

**Minutes for Redistricting Reform Regional Public Meeting – Hagerstown**  
**Hagerstown Community College, Career Programs Building**  
**11400 Robinwood Dr., Hagerstown, MD 21742**  
**September 21, 2015**  
**1:00pm**

**Call to Order at 1:07 pm**

**Attending:** Walter Olson, Alex Williams, Michael Goff, Tessa Hill-Aston, Chris Summers, Ashley Oleson, Carol Ramirez, Sen. Joan Carter Conway, Sen. Steve Waugh, Del. Jason Buckel

**Not Attending:** Del. Alonzo Washington

Walter Olson welcomes members to Western Maryland

- Introduction to commission members
- On Aug. 6<sup>th</sup> Governor Larry Hogan created commission by executive order
- Holding meetings around the state for report due November 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- We will begin by hearing a presentation from the Dept. of Legislative Services, Karl Aro and Jodie Chilson

Karl Aro

- Here to tell how the process works
- Article 3 Section 5, the Governor is given authority second day following census
- After submitted to General Assembly power is then transferred court of appeals
- What happened in 1981 is somewhat unique
- Advisory committee of people to assist in drawing the maps
- Governor Hughes put this together
- Commission planned to have 5 public hearings throughout the state
- As interest grew the amount of public hearings grew
- After the hearings the commission gathered to showcase
- Then DLS prepares as a joint resolution
- Once 45<sup>th</sup> date trips, goes to court
- Depending on what cycle we are in
- Federal laws that controls
- Legislatively plus or minus 5 percent is what we aim for
- We get data around February or March
- In 2021 we will get the data to change it around prison population
- Dept. of planning helps with this
- Takes several months to make this adjustment
- Philosophy to go back to home areas to be counted for that area
- It is a grinding process

Alex Williams asks for copy of historical process

Michael Goff asks how Karl Aro's office fits into the process

Karl Aro explains clients are primarily the legislators

Jason Buckel asks question, we can have a plus or 5% deviation

Karl Aro explains the way the Supreme Court ruled was maximum deviation of minus plus or minus ten

Michael Goff asks if Aro's office works at all with the Governor's office

Karl Aro answers his office is not working with the Governor's office or his top aides, main function is to be a resource for the legislators

#### Karl Aro

- Nonpolitical agency, do not have political data
- Pay close attention to voting rights standard

Senator Joan Carter Conway explains DLS does not draw the maps for the governor, the governor draws prior to being voted on. She explains she was not thrilled with the map that was drawn, has serious issue with Baltimore City crossing. She had many concerns because they divided a number of communities.

#### Jodie Chilson – Senior Policy Officer at DLS

- Welcomed to give brief overview of commissions that have been submitted to General Assembly for consideration
- Last year several bills to set up nonpartisan commission
- Varied in membership
- One of the bills had members being picked by lottery
- Process of how map was drawn, some bills kept commission instead of governor
- One bill nether side was drawn, but court of appeals could still hear the case
- Bills in 2014 that were similar some were really detailed
- None of them have reached the floor of either house

Alex Williams

- Asks to compile the information from the presentations to have in readable documents
- Lists what other states do

#### Karl Aro recommend to go to NCSL

- Most will have where the commission is drawing the map
- Not all of the commissions are non-partisan
- A few of the states have advisory commission
- A few other ones have back up commissions
- Iowa is totally different from any other state
- Iowa doesn't look at voting or party information

### Senator Andrew Serafini

- Senator from Washington Co.
- Has financial planning business
- Karl Arrow sat down with us to see what it means with population
- Problem with with depoliticizing something can we make it better
- Turned states blue and red against each other
- When we push a district one way strongly
- Some people have to move more conservative or liberal because district is that way
- Need to create balances districts
- Four members in Baltimore
- Bryan Feldman made the point the Montgomery co. and Washington county were familiar
- Has a lot of territory to cover, need to be close to the people
- Proponent of single member legislative districts

### Delegate Neil Parrott

- A lot of people who really care about this issue
- Introduced a bill in 2013 regarding redistricting reform
- Previously offered legislation to follow the California model
- In 2014 co-sponsored bill with Heather Mizeur to create nonpartisan redistricting commission
- If you look at last congressional map it was drawn to keep congressional safe
- Comedy central featured district 3 and said it was the ugliest district in the nation
- A federal judge
- Law suit brought forward on racial
- 2 other active lawsuits against congressional map
- In first lawsuit couldn't throw out map
- The map is not compact politicians picking their voters and not voters picking their politicians
- 75,000 people signed a petition that said this map was not fair
- Many people in the state of MD care about this process and very important for Maryland
- HB 921 was a bill to require legislative districts to be single member districts
- One of the things that you will decide is who is making the maps
- For congressional districts use the constitution for drawing the map
- Each legislative district
- If we follow that rule almost all of the complaints would go away
- Some of 2 delegates representing them and some have 3
- Difficult for citizens to know who to go to
- Better to have single member districts to better serve
- Plus or minus 5 %
- In urban areas lowered number
- On the state level need to respect legislative boundaries
- People need to know who their representatives are
- What are the rules that people will use when they draw the maps

