

Final
STAFF SUMMARY OF MEETING

COMMITTEE ON JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON REDISTRICTING

Date:	03/19/2011	ATTENDANCE
Time:	09:00 AM to 11:46 AM	Brophy X
Place:	Mesa State College, College Center, Ballroom South	Carroll *
		Coram X
This Meeting was called to order by <u>Representative Balmer</u>		Nikkel X
		Pabon X
		Scheffel X
		Schwartz X
		Vigil X
This Report was prepared by <u>Hillary Smith</u>		Balmer X
		Heath X

X = Present, E = Excused, A = Absent, * = Present after roll call

Bills Addressed:	Action Taken:
Grand Junction Public Hearing	Witness Testimony and/or Committee Discussion Only

09:00 AM -- Grand Junction Public Hearing

Representative Balmer, Co-chair, called the meeting to order. The committee held a moment of silence for the victims of the earthquake and tsunami in Japan. The committee said the Pledge of Allegiance. The members of the committee introduced themselves.

09:06 AM

Senator Heath, Co-chair, made introductory remarks. He provided some background on the redistricting process and the mission of the committee. He noted that Colorado's number of congressional districts will remain the same. He spoke about the technology available to the committee for redrawing the districts.

09:10 AM

Representative Balmer addressed the significance of public input for the redistricting process. He provided additional details concerning the formation of the committee and its goals. He explained that this is the committee's tenth and final public hearing throughout the state. He described the cost savings of avoiding a special session for redistricting. Representative Balmer then summarized the history of redistricting in Colorado, noting that the courts have been drawing the plans since 1981. He indicated that the committee is trying to break this pattern. He spoke about the importance of public input concerning communities of interest. He described geographical and transportation-related factors for drawing districts in certain ways. He encouraged the public to refer to the brochure "A Citizen's Guide to Redistricting" and the map of the current districts, both of which are available at the website www.colorado.gov/redistricting. He encouraged people to e-mail comments to the CongRedist2011@state.co.us e-mail account.

09:16 AM

Representative Balmer introduced former Congressman Scott McInnis, Senator Steve King, and Representative Ray Scott, who were present at the hearing.

09:17 AM

Tom Morris, Office of Legislative Legal Services, spoke about the redistricting process, explaining that the plan will be introduced as a bill and will go through the normal bill hearing process. He summarized the federal legal requirements concerning redistricting, including the "one person, one vote" requirement. He then discussed the importance of the federal Voting Rights Act. He described other factors of redistricting that have been considered in the past, such as local boundaries (municipal and county), compactness and contiguity, and communities of interest. He said that public testimony is particularly important for defining communities of interest. He posed several questions for witnesses to address in their testimony concerning communities of interest.

09:23 AM

Mr. Morris explained that the precinct boundaries used by the U.S. Census Bureau in its calculations differ slightly from the actual precinct lines. As a result, 453 people were placed in the wrong congressional district. The members of the committee received a packet of information about this discrepancy along with an updated table of population figures. An image of the difference between precinct lines and Census boundaries in Jackson County was displayed for the audience. All of this information is included in Attachment A.

09:25 AM

Representative Balmer explained that the committee aims to vote a plan out of committee unanimously, hopefully within two or three weeks. He spoke about the bipartisan nature of the committee. He introduced Colorado State Board of Education member Marcia Neal, Fruita Mayor Ken Henry, and Snowmass Mayor Bill Boineau, who were present at the hearing.

09:28 AM -- Former Congressman Scott McInnis, representing himself, spoke about the nature of the communities in Congressional District 3. He said that the district is the primary water source for Colorado. He described his past involvement in the redistricting process. He said that Chaffee County has more in common with Congressional District 3 than with its current district. He spoke about problems with splitting the mountain communities. He expressed his opinion that Eagle and other mountain communities do not have as much in common with Boulder as with the counties in Congressional District 3. He asked that the committee consider unifying ski districts. He asked that the mountain community of interest be kept intact, and he described several factors, such as water, that indicate that mountain communities are a community of interest. He remarked that ski resorts and public lands should also be considered communities of interest. He spoke about differences between the Eastern and Western Slopes. He moved on to a discussion of energy. He concluded his remarks by noting that the Western Slope is big in size but not in population. He suggested that the two large rural sections of the state are easy to recognize and to unify, and could be drawn first in the redistricting process.

09:37 AM

Senator Carroll mentioned that residents of many counties have indicated an interest in joining Congressional District 3. She asked who should be removed from the district in order to add more people. Congressman McInnis noted that Otero and Las Animas Counties used to be in Congressional District 4. He suggested that those counties could be moved back to Congressional District 4 in order to put Eagle and Chaffee Counties back in Congressional District 3. Representative Pabon asked if the I-70 corridor should be considered a community of interest in Congressional District 3. Congressman McInnis agreed that the corridor is a community of interest; he spoke about ski resorts and attendant traffic.

