

Final
STAFF SUMMARY OF MEETING

COMMITTEE ON JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON REDISTRICTING

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| Date: | 02/26/2011 | ATTENDANCE |
| Time: | 01:03 PM to 02:06 PM | Brophy X |
| Place: | Fort Morgan High School | Carroll X |
| | | Coram X |
| This Meeting was called to order by | <u>Representative Balmer</u> | Nikkel X |
| | | Pabon X |
| This Report was prepared by | <u>Hillary Smith</u> | Scheffel X |
| | | Schwartz E |
| | | Vigil X |
| | | Balmer X |
| | | Heath X |

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

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| Bills Addressed: | Action Taken: |
| Fort Morgan Public Hearing | Witness Testimony and/or Committee Discussion Only |

01:03 PM -- Fort Morgan Public Hearing

Representative Balmer, co-chair, called the committee to order. Members of the committee introduced themselves and explained which districts they represent. The committee said the Pledge of Allegiance. Representative Balmer described the committee’s purpose and discussed how witness testimony would proceed. He explained that this committee is concerned with congressional redistricting, not state House and Senate redistricting.

01:13 PM

Esther van Mourik, Office of Legislative Legal Services, provided a brief overview of the process of congressional redistricting and the factors that must be taken into account when the boundaries are redrawn. She spoke about the importance of the “one person, one vote” requirement and Section 2 of the federal Voting Rights Act. Ms. van Mourik listed traditional redistricting principles, including the preservation of local boundaries and communities of interest. She suggested several issues for witnesses to address in their testimony.

The following individuals testified:

01:15 PM -- Steven Nein, representing himself, described his experience as a rancher and farmer. He said that areas that share common interests and values need to be kept together. He spoke about the importance of water issues to rural parts of Colorado, then addressed funding for state colleges. Mr. Nein responded to questions from Senator Heath.

01:18 PM -- Cathy Shull, representing Progressive 15, introduced herself and described her organization, which is a rural advocacy group consisting of 15 counties in the northeastern section of the state. She spoke about issues that are important to the members of Progressive 15. She described the shared economies in the northeastern region, including agriculture, water, and energy. She spoke about regional groups that exist among various counties in Congressional District 4, remarking that the counties in such groups would prefer to remain in the same district. She then discussed what she termed the culture of “rural frontier.” Ms. Shull responded to questions from the committee, stating that Progressive 15 has taken no formal opinion concerning ways to cut the population of Congressional District 4. She indicated that her personal opinion is to cut some of the population of

Weld County. She continued to respond to questions from the committee.

01:22 PM

Representative Balmer introduced Representative Sonnenberg, who was present at the hearing.

01:23 PM -- Kerrie Steinbach, representing herself, spoke about her experience as a rancher and as someone involved in education. She asked that the committee consider keeping Congressional District 4 together. She spoke about the connection and sense of community among Morgan, Weld, and Larimer Counties. She also addressed the importance of Colorado State University and 4H organizations to the district.

01:26 PM -- David Cornwell, representing himself, described his experience as a builder and as a county supervisor. He spoke about communities of interest and addressed the importance of rural areas and agriculture. He referred to the "frontier attitude," stating that it needs to be preserved. He suggested that population from Larimer County or from other high-density areas should be removed from the district in order to preserve its rural interests.

01:30 PM -- Al Peltzer, representing himself, suggested removing population from Baca or Otero County; he said that Otero County could be made whole in this way.

01:32 PM -- Professor Steve Mazurana, representing himself, spoke about the history of Congressional District 4. He asked the committee to preserve the outlines of the district. He then spoke about the importance of competitive districts. He addressed the significance of education, noting that 80 percent of the students at the University of Northern Colorado are from Colorado. He suggested removing population from the south or southeast corner of the state, perhaps placing those people in Congressional District 3. Professor Mazurana indicated that he preferred not to cut population from Weld County, and would rather cut population from the southeast corner of the state. He then described Greeley's inter-governmental agreements, along with other relationships across the district. He spoke about the increasing population of Latinos and other minority populations in the district.

01:38 PM

Representative Balmer introduced Representative Becker, who was present at the hearing, and indicated that Senator Heath would chair for the remainder of the meeting.

01:38 PM -- Washington County Commissioner David Foy, representing himself, noted that Otero County is currently split between Congressional Districts 3 and 4. He spoke about the southern part of Weld County, suggesting that the area is more similar to the northern Front Range than to the rest of the Eastern plains. He said that the South Platte River area is an important economic area, and he made several suggestions concerning additions and subtractions to the population of Congressional District 4. Commissioner Foy responded to questions from the committee. He spoke about the expansion of the Front Range northward. He continued to respond to questions from the committee.

01:42 PM -- Richard O'Connell, representing the Logan County Economic Development Corporation, spoke about economic interests in Congressional District 4. He described an economic district consisting of six northeastern counties. He continued to describe economic interests in the region.

01:45 PM -- Jerry Wathen, representing himself, discussed his experience serving on the Colorado Commission on Aging. He spoke about the process of redistricting in the past. He expressed his opinion that Congressional District 4 should be kept intact, and suggested that population from the southeastern corner of Weld County or from the southeastern corner of the state be removed from the district. He indicated that he personally would like to see Weld County kept intact.

01:48 PM -- Mac McGraw, representing himself, spoke about his experience serving in the Wyoming state legislature during redistricting. He suggested that the southeastern counties be put in the same district as

Pueblo County. He said areas around Highway 50 have more in common with Pueblo County and with the other southern counties than with Fort Morgan and Sterling. He spoke about cultural commonalities. He said that Otero County should be put back together, and Crowley, Kiowa, Bent, Prowers, and Baca Counties should all be moved to Congressional District 3. He then suggested putting Cheyenne, Lincoln, and Kit Carson Counties in the same district as Aurora and Colorado Springs. He spoke about the counties represented by Progressive 15 compared to those represented by Action 22. He suggested that the people in Lamar and Las Animas Counties would prefer to be in the same district as Pueblo County. He then expressed the belief that Weld County should be made whole, and spoke about commonalities between Fort Lupton and Brighton. Mr. McGraw responded to questions from Representative Coram concerning adjustments that would need to be made to Congressional District 3 if it were to absorb all of the southeastern counties.

01:56 PM -- Paul Robert Owens, representing himself, spoke about Congressional District 6. He expressed his hope that the district would be made more competitive. He suggested moving Greenwood Village, Evergreen, and Golden to other districts. He responded to follow-up questions from the committee.

02:00 PM -- Morgan County Commissioner Tony Carlson, representing himself, recommended that counties should be kept as whole as possible. He also expressed his opinion that Congressional District 4 should remain as agricultural as possible.

02:03 PM

Witness testimony concluded. The committee invited the members of the public to ask questions.

02:04 PM -- Al Peltzer returned to ask what sorts of suggestions were given at the Loveland meeting earlier in the day. Representative Balmer and Senator Heath summarized the suggestions given at that hearing. Representative Balmer encouraged the members of the public to use the CongRedist2011@state.co.us e-mail account to communicate with the members of the committee.

02:06 PM

Senator Heath thanked everyone for coming. The committee adjourned.