



ALASKA REDISTRICTING BOARD

**Alaska Redistricting Board Meeting
April 5, 2022 | 10:00 a.m.
Anchorage Legislative Information Office and Zoom Virtual Meeting
1500 West Benson Blvd, Anchorage, AK 99503**

The Alaska Redistricting Board met on April 5, 2022. Present participants are below:

John Binkley	Chair of the Board
Melanie Bahnke	Board Member
Bethany Marcum	Board Member
Budd Simpson	Board Member
Nicole Borromeo	Board Member
Peter Torkelson	Executive Director
Matt Singer	Legal Counsel

Agenda

- Call to Order & Establish Quorum
- Adoption of Agenda
- Public Testimony

Call to Order

Chairman Binkley called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. With all board members present, a quorum was established.

Adoption of Agenda

Member Borromeo moved approve the agenda with an amendment to add Agenda Item #4 for Board Comments following Public Testimony. Member Simpson seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

Public Testimony

- Anchorage resident, Carolyn Clift, thanked the board for presenting the new map that places the North and South Muldoon areas into one Senate District K. Carolyn also noted that there is no contiguous transportation or socioeconomic integration between South Muldoon and Eagle River. Carolyn urged the board to adopt the new map that links her the North and South Muldoon communities.
- North Pole resident, Barbara Tyndall, testified against the "Bahnke Plan" or "Senate Minority Plan" and stated that a socioeconomic profile and more Senate alignment is needed. The proposed map seems to be politically motivated to change Senate seats.
- Anchorage Assemblymember, Christopher Constant, expressed concern about the Senate



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pairing of Districts 23 and 24. Christopher lives in House District 23. To get to the main body of the district, he must drive 20-30 miles and drive through multiple communities to do so. This is the same for others in his community. The finger in the north is a prime concern.

Christopher suggested the following:

- 1) Pair Districts 23 and 17 together, this would unite neighbors who live across the street
- 2) Make minimal changes to boundaries that make the map unconstitutional

Christopher described the reapportionment process in the Municipality of Anchorage. The city ran a robust public process with over 20 opportunities for public testimony, had a public portal to receive public comment, hired a contractor who proposed several maps and opened the mapmaking process to the public. The final map adopted was a map submitted by a member of the public. Two proposed maps paired Chugiak-Eagle River with Hillside Anchorage; this pairing resulted in a community uproar in overwhelming opposition.

The Anchorage Assembly listened to the community's feedback and Christopher expressed hope for the board to do the same, too, with the testimonies given by the public and resolutions written by community councils that opposing the pairing of Chugiak-Eagle River with South Anchorage. Christopher referenced several public comments and resolutions by community councils that were written expressing this opposition.

- Eagle River resident, Susan Fischetti, stated that the court decision was given 10 days ago, so there is no rush to adopt the pairings proposed by Member Bahnke right away. Because of the recent court decision, Susan's testimony has changed since her testimony on February 28, 2022. It seems as if this process is being used to promote their special interests rather than doing what is best for the state. Since 1974, Chugiak-Eagle River has been paired with the valley and the hillside, so this is not a new pairing. Chugiak-Eagle River has been represented by two Senate members since 1974. Senate District K is what the judge would like to be reworked; the Bahnke plan changes almost every district.
- Fairbanks resident, Patty Wisel, testified against the "Bahnke Plan" and requested the board to consider a plan that is more representative of similar socioeconomic profiles and equal Senate seat alignment.
- Anchorage resident, Robert Hockema, testified in favor of Member Bahnke's proposed Senate pairings because it keeps communities of interest representing Alaskans' interests. The suggested pairings connect North and South Muldoon, the best contiguous pairing. It is superior to the U-Med connection to the west and superior to the alternative Abbott Loop district with different community interests and priorities.

Although Muldoon and Eagle River have historically been paired, this does not mean it was a fair pairing because state and local official processes have consistently disenfranchised Muldoon.

This pairing also keeps important communities together that have repeatedly asked to remain



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together during old state and municipal reapportionment testimonies. The pairings include the following: Spenard and Turnagain (Districts 14 and 16), Airport Heights and Midtown (Districts 18 and 19), Hillside and Southside (Districts 9 and 11), Southport, Klatt, and Oceanview (Districts 10 and 15).

