

Final
STAFF SUMMARY OF MEETING

COMMITTEE ON JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON REDISTRICTING

Date:	02/28/2011	ATTENDANCE
Time:	06:05 PM to 07:21 PM	Brophy *
Place:	SupCt	Carroll X
		Coram X
This Meeting was called to order by	<u>Senator Heath</u>	Nikkel X
		Pabon X
This Report was prepared by	<u>Christie Lee</u>	Scheffel X
		Schwartz X
		Vigil X
		Balmer X
		Heath X

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

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

06:07 PM -- Denver Public Hearing

Senator Heath, Co-Chair, called the committee to order and gave some opening remarks. Representative Balmer, Co-Chair, also gave some opening remarks.

06:09 PM -- Brita Darling, Office of Legislative Legal Services, gave an overview of the redistricting process in Colorado. She explained the population shifts and what needs to occur in each district:

- District 1 needs gain 56,418 people;
- District 2 needs to lose 15,348 people;
- District 3 needs to gain 12,271 people;
- District 4 needs to lose 6,584 people;
- District 5 needs to lose 7,445 people;
- District 6 needs to lose 79,356 people; and
- District 7 needs to gain 40,047 people.

06:16 PM -- Congresswomen Diana DeGette explained that she represents Congressional District 1 and talked about the importance of keeping Denver together. She discussed the laws that govern redistricting. Congresswoman DeGette talked about the communities of interest in Denver, including the Denver Health System, Denver International Airport (DIA), and its transportation projects.

06:26 PM -- Bill Vidal, Mayor of Denver, talked about his background in public service. He said the best thing for Denver is to stay in a unified district and gave some reasons. Mayor Vidal asked that the committee not dilute the minority voting strength in Denver. He discussed the communities of interest within Denver, including Denver Hospital and homeless shelters. He also talked about Denver's school district, Denver being a regional transportation center, and DIA. Mayor Vidal discussed the sports teams, federal agencies, and other organizations headquartered in Denver. He asked the committee to keep Denver whole and in a unified district. Mayor Vidal stated that he would need to provide that information at a later time as he did not know it offhand.

06:34 PM

Representative Balmer mentioned that Congressional District 1 needs to gain 56,418 people and asked which communities link the most to Congressional District 1 and asked which areas the mayor would include to make up that additional 56,418 people. Mayor Vidal responded. Senator Carroll also asked where 56,418 people would come from. Representative Pabon asked what percentage of the residents in Denver send their kids to Denver Public Schools.

06:37 PM -- O'Neill Quinlan, past member of RTD, responded to questions regarding his input on how he would keep Denver intact and distributed a handout (Attachment A).

06:42 PM -- Linda White, representing herself, stated that she believes Congressional District 1 should remain whole and if the district adds people asked that they be added from north Aurora or Commerce City.

06:44 PM -- Judy Kriss, representing House District 9 in the City and County of Denver, believes Denver should remain whole and the boundaries contiguous. She noted that Arapahoe County borders Denver and talked about the common interests with Arapahoe County to the east. Representative Pabon asked the witness to talk about the relationship between House District 9 and the northwest quadrant of House District 4 that he represents.

06:48 PM -- Monisha Merchant, member, University of Colorado Board of Regents, talked about the Anschutz Medical Campus in Aurora. Representative Balmer asked if she would like to see the campus stay in Congressional District 7. Ms. Merchant said that she would.

06:50 PM -- Daniel Willis, representing himself, but who is also an officer with the Democratic Party, explained that he has been looking at redistricting in Colorado since 2002. He agreed Denver County should stay whole in Congressional District 1, and suggested taking the area of Aurora in Arapahoe County between Denver and I-225, or adding north Aurora and Commerce City. He talked about the piece of Jefferson County that is located in Congressional District 1 which only includes only 3 voters. Representative Pabon asked how many people off Mr. Willis' plan is from the ideal district number. Mr. Willis explained that his proposal is off by 289 people, but explained that he attempted to not split counties. Senator Schwartz asked Mr. Willis if he believes that people identify more closely with their counties, community of interests, or cities. Mr. Willis said some relate more with their city than county, and mentioned that as you go further outside the Denver area people associate more with their county. Representative Pabon commented on Mr. Willis' attempt to keep counties whole, and explained that by keeping Denver whole, other counties must be split, and asked which Mr. Willis suggests should remain whole. Mr. Willis said it seems silly to split the core that is Denver.

07:01 PM -- Wendy Warner, representing herself, talked about neighborhood identification by residents in Denver and mentioned she works for a nonprofit in Adams County. She suggested that the southern part of Adams county shares similar issues with Denver, and that it makes more sense to add people from the north rather than the south side of Denver. Representative Pabon asked how far north in Adams County those similarities exist. Ms. Warner stated Commerce City and Federal Heights.

07:05 PM

Mikel Whitney, representing Citizens for CD 6, reiterated their position from over the weekend on February 26 which related to what areas of CD 6 could be moved to other districts.

07:08 PM -- Amber Tafoya, representing the Latina Initiative, talked about the Latino community in Denver and the importance of keeping their community of interests together.

07:15 PM -- Jon Holmberg, representing himself, stated that he would like to see municipalities and counties kept whole and talked about the costs involved in elections when cities are split.

07:16 PM -- Sharon Pearce, representing himself, urged the committee to consider environmental areas and topographic features when creating districts. She talked about the difficulty of citizens attending congressional meetings that are hard to get to due to the cost of gas and other factors.

07:21 PM

Representative Balmer announced that the committee would be holding its next meeting in Golden on March 3. The committee adjourned.

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February 28, 2011

Ladies and Gentleman Of The Redistricting Committee,

In years past, a failure to put petty partisan bickering aside has led to our congressional lines being redrawn by the courts rather than our elected leaders.

I am here tonight to ask that this general assembly take a different path, and put political posturing aside for the sake of the people of this great state.

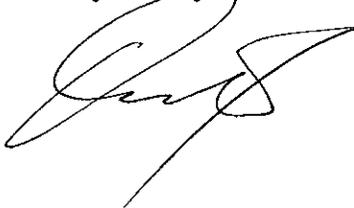
An article that ran in the Denver Post last week indicated that each congressional district would have to change in order to be evenly divided among our allotted seven districts. Given that Colorado's population is now north of 5 million none of those numbers looked very large, which suggests that the change required should be minimal.

One would have to believe that if the current boundaries are tinkered with only around the edges, not a complete rewrite of the map, and if counties, cities, and regions that share common interests are left lumped together, to the extent possible then there is really little to fight over.

It seems to me that the only factors that should be considered when redrawing the new lines are apolitical. There should be an effort to keep places like the Eastern Plains and Western slope in one district. Large counties such as Denver should be left all in one district rather than gerrymandered into multiple districts.

Coloradans are tired of partisanship, we get enough of it in the day of the 24-hour news cycle, and there are plenty of things to fight about. I'm here to ask that the redistricting process is not one of them.

Thank you for your time.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'O'Neill P. Quinlan', written in a cursive style.