

ITEM 47 BOS PUBLIC COMMENT 001

From: maikhou@everydayimpactconsulting.com
To: [Clerk of the Board Public Email](#)
Subject: Letter Submission for BOS Agenda Item 47
Date: Tuesday, May 4, 2021 12:32:35 PM
Attachments: [Redistricting Letter and Best Practices 5-4-2021.pdf](#)
Importance: High

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Good afternoon,

We would like to submit the attached Redistricting best practices letter on behalf of the Sacramento Redistricting Coalition for today's BOS Agenda Item #47. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter!

If you have any further questions or wish to follow up, please do not hesitate to reach back out to me directly.

In Community,
Maikhou



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SACRAMENTO
Redistricting Coalition

Sue Frost, Chair
Sacramento County Board of Supervisors
700 H Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Presentation On 2021 Redistricting Requirements And Provide Direction On Redistricting Process

Recommendations for Commission Next Steps

Dear Commissioners:

Congratulations to each of you for being selected to serve on Sacramento's inaugural Independent Redistricting Commission. As members, your influence will impact the shape and function of Sacramento's democratic institutions for several decades. Our Sacramento Redistricting Coalition is a group of local advocacy organizations, grassroots organizers, civil rights advocates, and other community-based groups. Collectively, we seek to ensure the redistricting process is inclusive of our broader community, and executed in a just manner that protects the incredibly diverse, yet marginalized, communities of the Sacramento region. Our goal is to see a redistricting undertaking that secures district boundaries which authentically serve our population and confirm fair equal representation. We look forward to working collaboratively with each of you in the coming months to establish new district maps. It is important to note that many of us were heavily engaged in the 2020 Census, as well as in the 2010 state and local redistricting processes. With this experience in mind, we submit the following recommendations for implementing an equitable and transparent process, particularly as it relates to underrepresented communities.

Preparedness and Transparency

To ensure you are effectively prepared and supported in the work ahead, we recommend that you learn from other commissions and relevant research, and secure the training you need, and independently lead the hiring of any staff and consultants. The importance of maintaining an independent process cannot be understated. Though the City's staff will support your work, it is the responsibility of the Commission to it and make critical decisions about how you will execute a fair and inclusive line drawing process. Luckily, the state legislature has extended the deadline to adopt final maps to December 15, 2021. Cal. Elec. Code Section 21622(a)(2). This allows for ample time for you to access ~~to~~ the training you need to meaningfully engage with experts in the field who will inform your decisions about how to conduct the redistricting process. We recommend the following initial steps:

1) Learn from other commissions.

While this redistricting cycle is taking place in a historically vital moment, there are previous models used that can amplify effectiveness in your role. The task before you is daunting, but fortunately you do not have to reinvent the wheel. There are a growing number of state and

local commissions that have developed best practices for initiating this work and establishing a robust training program and staff capacity. The 2010 State Citizens Redistricting Commission (CRC) made recommendations in a [written report](#) based on its experience as California's the first citizens redistricting commission. The 2020 CRC is currently making decisions about how they will conduct their work and offers innumerable resources that might be helpful to you on their website. Similarly, San Francisco has used independent commissions for several redistricting cycles. Communicating with current and former state and local commissioners will be key to your success. Understanding what went well during their onboarding, training, and redistricting processes, and what they would have done differently will be invaluable to moving forward successfully.

2) Elevate research and training needs.

Build upon the topic areas included in the CRC training used this past fall. After your commissioners review video trainings the CRC received (Redistricting 101, the Voting Rights Act, redistricting laws, census data and California's diverse demographics), seek to gain more in-depth understanding of these topic areas. In particular, we suggest engaging experts to provide a granular analysis of voting rights violations and to provide counsel on compliance with the VRA¹. We also recommend that data analysts trained in social science research methods be used early on to collect, analyze and interpret data on the actual or potential incidence of racially polarized voting related to compliance with the VRA². This will be essential to informing members' decisions on hiring consultants to work under the Commission's guidance to ensure a fair, transparent, and lawful redistricting process.

3) Be intentional and transparent.

