

# Local House districts didn't merit changes

ShT MAR 31 2011

One of many skirmishes regarding legislative redistricting ended in the most logical solution by leaving Shreveport House districts relatively status quo. We trust the Senate will find no fault with this component as part of the overall House plan that will be submitted to the Senate.

We don't necessarily side with or against state Rep. Barbara Norton, who sought to preserve her decidedly African-American majority district rather than lose constituents to create another majority-African American district. Nor do we fault freshman state Rep. Alan Seabaugh, who didn't want to be drawn out of his recently won south Shreveport district as part of the proposed realignment.

We just don't think the population numbers in Shreveport changed enough to force a significant change in the five House districts that cut across the city.

Shreveport's population decreased by only 834 people, to just under the 200,000 mark. And the need to create a fourth predominantly black district doesn't seem justified with a black-white ratio that changed less than four percentage points — 54.7 percent African-American to 41.2 percent white.

Using that rationale, why not look at Baton Rouge where the overall population grew and the African American population increased almost 5 percent?

For now Norton will keep her 88.7 percent African American district, one of three predominantly African-American districts, and Seabaugh will remain a resident of District 5, one of two predominantly white Shreveport districts.

If they are concerned about federal approval of the state's House redistricting plan, lawmakers would have been better advised to create another majority minority district in south Louisiana — one was in fact created in the river parishes — where populations changed more significantly in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

Compared with those numbers, the Shreveport exercise was wasted time.