highlight the boundaries of your neighborhood or community of interest is just as valid as any other map.

Issues of concern which should be addressed:

Cracking:

A form of dilution occurring when districts are drawn so as to divide a geographically compact minority community into two or more districts. If the minority community is politically cohesive and could elect a preferred candidate if placed in one district but, due to cracking, the minority popu-

lation is divided into two or more districts where it no longer has any electoral control or influence, the voting strength of the minority population is diluted.

Packing:

A form of vote dilution prohibited under the Voting Rights Act where a minority group is over-concentrated in a small number of districts. For example, packing can occur when the African American population is concentrated into one district where it makes up 90% of the district, instead of two districts where it could be 50% of each district.

Stacking:

A form of vote dilution where a district that on its face appears to be a majority-minority district is “stacked” with low-performing minority precincts and high-performing white precincts, or where the minority population is actually a non-voting population, such as an inmate population or a non-citizen population, so that the candidate of choice of minority voters cannot actually win election. Like “stacking the deck” in a card game, unfairness to minorities is built into the district even though it may be 51% in minority voting age population.

How can I find out more about the North Carolina redistricting process?

Visit: <http://www.ncleg.net/gis/randr07/redistricting.html>

Please forward this information to members in your organizations. I thank you in advance for your input and I look forward to seeing you on Saturday.