Engaging in meaningful actions to relay critical and centralized information about the Commission should be done with great intention. While many local redistricting commissions have chosen to hold only one public hearing per district as legally obligated, we recommend this number be expanded. Conducting more public hearing events beyond the legal minimum will communicate to community members the value you place on their participation. Additionally, holding more public outreach meetings is one way of combatting barriers presented by economic, disability and geographic issues that lessen the likelihood of broader robust public engagement. Equally as important, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these barriers have been amplified and highlight the need for greater public outreach. Similarly, the Sacramento Independent Redistricting Commission is legally obligated to have redistricting maps available to the public at least seven days before final voting occurs³. Seven days is a dismal amount of time to receive public feedback from large metropolitan areas like Sacramento⁴. Accordingly, we

¹https://wedrawthelines.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/64/2015/06/handouts_20150630_crc_handbook_final.pdf

² Ibid

³https://assets.ctfassets.net/mla2k9txthv8/171t7PoqcOAM6acoGgiCy2/e716d108af55859240b07a8a373d5a7b/CA_Local_Redistricting_Commissions_-_Aug_2017.pdf

⁴ Ibid

recommend the maps be made publicly available thirty days before they are submitted for vote which is in accordance with the most vigorous standard for local redistricting commissions in the state⁵.

Build Infrastructure

To ensure an effective and efficient redistricting process we also recommend the establishment of a strong infrastructure that will center your implementation. Notably, we recommend models for collaborative leadership, delegation of work to subcommittees, and participation in team integration opportunities.

1) Decentralized leadership.

The 2010 state CRC chose a shared leadership model in which it rotated chairs and vice chairs throughout the process. This is being used again by the 2020 CRC. There are several benefits to replicating this model. No person, group or entity has the ability to fully centralize control of the Commission, and it communicates the importance of equity among the commissioners to the public. It allows everyone to cycle in and out of the roles of facilitating meetings enabling all commissioners to spend most of their time being actively involved in discussions without one or two commissioners having to consistently focus on leadership tasks. Furthermore, we also recommend the creation of a citizen advisory body to provide essential counsel to the Commission⁶. Community leaders bring invaluable expertise to the redistricting process and increase the democratic nature of these undertakings by creating another avenue of resident participation. In doing so, the Commission can integrate the best features of commission models in the state.

2) Use subcommittees to get your work done.

Your Commission has many important decisions to make and business to attend to in the upcoming year. We recommend you create subcommittees to carry out some of this work. Both the CRC and San Diego have used subcommittees to get important work done. For example, San Diego Redistricting Commission currently has three subcommittees: budget, bylaws, and hiring. With a wider jurisdiction, the CRC has a variety of subcommittees, some of which may be useful to consider. A list of its current subcommittees can be found on a recent meeting agenda, including a subcommittee dedicated to Voting Rights Act compliance. Given the preeminence of such compliance in the redistricting process, we urge you to establish a subcommittee that is tasked with ensuring your commissioners receive ongoing training and access to consultants needed to ensure your understanding and compliance.

3) Engage in team building.

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

Your Commission will need to work very closely together over the coming year and thereafter should your maps be challenged. You will have robust discussions and be faced with difficult decisions about where district boundaries will fall. We believe that you will be better commissioners individually, and a better Commission as a whole, if you spend time now getting to know each other and communication styles. We suggest taking time to do some deliberate team-building now, especially with the current reality of COVID-19 and necessity of remote meeting platforms. This could take the form of a series of virtual lunches, dinners, or coffees. You could also explore a virtual team-building exercise. We hope that you plan this as part of your ongoing activities during your time as a Commission.

We extend our utmost appreciation to each Commission member for dedicating your time to this significant work to serve the diverse communities of Sacramento. Your commitment to the public is deeply valued. Again, we are available to speak to any of the above issues or to recommend experts who can inform your important considerations over the next few months. We look forward to monitoring your progress and collaborating with you on this vital project.

Sincerely,

Sacramento Redistricting Coalition

Partners Organizations:

Organize Sacramento

League of Women Voters of Sacramento County

Local SEIU 1021

Uptown Studios

Everyday Impact Consulting

