From: Martiniak, Chris [mailto:[redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, December 01, 2010 9:34 AM
To: Voters First Act
Subject: assistance

Dear commissioners

In 1972 as a second-year law student at UC Berkeley (Boalt Hall), I participated in redistricting the state assemby, state senator and federal congressional districts for the state of California. The California Supreme Court had taken over districting and appointed Paul McKaskle, then dean of the USF law school, as a special master to prepare a districting plan. He, in turn, hired three law students, each of whom had been extern clerks for California Supreme Court judges. I was lucky enough to be one of them.

Paul determined to come up with districts that disproved what the legislators had claimed about the impossibility of creating equal districts with rational rather than politically motivated boundaries.

He also determined to make the process as open as possible, holding hearings around the state for input from citizens and groups, and holding hearings in Sacramento for input from the politicians.

The result was a plan that we were very proud of, and which was widely praised.

We created 40 state senator districts, the boundaries of which almost completely followed pre-existing community boundaries- county lines, city limits, and natural boundaries. For small deviations we used voting precinct lines, school district boundaries or other such lines as a discipline to avoid arbitrary boundaries.

We then divided the 40 state senate disticts in half to make 80 state assembly districts. This nesting made the districts more understandable and was further protection against arbitrary boundaries.

We then drew the 43 congressional districts (at that time California had 43 members of Congress), by using these state district boundaries, deviating from them as

necessary to achieve the correct population count. The deviations also followed as much as possible pre-existing boundaries.

This was truly a great experience.

I subsequently received a Fulbright fellowship to Great Britain to study that country's civil service boundary commissions which draw the election districts there, to see how well it works, what problems it encounters, and to see if it could be a model for the U.S. My conclusion was and is that it works extremely well (despite occasional scandals) and would be a great system in the U.S. But I also concluded that as a practical matter it would never ever happen here. Now, here it is over 35 years later and California is actually following that path. Amazing.

I am now a senior litigation attorney at Covington and Burling. I regret that I missed the deadline for applying to be on the commission. Nevertheless, I would love to provide whatever knowledge I gained from this experience. Or I would just love an opportunity to meet you and talk about the process.

I assume that Paul McKaskle has been in contact with you, but if not, he would be an amazingly well informed resource.

All the best.

Chris Martiniak

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