09:40 AM -- Michael Tucker, representing the Eagle County Democrats, expressed the view that his group's interests are best served by staying in Congressional District 2. He stated that Eagle County should remain whole, and said that the western part of the county should not be split from the rest of the county. He remarked that it is already difficult for people in the western part of the county to get the attention of elected officials.

09:43 AM -- Anita Sherman, representing herself as a resident of Glenwood Springs, stated that Eagle County is a non-metropolitan urban area. She spoke about the importance of compactness. She said that Eagle's communities are not ranching- or agricultural-based. She suggested that all northwestern counties should be put in to Congressional District 2. Ms. Sherman responded to follow-up questions from the committee. She expressed the view that the northwestern counties are more closely aligned with Boulder County than with Pueblo or Mesa Counties. Representative Coram suggested that adding all of the northwestern counties to Congressional District 2 may require removing Boulder County from the district; he asked for her thoughts on this possibility. Discussion continued between Ms. Sherman and Representative Coram concerning ways to adjust the districts if the northwestern counties were added to Congressional District 2.

09:50 AM -- Harvie Branscomb, representing himself, distributed three handouts to the committee (Attachments B, C, and D). He described his theory of redistricting. He said that he is in favor of competitive districts. He explained the information contained in his handouts, noting that one of the handouts is a proposed map. Mr. Branscomb walked the committee through his map. He addressed questions concerning Eagle County, explaining why he feels that Eagle County should stay in the same district as Boulder County. He spoke about variations among factors such as age, race, and education in counties across the state. Mr. Branscomb then summarized testimony from other meetings related to his map.

10:00 AM

Mr. Branscomb responded to questions from the committee.

10:02 AM

Representative Balmer introduced Mesa State Student Body President Nick Lopez, who was present at the hearing.

10:03 AM -- David Dunnagan, representing the Disabled American Veterans, spoke about the veterans of the Western Slope. He stated that there are 69,000 veterans in Congressional District 3, 37,000 of whom reside on the Western Slope. He spoke about health care for veterans on the Western Slope. He indicated that veterans who live in rural areas have trouble getting to health care facilities. He expressed the hope that congressional representatives would respect the service of veterans on the Western Slope.

10:08 AM -- Duncan McArthur, representing himself, spoke about the current boundaries of Congressional District 3. He expressed the belief that although the district is large, all of the counties within it share many common interests, such as water. He remarked that resort areas are intermixed with other communities. He urged the committee to keep the Western Slope whole.

10:11 AM -- Jack Real, representing himself as a resident from Glenwood Springs, suggested that the northwestern counties would have a better voice in Congress if they were added to Congressional District 2. Mr. Real responded to follow-up questions from the committee.

10:14 AM -- Roland Reynolds, representing himself, suggested that the current lines of Congressional District 3 are not ideal. He said that it should be called the "Mountain West" district. He stated that the economy of western Colorado centers around tourism, mineral extraction and ranching. He stated that Mesa County is the economic center of Congressional District 3. He drew distinctions between farming on the Eastern and Western Slopes. Mr. Reynolds noted that Pueblo County has a steel manufacturing plant and a dense population. He suggested dividing the state into three areas: "Farming East," "Mountains," and cities in between. He spoke about the diverse population of the Western Slope. He expressed his support for a *Daily Sentinel* op-ed written by Jim Spehar (Attachment E). He distributed two additional handouts (Attachments F and G).

10:20 AM -- Kevin McCarney, representing himself as a resident of Clifton, stated that Congressional District 3 is competitive. He suggested that counties should not be split, he said this is a logical and simple solution. In response to questions from Senator Carroll, he clarified that he believes Grand County should be put in Congressional District 3.

10:22 AM -- Rio Blanco County Commissioner Ken Parsons, representing himself, said that using a geographic information system (GIS) is helpful, but factors such as water, the Continental Divide, and hydrological basins should also be taken into account. He spoke about the uniqueness of northwestern Colorado. He indicated that the Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado have adopted a resolution on this issue. He said that the Western Slope is a political and geographical region that constitutes a community of interest, and he asked that it be maintained as much as possible. Commissioner Parsons responded to questions from Senator Brophy concerning whether the northwestern counties have commonalities with Boulder County. In response to questions from Senator Schwartz, Commissioner Parsons said that the I-70 Corridor also makes sense as a community of interest. He expressed the opinion that Jackson has more in common with Routt and Moffat Counties than with Larimer County. He then discussed the importance of school districts.

10:31 AM -- Gay Moore, representing herself, stated that the only thing that should divide the state is the Continental Divide. She asked the committee to not be concerned with the political affiliations in districts.

