

**Office of
The Board of County Commissioners
Granite County**

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Clifford Nelson, Chairman
25 Nelson Lane
Philipsburg MT 59858

Maureen Connor, Commissioner
P O Box 6
Philipsburg MT 59858

Scott C. Adler, Commissioner
750 Frontage Road West
Drummond MT 50932

October 9, 2012

Montana Districting and Apportionment Commission
P O Box 201706
Helena MT 59620-1706

Dear Commission Members:


The Board of Granite County Commissioners is extremely disappointed in the preliminary legislative districting maps which continue to place Granite County with an urban area of Anaconda-Deer Lodge County. In 2011 a Joint Resolution was passed by Granite and Powell Counties requesting that they be linked in a legislative district due to the myriad similarities in the counties and avoiding putting rural Granite County in with an urban area.

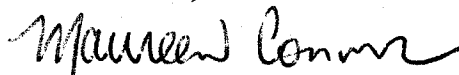
We again vigorously express this request as the preliminary districting continues to disenfranchise voters in Granite County as they will continue to be easily outvoted due to the predominance of voters in the urban area of Anaconda-Deer Lodge County.

While we understand that the task of districting the entire state is monumental, we request that serious reconsideration be given to this area. Political parties and local officials agree that it makes good sense to be aligned with another rural area to give citizens the opportunity to have a real voice in state government, which they do not have under the current plan.

Sincerely yours,

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF GRANITE COUNTY


Clifford Nelson, Chairman


Maureen Connor, Commissioner


Scott C. Adler, Commissioner

cc: Powell County Commission



PONDERA COUNTY

20 4TH AVENUE S.W.

CONRAD, MONTANA 59425

Districting and Apportionment Commission
Legislative Services Division
PO Box 201706
Helena, MT 59620-1706



RECEIVED

OCT 10 2012

Montana Legislative
Services Division

Dear Commission Members,

It has come to our attention that the newly proposed boundary between HD 26 and HD 17 removes Senator Llew Jones from his home community of Conrad by the length of his residence's driveway. What makes this omission particularly confusing is that the new boundary leaves the city of Conrad substantially whole, while linking Senator Jones' residence with a population area (Choteau) over 25 miles away. Additionally, the proposed boundary removes the local airport, golf course, and shooting club from the district containing Conrad's population.

As you are aware, Senator Jones has a long history of distinguished public service in the Golden Triangle region. He has served the cities of Conrad, Shelby, Valier, and Cut Bank as their Representative for three terms and, with the addition of Chester, Big Sandy, and Fort Benton, as their Senator for one term.

We understand that the commission's constitutionally defined priority is to equalize the population in each new house district. In support of this requirement, it is important to note that there are fewer than six individuals who would be impacted by the boundary change we are proposing. Therefore, the commission should find that neither the inclusion nor the exclusion of the proposed geographical area will appreciably alter the final population statistics in either of the affected house districts.

Furthermore, while we agree that the location of a boundary should not be based upon the residence of any existing legislator, we do believe that the commission should be especially cognizant of a boundary's impact in rural districts. A rural legislator does not share the same advantage as an urban legislator in regards to the location of their home. This occurs because an urban legislator can often run in any legislative district within their county of residence, while a rural legislator can only run in the district in which they actually reside. The debilitating potential of this inequality requires that the commission be particularly careful when locating a boundary in rural areas.

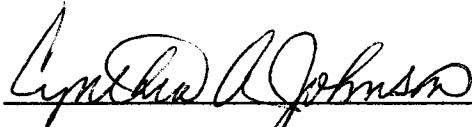
The commission's proposed boundary, when viewed within the framework of the residency statutes controlling rural districts, stands to completely exclude Senator Jones

from participation in the 2014 legislative elections. By accepting the minor change we are proposing, the commission would at least be providing the Senator with an opportunity to run for the House seat that contains the communities he has served so well in the past.

As elected officials and community leaders, we recommend that the commission accept our change to the proposed boundary. We are certain that this change best represents the needs and desires of the Golden Triangle region, as well as, those of the state of Montana.

Respectfully,

Pondera County Commissioners



Cynthia A. Johnson, Chairman



Joseph Christiaens, Vice-Chairman



Sandra J. Broesder, Member

N48-1824

N48-1752

N48-168

N48-1608

N48-1536

W112 015

W112 005

W111 995

W111 985

W111 975

W111 965

W111 9

My Road

Coalmine Rd

Conrad Dupuyer Rd

Please
Propo

City of

Stevens

GOO

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OCT 18 2012

Montana Legislative
Services Division

October 17, 2012

Commissioner Jim Regnier, Presiding Officer
Districting and Apportionment Commission
Legislative Services Division
PO Box 201706
Helena, MT 59620-1706

Dear Chairman Regnier,

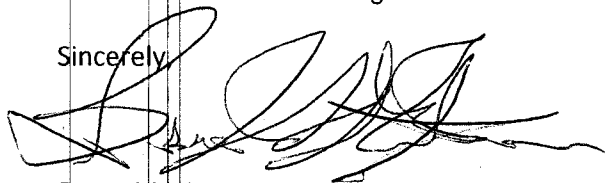
As I compared the Tentative Commission Plan for Billings with the plan which we drafted, I am disappointed that the work done by our local planning group was not taken into consideration. Our group spent a great deal of time determining boundaries based on the criteria established by the Districting and Apportionment Commission, especially in terms of population deviation and compact and contiguous territory. The tentative Commission Plan has our south side neighborhood divided among four districts as opposed to the single district in our proposal. There are other examples where neighborhoods, schools and election ward boundaries are ignored and new districts are narrow and long rather than compact. We made a concerted effort to use your criteria by taking into consideration the neighborhoods, schools, major roads, natural boundaries and wards.