### Delegate Brett Wilson

- Going to be brief
- Touch base on single member district
- A crime to put multi member districts together
- Taking away opportunity of the candidate
- Should have single vote single count representation
- Beyond that

### Christopher Eric Bouchat

- Sued the state of Maryland
- After that ran for House of Delegate
- He is a Carroll Co. resident
- In cross county districts you immediately disenfranchise voters
- I believe the answer to this committees question lies in the the sovereign people
- Need to recommend a convention of people
- When people go to vote for the convention delegate they don't know what party they are
- Those delegations elected could meet with their constituents
- This convention should be by average citizens
- The people of MD are sovereign
- Create congressional and state legislative districts
- Need to be progressive nationally
- No greater science then

### Richard Bodine

- Feels disenfranchised
- Had Roscoe Bartlett, then got gerrymandered
- Believe in constitution and not bullies coming over and taking system
- Speaks for a lot of people
- Brought daily paper about votes in Congress
- Please with recommendations submit something that is fair

### Randy Buchman

- Attempt at inconsistency
- Common problem that both political parties
- We can't fix a wrong somewhere else
- The congressional map looks like the fur of a calico cat or a Picasso painting
- An immediate glance shows you what is happening
- Something that would be funny if it wasn't so terribly ridiculous
- Encouragement, not be dissuaded

### John Bates – Michael Hough Legislative Aide

- Represents one of the most conservative districts in the state
- But congressional representatives do not represent that properly

- Fully endorses single member districts

#### Robert Wood

- Retired engineer and resident of Washington County
- Highly distressed about redistricting esp. because of the 6<sup>th</sup> congressional district
- The party in power at time of reapportionment should be able to change the lines
- Make things more clear on the ballot
- California has achieved a bipartisan system
- Want a process where no party can take an unfair advantage
- Democrats what to take to federal level, not state
- Federal will take too long, because broken federal system
- Multi delegate issue needs to be looked at

#### Tom Ferleman

- Great to hear passionate
- From Booz Allen
- Appointed by Ike Legget for – May run for Congress in 6<sup>th</sup> congressional district
- Money always goes down county
- Very insightful as I began canvassing and meeting with people to speak about issues
- Didn't know their representatives
- Redistricting based on terrain

#### Steve McCullum

- IT Consultant
- Deals exclusively with IT and Geospatial
- MD is considered to be one of the most gerrymandered districts in the country
- When you look at current map economic disparity between rural and urban areas
- A lot of people feel disenfranchised and powerless
- Political boundaries are compromised
- Often times used to silence the voices of the people that don't have current power

#### Jesse Pippy

- A lot of good things have been said
- Devil in the details

#### Problems with inmates

- Ask Mike Miller is the line was drawn to kick Roscoe Bartlett out
- If a commission goes by district the lines were shown to gain a political
- How in a state that has 5 million people mainly democrats we had a
- In football worst performing team gets the first draft pick
- Good to have folks on both sides
- Key is finding the right balance

Sen. Joan Carter Conway informs the same numbers apply to each jurisdiction and county. There was a federal suit presented by ACLU regarding prison population in redistricting.

### Kai Hagen

- Director of envision Frederick CO.
- Issue been studying for 20 to 30 years
- Gerrymandered Ohio, Pennsylvania, etc.
- Nationally more people voted for Democratic members of Congress
- The number of districts where every race is completely over by the primary
- Elected people that don't
- Gerrymandering is unsung if we fix in MD won't fix in other states (we can't take it that way)
- Thrilled to have Chris Van Hollen and Congressman, but as a democrat feels like there needs to be reform
- Not enough outrage about this
- An exercise in pure political power
- This isn't about Hogan or the party trying to make maps that go the other way
- More Democrats with courage to say this needs to change
- What's hard is recommendations about the process
- Make steps that are truly fair nonobjective panels
- Places like in CA and FL
- Higher voter participation

### Mark Norr

- From congressional district 3

### Ginger Bigelow

- Came to listen
- The way the lines were drawn were so incredibly unfair
- Apathy in Co.
- Can't fight Montgomery Co. machine
- If you want apathy, come to Washington Co.
- Would like to think culturally how this affects us
- Voter turnout is not good

**Meeting adjourned at 2:56pm**