10:33 AM -- Dea Jacobson, representing herself, spoke about her experience as a congressional aide. She said that the diversity of Congressional District 3 makes it a challenging district to represent, especially in terms of size. She spoke about issues involving travel across the district. She conceded that this may have to remain the same, due to the requirement that the population of each district be as equal as practicable. She spoke about the importance of the I-70 and Highway 50 corridors. She argued that transportation is an important factor to consider.

10:36 AM -- Snowmass Mayor Bill Boineau, representing himself, spoke about the importance of geographic, water, and transportation boundaries. He described relationships among various cities pertaining to these issues, noting that many cities are in different congressional districts. He responded to questions from Senator Schwartz concerning whether Eagle County should be divided.

10:40 AM -- Kathy Hall, representing herself, spoke about her former experience as the Mesa County Commissioner and about the boards and councils on which she has served. She urged the committee to keep the Western Slope whole as a community of interest. She discussed how the Continental Divide affects travel to Denver. She stated that people on the Western Slope should not be represented by someone from Fort Collins.

10:43 AM -- Fruita Mayor Ken Henry, representing himself, spoke about the town of Fruita, noting that it has many graduates with advanced degrees. He voiced support for Congressman McInnis' comments. He spoke about state- and federal-owned properties. He then discussed the number of lawsuits dealing with inter-mountain diversion of water.

10:46 AM -- Sharon Brenner, representing herself as a resident of Carbondale, spoke about the drive from Mesa County to Denver. She said that under no circumstances should the northwestern counties be placed in the same district as Boulder County. She said that the northwestern counties have factors such as a rural nature and concern with natural resources and recreation that do not match what she termed to be the urban interests of Boulder and Gilpin Counties. Ms. Brenner suggested moving Lake and Chaffee Counties to Congressional District 3, and putting Otero and Las Animas Counties in Congressional District 4. She then spoke about the importance of transportation.

10:48 AM -- Bonnie Petersen, representing Club 20, said that her organization represents 22 counties on the Western Slope and two Indian tribes. She urged the committee to do its work in a nonpartisan manner and to maintain communities of interest like the Western Slope and the Eastern Plains. She spoke about the impact of public lands, water, tourism, and agriculture. She added that it is important to have a representative who understands the issues of the area that he or she represents. Ms. Petersen suggested that it would be dangerous to put rural areas with large metropolitan areas. She strongly encouraged the committee to maintain the communities of interest as they stand.

10:50 AM -- Bob Hislop, representing himself, spoke about Boulder, Arapahoe, Jefferson, and Mesa Counties. He described the differences among those counties. He stated that there is a community of interest on the Western Slope, and he stressed the importance of tourism, energy, and water to this area. He recommended putting Otero and Las Animas Counties in Congressional District 4, and moving Chaffee and Lake Counties to Congressional District 3. He expressed hope that Eagle County would also be included in Congressional District 3. He voiced opposition to the idea of putting northwestern counties in Congressional District 2.

10:53 AM -- Ed Stephens, representing himself, noted that Colorado is not flat. He spoke about the importance of the Continental Divide. He addressed the distinctiveness of the Western Slope and its concerns with water. He then described the interests of the mining, agricultural and drilling industries. He stated that the Western Slope should not be divided, and he referred to previous testimony on this point.

10:57 AM -- Bill Hugenberg, representing himself, explained that he used to be the Grand Junction local Census manager. He expressed his dissatisfaction with the U.S. Census Bureau's operations on the Western Slope. He believes that the Census data for some Western Slope counties indicates too low of a population.

10:59 AM -- Debra Irvine, representing Summit County Republicans and several other organizations, said that Summit County is a member of Club 20 and is committed to the Western Slope. She referred to testimony presented at the March 15th hearing in Boulder that drew relationships between Summit and Boulder. She expressed the opinion that Summit County has a stronger relationship with Congressional District 3 and the Western Slope than with Boulder. She asked the committee to move Summit County back to Congressional District 3.

11:03 AM

Representative Balmer indicated that Senator Heath would chair for the remainder of the meeting.

11:03 AM -- Rick Stelter, representing the Delta County Democratic Party, stated that Congressional District 3 should be kept largely as it is currently drawn. He spoke about the history of redistricting in the area. He discussed the importance of agriculture, mining, energy, and timber. He asked that Chaffee County be put back in Congressional District 3. He referred to previous testimony concerning the possibility of adding Lake and Crowley Counties to Congressional District 3. Mr. Stelter said that he would prefer to avoid splitting counties. He addressed previous testimony suggesting that Lake and Crowley to 3. He said that they would like to avoid splitting counties. He then referred to previous testimony concerning Eagle, Moffat, Routt, and Jackson Counties.