Lastly, the pairing shares JBER with Anchorage as opposed to handing it over to Eagle River by default as past reapportionments have done. These pairings make sense, are defensible in court, have broad support, and deserve discussion by the board. Board members must be transparent. The process must be completed quickly considering the upcoming elections. The more clarity voters have, the better equipped they are to hold a fair, trusted election process.

- Alaskans for Fair Redistricting member, Randy Ruedrich, testified that regarding the pairing of East Anchorage and Chugiak-Eagle River, the two areas have always been paired in various ways for various reasons, primarily due to a "numbers game".

Regarding the repair of the House districts, Randy suggested that the board only reassemble the map to the necessary extent and complete one repair as directed by the court. Changing districts may impact the people who have already declared that they are running for office.

Randy submitted a map on April 4, 2022, that represents eight of the Anchorage Senate seats, three of which are not changed: 1) Senate Seat F for Districts 11 and 12, Senate Seat H for Districts 15 and 16, and Senate Seat L for Districts 23 and 24. There is a remainder of 10 House seats.

Randy referenced a testimony he gave in November stating that South Eagle River could be paired with District 22 or 9 in the current map. If it was paired with District 9, municipal uplands would be placed together where the commonalities are road service and fire service areas and issues. This pairing was done in 2001 by combining parts of the Senate district. Randy referenced the 2001 instance where House District 18 went unchallenged after being redrawn after court action and went on to note that Eagle River is combined with South Anchorage to create a Senate seat now that they have grown large enough to each have a House seat; this will serve the areas well.

Next, House Districts 10 and 13 in South Anchorage would form Senate District G, an area that could potentially be bifurcated by Dimond Boulevard. To the north is Senate District I that pairs House Districts 14 and 17 in Central Anchorage. These two districts were the historical residential development area of the city; thus, redevelopment is a key component of this area making it a benefit to share a Senator with Spenard, through Chester Creek, into the South Addition.

District 18 has always been seen as the U-Med District while District 19 is often ignored as a U-Med District where the Alaska Regional complex sits. The Providence and Alaska Native health campuses are on District 18. Both districts together create a medical community for the surrounding residents, some of which have moved to the areas to be closer to healthcare facilities. House Districts 20 and 21 lie along either side of Muldoon Road into Senate District K in East Anchorage. This combines North Muldoon with the areas to the south. Districts 23



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and 24 should be maintained due to the historical military significance. For context, Eagle River was developed with off-base housing designed for military members. Randy noted that he has not engaged in changing the pair of Districts 23 and 24.

- Anchorage resident Yarrow Silvers - testified in representation of herself, but the proposal introduced in her testimony is on behalf of the East Anchorage plaintiffs. The "Bahnke Plan" respects communities and socioeconomic integration. The plan is not based on partisan data and is informed by public testimony; this is evident by the compact spaces, areas of contiguity, and general support - all of which have not been seen in the more partisan proposal that has caused strong opposition by the people impacted by these pairings. The Supreme Court has ordered the board to correct the constitutional areas and make other revisions to the proclamation plan. The following pairings proposed by Yarrow and the East Anchorage plaintiffs are the following:

- 1) Senate District B - House Districts 9 and 10
- 2) Senate District F - House Districts 11 and 12
- 3) Senate District G - House Districts 13 and 14
- 4) Senate District H - House Districts 15 and 16
- 5) Senate District I - House Districts 17 and 23
- 6) Senate District J - House Districts 18 and 19
- 7) Senate District K - House Districts 20 and 21
- 8) Senate District L - House Districts 22 and 24

The above pairings contain the minimum changes necessary to fix the constitutional errors, are logical, respect communities, and were introduced during the initial Senate pairing process, where they had general support. The East Anchorage plaintiffs have submitted additional details on this proposal via email.