We also took great pride in leaving partisan politics out of our discussions. When we were done and it became a public document, we heard grumbling from both political parties which gave me the impression that we had done a good job being color-blind.

Would we do this again in ten years? Probably not. We put a great deal of time developing our "hometown" draft. Living and working in Billings, especially those of us who have lived most of our lives here, gives us the local knowledge which we feel is essential when developing a draft map. We know the neighborhoods, schools, voting districts and natural and man-made boundaries. Who better to map than the "locals".

We will live with the results of your commission as we have in the past and hope that ten years from now the outcome might have a more local flavor.

Sincerely,



Bruce MacIntyre
Director, Business Advocacy and Government Affairs

Billings
MONTANA'S  TRAILHEAD

ACCREDITED
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE UNITED STATES

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ph 406-245-4111 / f 406-245-7333 / www.billingschamber.com

it's
Billings
Billings Chamber of Commerce
Convention and Visitors Bureau

Weiss, Rachel

From: Mary Ellen Morrison <tootisme@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 10:24 PM
To: Redistricting
Subject: Redistricting Plan

To the re-districting committee:

I live in the Helena valley. It has been a long 10 years since the 2000 re-districting plan. That plan disenfranchised me, and the new plan continues to do that.

That plan split up the Helena Valley and paired chunks of it with the city of Helena. It is my understanding that according to your guiding principles, when you create districts you are to take into consideration communities of interest. It is ridiculous to say that the city of Helena is the same as the valley, thereby arguing that similar areas of interest had been put together. It would be logical and reasonable to divide the valley into districts and divide the city into districts. The sole reason for the districting as laid out, of course, is to disenfranchise the valley which tends to be conservative. I believe that this plan, as it relates to the Helena valley, does not follow the guiding principles of the redistricting commission and is politics at its worst.

We have a representative who has well represented the city portion of our district--the valley portion has no representation. This plan is totally political and has no consideration for what is truly democratic--with a small "d". Please reconsider the plan.

Mary Ellen Morrison
201 Alfalfa Rd
Helena, MT 59602

**BILLINGS GAZETTE**

Gazette opinion: Keeping tabs on state redistricting commission

9 HOURS AGO

Back in August, the Montana Districting and Apportionment Commission spent a full week hammering out a preliminary plan for redrawing state legislative districts to reflect the 2010 census.

The five-member bipartisan commission will meet again next week for the first time since August. Decisions made yet this fall may determine the final plan that will be in place for elections in 2014 through 2022.

Although the preliminary plan garnered unanimous approval in August, commissioners are expected to introduce amendments, probably at a meeting and public hearing scheduled for Nov. 15 in Helena.

Also on the Nov. 15 agenda is discussion about how to pair the 100 representative districts into 50 Senate districts. As much as possible, those pairings should follow the same criteria as the representative district apportionment, keeping Senate districts within county and city lines when possible. The decisions need to make sense for the people in the district. Their assignment of holdover senators to the new districts also should make sense for citizens. If sitting senators find themselves assigned out of the area that elected them, it should be because voter equity and the population shift required the change — not because of which political party the incumbent represents.

The panel is expected to take action on Senate districts and discuss plan amendments at another meeting in late November. On Dec. 19, the commission will hold a public hearing on a complete proposed plan. After that, the panel must vote on the plan it is required to submit to the 2013 Legislature.

Lawmakers may make recommendations on the plan, but the final decision will be up to the commission, which will take final action sometime after the Legislature adjourns.

Although decisions won't be set until next spring, the details being mapped out this fall matter tremendously. Even those of us who cannot attend the Helena hearings can find out what the commission is proposing by listening to the meetings via Internet or visiting the commission website, which provides detailed, colored maps of the proposed legislative districts. Let's keep an eye on this important public process.

To learn more

The Districting and Apportionment Commission will meet by teleconference at 10 a.m. on Oct. 25. Commission staff and the public will attend the meeting in Room 172 of the state Capitol in Helena. The meeting also will be streamed live on the

Internet and broadcast on TVMT. To watch on the Internet, go to the link with this Gazette opinion at billingsgazette.com.

The Oct. 25 meeting agenda includes correcting technical errors in the August plan that would have put about 200 Yellowstone County residents in districts not contiguous to their places of residence. Noncontiguous districts aren't permitted by law. The error will be corrected by placing these residents in the same district as their neighbors.

More information on redistricting is available at the commission website through the link at billingsgazette.com.