11:06 AM -- Rob Irvine, representing himself, spoke about the interests of seniors and retirees. He described his time in the Air Force. He said that people on the Western Slope and in the mountain communities are there for the quality of life and for recreational opportunities. He voiced support for Ms. Petersen's testimony.

11:10 AM -- Arthur Gardner, representing himself, spoke about the small population increase required for Congressional District 3. He said that interests of Congressional District 3 are: agriculture, tourism, mining, water, and public lands. He stated that major suburban and urban interests should not be added to these interests.

11:13 AM -- Ron Roesener, representing himself, spoke about the differences between the Eastern and Western Slopes. He said that the boundaries of Congressional District 3 should remain largely the same, but that Grand and Eagle Counties should be added to the district. He believes that Otero and Las Animas Counties are more aligned with Congressional District 4 than with Congressional District 3. He said that Garfield County is a ranching area, not a tourism area.

11:16 AM -- Kaye Ferry, representing the Eagle County Republicans and several other organizations, addressed previous testimony concerning splitting Eagle County. She referred to testimony provided by Travis Whipple at a previous meeting concerning whether the new plan should be based on the current plan. She added additional detail concerning the I-70 corridor. She stated that \$800,000 per hour is lost when I-70 closes, and she discussed the impact of this loss of revenue. She distributed five handouts to the committee (Attachments H through L).

11:19 AM -- Bob Rasnick, representing himself, said that the Continental Divide is a geographic divide that should serve as a natural divide for congressional districts.

11:21 AM -- Rio Blanco County Commissioner Kai Turner, representing himself, suggested that Grand County should be added to Congressional District 3. He said that if a distinction has to be made, he would prefer that Grand County be added rather than Chaffee County. He responded to questions from the committee.

11:22 AM -- David Merritt, representing the Garfield County Republicans and several other organizations, said that political boundaries should follow watersheds.

11:24 AM -- Nina Anderson, representing herself, spoke about the diversity of Congressional District 3. She stated that Moffat and Rio Blanco Counties do not align with Congressional District 2. She suggested putting Pitkin, Garfield, and Grand Counties in Congressional District 2. She spoke about the southern area of the Western Slope, and also said that the Continental Divide and its effects on water should be considered.

11:26 AM -- Orchard City Mayor Don Suppes, representing himself, spoke about urban versus rural communities of interest. He said that he sees no reason for Pueblo County to be in Congressional District 3 if communities of interest are being considered. Mayor Suppes responded to questions from the committee. He said that Pueblo is an urban community, and he described how voting patterns in Pueblo differ from the rest of Congressional District 3. Discussion ensued concerning communities of interest and political competitiveness.

11:30 AM -- Jim Womack, representing himself, referred to earlier testimony suggesting that the northwestern counties be put in Congressional District 2. He disagrees with this suggestion. He specifically spoke about the lifestyles and livelihood of people in Moffat County. He stated that more people from Moffat Counties and surrounding areas retire and stay in the Western Slope than move to Boulder. He spoke about the community's interests in agriculture, energy, and hunting.

11:33 AM -- John Justman, representing himself as a resident of Fruita, and Fruita Co-op Board, spoke about farming and public lands in Mesa County. He said that the county is a rural area. He does not want to be part of a metropolitan area. He indicated that Mesa County needs a representative who represents rural interests.

11:35 AM -- County Commissioner Rachel Richards, representing the Pitkin County Board of Commissioners, spoke about what she termed to be the extremely partisan nature of politics today. She emphasized the importance of competitive districts. She spoke about problems that occur when a district is a safe seat. She described different interests among counties in the Western Slope. She said that it is a myth that everyone agrees with each other on the Western Slope. She spoke about the importance of the Roaring Fork Valley, noting that a small portion of Eagle is there. She reiterated the importance of competitive districts.

11:39 AM -- Debbie Marquez, representing herself as a resident from Edwards, spoke about the I-70 corridor as a community of interest. She discussed the number of times that Eagle County has changed districts. She agreed with Ms. Richards' comments concerning competitive districts. She also agreed with the suggestion of putting northwestern counties in Congressional District 2. She addressed the previous redistricting process. She voiced support for an idea that each major metropolitan area could be viewed as the capital of a district, *e.g.* Grand Junction and Pueblo could each be the capital of a separate district.

11:43 AM -- Cathie Jorgenson, representing herself as a resident of Mesa County, spoke about the history of the courts' involvement in redistricting. She said that it is better for the elected officials to complete the redistricting plan. She asked the committee to discuss how it will ensure that it does its job.

11:45 AM

Senator Heath responded to Ms. Jorgenson's comments, saying that the goal is to have a map done by April 14, then to have it passed by both chambers and to the Governor before the end of the legislative session. He thanked everyone for coming.

11:46 AM

Representative Balmer closed public testimony. The committee adjourned.