- Doyon/Sealaska/Ahtna/Fairbanks Native Association/Tanana Chiefs Conference Coalition member, Tanner Amdur-Clark, testified on behalf of the coalition in support of the proposal put forth by the board at the April 4, 2022 meeting that puts Cantwell in District 30 instead of District 36 as the borders are being put back along the borough boundaries in a contiguous way. The board was encouraged to make minimal changes necessary to comply with the court, particularly on the House side. New mapping proposals could open the court up to additional litigation.
- Alaska Black Caucus President/CEO, Celeste Hodge Growden, agreed about an earlier comment observing "badgering testifiers" and noted that this should stop. Celeste spoke in favor of pairing House Districts 20 and 21 with Senate District K and noted that there had been a very long history of federal, state, and local officials using the redistricting process as a mechanism for excluding voters of color. This unjust pairing happened with the late Senator Bettye Davis; it was wrong then, and it is wrong now. For many reasons, groups of color cannot testify during business hours due to work and cannot break away to tend to their families on the weekends. Celeste noted that she was advocating for the BIPOC community and urged the board to correct the error of the Senate District K by pairing House Districts 20 and 21.



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- Anchorage resident, George Martinez, congratulated the board because history was made. Several references to "fixing the error identified by the Supreme Court" have been made. This error is significant and historical because it results from partisan gerrymandering that the Supreme Court has found unconstitutional for the first time in Alaska. The error was also a direct violation of equal protection, the "one person, one vote" principle, and the right to political representation - all values must be aligned with the remedy to the error. So far, this alignment has not been made by the board or legal counsel. The equal representation of East Anchorage is what is most important to George's family and neighbors. Gerrymandering must stop. Districts 20 and 21 must be combined. Muldoon deserves equal representation.
- North Pole resident, Michael Ryan, spoke in opposition of the Senate minority plan on the "Bahnke map" as it seems to be politically motivated and would result in the loss of two Senate seats.
- Senator Tom Begich stated that there have been several references to a "Senate minority map" that is equated to the map adopted by the board and is also referred to as the "Bahnke map". Senator Begich clarified that these maps are not connected and that he has had no communication with Member Bahnke throughout the redistricting process. The map developed by Senator Begich with members of, not just the Senate Minority Caucus, but the Senate majority, was the map he'd hoped to have considered. The Hickel process, along with others, were designed to prevent gerrymandering. The court now recognizes that there is a standard for political gerrymandering and the standard should be adhered to. Maps should be repaired in the least disruptive way possible.

Senator Begich referenced the Superior Court's decision that was upheld by the Supreme Court decision. On page 65 of the Supreme Court's decision, indicates that overwhelming testimony was against combining Eagle River and Muldoon. Further, it was clear to the court that most of the public comments were in favor of keeping Eagle River and Muldoon together in their own respective Senate seats. This implies that House Districts 22 and 24 (Eagle River) should be combined in a Senate seat and the two Muldoon seats should be combined into one Senate seat. These two pairings will reverse the error found by the courts and remove the political gerrymandering that has occurred in this process.

Senator Begich cited the Superior Court point on page 70 stating that the court found the board intentionally discriminated against East Anchorage residents in favor of Eagle River and further acknowledged that the two separate entities must be combined to remedy this issue.

Senator Begich addressed the text messages that were presented in court between him and Member Borromeo, clarifying that these were suggestions for pairings that were rejected by Member Borromeo. Any other assertions are false.

- Anchorage Resident, Mike Robbins, testified in support of the revised redistricting plan as it supports districts with socioeconomic profiles by putting neighborhoods together that share the most common values and demographics.

Mike suggested the following pairings:



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- 1) House Districts 10 and 13 (similar to current alignment)
- 2) House Districts 11 and 12 (declared by Board in November '21)
- 3) House Districts 14 and 17 (similar in business characteristics)
- 4) House Districts 15 and 16 (declared by Board in November '21)
- 5) House Districts 18 and 19 (shared diversity and socioeconomic linkages)
- 6) House Districts 20 and 21 (same roadway, neighborhoods, dynamics)
- 7) House Districts 22 and 9 (similar voter demographics)
- 8) House Districts 23 and 24 (several military members along highway, strong socioeconomic relationships)

Mike encouraged the board to not adopt the "Bahnke plan" and noted that his recommendations establish fair Senate pairings for Anchorage.

