

Minutes for Redistricting Reform Organizational Meeting
Wineland Building, 4th Floor Conference Room
August 27, 2015
1:00pm

Walter Olson begins opening remarks:

- Gerrymandering is not something our generation developed, it has existed since Elbridge Gerry
- It has gotten worse, Maryland has some of the worst gerrymandered districts
- History in Maryland of reform on both sides of the aisle
- Issue plays out differently in different regions

Walter Olson turns over to staff

Patrick Hogan discusses Tactics:

- The primary goals of gerrymandering are to maximize the effect of supporters' votes and to minimize the effect of opponents' votes. These can be accomplished through a number of ways:
 - "Cracking" involves spreading voters of a particular type among many districts in order to deny them a sufficiently large voting bloc in any particular district.
 - "Packing" is to concentrate as many voters of one type into a single electoral district to reduce their influence in other districts
 - "Hijacking" redraws two districts in such a way as to force two incumbents of the same political party to run against each other in one district, ensuring that one of them will be eliminated, while usually leaving the other district to be won by someone from a different political party.
 - "Kidnapping" aims to move areas where a certain elected official has significant support to another district, making it more difficult to win future elections with a new electorate.
 - These tactics are typically combined in some form, creating a few "forfeit" seats for packed voters of one type in order to secure more seats and greater representation for voters of another type.
- Problems with Gerrymandering
 - Divides communities
 - Disenfranchises voters
 - Suppresses minority viewpoints
 - Harms representation
 - Creates citizen confusion and apathy
 - Contributes
- Instructs to turn to Executive Order
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- Conduct a comprehensive examination of ideas that could enhance the integrity of Maryland's congressional and legislative redistricting process
- We have received public comments through website

- Reporting of commission will go to the Governor and presiding officers
- The report is due by November 3rd
- Discussion of timeline
- Go over dates and locations
- Discussion among members on the times of the meeting
 - Would more people come if it was in the evening?
- Discussion on locations
 - Important to make sure all regions are represented
- Sen. Joan Carter Conway
 - Minority Majority District needs to be represented
- Send information out to members tomorrow for approval
- Alonzo Washington brought up structure for the meetings
 - Should have timed amount for public testimony
- Michael Goff suggests having experts to present
- Walter Olson suggests to have an academic or political figure
- First half hour have expert testify

Patrick Hogan

- Bipartisan issue
- Republicans and Democrats both do this

Adam Dubitsky Discusses other States:

State Legislators

- In 37 states, legislatures are primarily responsible for the drawing of congressional district lines
- There are seven states that have only one congressional district each
- These are not counted among the 37 states
- In these states, the legislatures typically adopt district lines by a simple majority vote in each chamber

Advisory Commissions

- Several states employ advisory commissions to assist in the drawing of congressional and state legislative district lines
- These commissions may make recommendations to their respective state legislatures, but the legislatures are not necessarily required to adhere to these recommendations.

Processes

- Maryland- the governor's preferred plan is enacted if the state legislature fails to adopt new state legislative districts
- Oregon- the secretary of state draws state legislative district lines in the event of legislative gridlock
- Connecticut & Illinois backup commissions comprise members appointed by leaders of the state legislatures
- Mississippi and Texas – backup commissions comprise statewide elected officials
- Oklahoma – the backup commission comprises the governor, the Lt. governor and members of the legislature's majority party (selected by legislative leaders)

Politician Commissions

- Such commissions draw state legislative district lines in seven states: Arkansas, Colorado, Hawaii, Missouri, New Jersey, Ohio, and Pennsylvania

Independent Commissions

- Independent commissions draw the lines for both state legislative and congressional districts in six states:
 - Alaska
 - Arizona
 - California
 - Idaho
 - Montana
 - Washington

Arizona:

- Arizona State Legislature v. Arizona Independent Redistricting Commission was a case before the United States Supreme Court
- The court ruled that “redistricting is a legislative function, to be performed in accordance with the state’s prescriptions for lawmaking, which may include the referendum and the governor’s veto.”
- Had the court ruled in favor of the Arizona State Legislature in this case, independent redistricting commissions in these states might have been affected.

California:

- California citizens approved ballot initiatives in 2008 and 2010 directing the Legislature to transfer responsibility for redistricting to an independent, nonpartisan commission of 14 members to be appointed by the state auditor from a pool of qualified applicants.
- It took the commission’s five Democrats, five Republicans and four unaffiliated citizens eight months to redraw the lines
- They attended 23 public hearings and received more than 30,000 public comments.

Patrick Hogan

- Welcomes commission members to offer their own research

Meeting Adjourned at 2:24 pm