

O'Brien, Shawn

Email 3-23-11
 Statement of Calvin Lopes
 Legislative / General

Subject: FW: Louisiana Redistricting**From:** Calvin A. Lopes EA [mailto:taxmanla@bellsouth.net]**Sent:** Wednesday, March 23, 2011 10:28 AM**To:** Gallot, Rep. (District Office); Tucker, Rep. (District Office); Kostelka, Sen. (District Office); Web Team**Cc:** Times-Picayune; Willard-Lewis, Sen. (District Office)**Subject:** Louisiana Redistricting

My interest began to peak in the Redistricting Process once the 2010 Census results were announced. I wanted to have a good grasp on the process with the goal to participate in a redistricting plan worthy of Louisiana, the voters and residents.

Since then my emotions have gone from one of interest to one that is comical and is rapidly moving to one of disgust.

My best source of real-time information comes from written news reports. All I see is biased jockeying of our incumbent legislators and I am truly embarrassed.

Since when is this redistricting about the legislators? The redistricting requirement is based upon population migrations to verify every constituent is fairly represented and the elected officials serve them while working for all Louisiana residents. There seems to be a perception that boundaries have to meander around the state to keep one influential business happy or to keep one legislator's family home within a given district. I'm more than certain a redistricting pattern will emerge if the state is very simply divided geometrically without all this bickering, backstabbing and emotion.

It is now more than obvious none of the legislators want to cooperate and look at the big picture without resorting to making deals in back rooms.

Since there currently is an impasse I have a suggestion; the state Senate be assigned the responsibility to redistrict for the Representatives and the Louisiana House of Representatives be assigned the duty to redistrict for the Senate. Perhaps this will remove personalities from the equation and get this process moving forward. Once this is accomplished, attention then could turn to dividing the state into six Congressional Districts that breaks the state into six equal (geometric) areas.

Redistricting constraints are simple. Divide the state into a specified number of districts, make minor adjustments to break along voting precincts. Nothing could be simpler. The plus or minus 5% population requirement actually allows for a ten percent differential.

Concerns about race have no bearing on a first look at redistricting. Simple geometric boundaries on a state map will take care of all these concerns. What does it matter if a district has more of one race than another? What is important is that a given part of the state has a representative that will do his or her job at serving that portion of the state. The next election of our legislators will determine which individual will serve which area.

Would it be better for a truly independent unbiased outsider subdivide the state, or can our legislators come together and look at the big picture and do what is required? Must the voters begin the recall process for every legislator for them to truly understand just how important redistricting and fair representation truly is?

I've received word that one proposed plan calls to break my area of New Orleans into three separate districts without concern for the needs of the residents. A simple drawing of natural boundaries: the River, the Gulf, Lake Pontchartrain and the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal would be preferable to breaking a cohesive, operating, racially balanced population into three districts that serve absolutely no purpose. I've also heard this particular plan is coming from two legislators that do not reside anywhere close to this area. Are they looking out for themselves? Certainly they are not looking out for the voters and residents and most assuredly not for the needs of the state.

The redistricting process, so far, is in shambles. Must we the residents and voters come to Baton Rouge and force you to do your jobs? Must we the voters remove the redistricting process from your control? Do your jobs, or get out of the way.

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3/23/2011