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Business, seniors, good government and community groups continue to support voter-approved Citizens Redistricting Commission

Transparent Commission process far preferable to the politicians' back room deals

Sacramento - Several prominent business, nonprofit and good government groups expressed their continued support for the voter-approved Citizens Redistricting Commission as the historic commission completed its work this week. The Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, California Common Cause AARP, the League of Women Voters of California (LWVC), California State Conference of the NAACP, National Federation of Independent Business/California, California Forward and the California Chamber of Commerce all supported the creation of the Citizens Redistricting Commission so that politicians could no longer draw election districts to protect themselves, their parties and their special interest friends.

“Voters said they wanted citizens to be in control of the redistricting process in an open and transparent manner and that was achieved by this Commission. This redistricting process is far preferable to the self-serving, back room deals that characterized the drawing of district maps in this state for decades,” said Gary Toebben, president and CEO of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce.

Legislative, congressional and Board of Equalization district maps were drawn by the 14-member Commission to adhere to a set of objectives set forth in voter-approved Propositions 11 and 20 redistricting reforms. The entire process was undertaken in fully-noticed public meetings throughout the state allowing for, and welcoming, community input. In all, a total of 34 public hearings and 70 other Commission meetings were held in 32 cities over an eight month period. The proceedings, including the Commission selection process, were also provided for online viewing.

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“The Commission was committed to hearing the voices of Californians and conducting their business in an open process. The result is that districts are no longer rigged behind closed doors to protect politicians’ jobs, and voters will finally have a real voice in elections and can hold politicians accountable,” said Kathay Feng, executive director of California Common Cause.

The supporters of the Commission point out that challenges to redistricting maps are never unexpected and the voter-approved redistricting reforms anticipated and addressed this issue. If there are legitimate objections to any maps based on the Commission’s not abiding by the legal requirements of Props. 11 and 20, then those would be rightfully challengeable.

“We are confident that any challenges to maps will be resolved and the clear winners will continue to be California voters who expressed their frustration with political gridlock and passed redistricting reforms to hold politicians accountable,” said David Pacheco, California president of AARP.

Pacheco added that as required by law, the Commission has created a report describing why and how they drew each map according to the mapping criteria contained in Propositions 11 and 20. That report can be found at:

http://wedrawthelines.ca.gov/downloads/meeting_handouts_082011/crc_20110815_2final_report.pdf

“The voters put their trust in an independent citizens commission to conduct redistricting in an open, inclusive process, and the commission has more than fulfilled that trust,” stated LWVC President Jennifer A. Waggoner. “This citizen-driven process will be a model for the entire nation.”

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