- Anchorage resident, Alex Baker, testified in support of House Districts 17 and 23 being a Senate pairing. Government Hill and Downtown share the same Anchorage Assembly members. As a Downtown resident, he is in Government Hill a couple of times per week, usually for the Anchorage Curling Club. The Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson and Government Hill communities are very integrated as many people come from the base into downtown from the bridge. Alex also spoke about the frequency of updates on written testimony. He checked what his neighbors and community members were putting on the written record, which hasn't been updated since April 2nd. The public testimony has not been updated in a few days, impacting transparency from the board to the public. Alex asked the board to update the website after every meeting so the public can be able to testify based on up-to-date information.
- Anchorage resident, Fred Brown, testified in favor of Districts 22 and 9 being paired for the following reasons: 1) They supply and support their road service areas in the foothills of the Chugach Mountains and share the common need for road maintenance and 2) The two districts share the risk of fire and the need for fire protection. The proposal outlined by Randy Ruedrich would satisfy the homeowner's associations' concerns.
- Anchorage resident, Jamie Rodriguez, testified against the pairing of Districts 22 and 9. The court rejected the Northeast Anchorage pairing because it was a "wild overreach" of the constitutional requirements. The board discussed a proposed replacement on April 4, 2022, that would repeat the same overreach but worse. The replacement proposal pairs Districts 22 and 9 making it political gerrymandering by capturing another Senate seat for Eagle River to replace the Northeast Anchorage plan. The driving distance between Eagle River and Southeast Anchorage is approximately 27 miles, Eagle River and Girdwood is 67 miles, Eagle River and Whittier is 87 miles, and Eagle River and Portage is 108 miles. All of the destinations mentioned are in District 9. To get from Eagle River to Southeast Anchorage, five to six unrelated House districts must be crossed. Jamie urged the board to do their job fairly and correctly for all Alaskans regardless of political affiliation.
- Eagle River resident, Dan Saddler, testified powerfully against the "Bahnke Plan" and expressed concern about the rushed process giving the public limited time to review, analyze,



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and comment on the plan. This plan seems to be the product of planning by a subset of the board in a process hidden from public view. There also appears to be a coordinated effort to "ramrod this plan through by the sheer weight of public comments, sometimes the same person commenting a dozen or more times. That should be a perversion of the one person, one vote standard that should be at the heart of the redistricting process." Dan testified in support of the revised map that pairs Districts 22 and 9 as offered by AFFER for the following reasons:

- 1) These residents share common interests through the foothills and the upper slopes of the Chugach Mountains.
- 2) These communities rely on their local road service boards to maintain their roads.
- 3) These communities face similar road conditions and hazards: bears, wildfires, rush reliable utility services, and extreme weather conditions.
- 4) These communities are socioeconomically integrated simply by being part of the Municipality of Anchorage.
- 5) These communities are contiguous and joined in the uplands of the Chugach mountains.

Please reject the "Bahnke plan" and approve a plan that pairs House Districts 22 and 9 to make one Senate pairing.

- Anchorage resident, Gretchen Stoddard, expressed understanding for House Districts 9 and 10 being paired because the two districts share an elementary school, middle school, and high school, and there is a bridge going over the Seward Highway that links the two districts well. If the board chooses to pair House District 9 with another district other than House District 10, Gretchen asked the board to give the public time to provide comments and analyze the proposed change. Gretchen does not feel that District 9 would be paired well with any other district. Gretchen does not immediately agree with the idea of District 9 being paired with an Eagle River district.
- Anchorage resident, Ann Brown, testified against the "Bahnke Plan" as a resident of District 9 and testified in support of Districts 22 and 9.
- Anchorage resident, Brian Hove previously testified in support of House Districts 15 and 16. Since then, much has happened with litigation and the courts identifying deficiencies. As a result, Districts 15 and 16 have been separated. As Brian reviews the proposed map, some pairings confuse him, such as Districts 14 and 16. With the map offered by Randy Ruedrich, Brian noticed that Anchorage House districts have long and short boundaries, and the communities are connected, by and large, on the long side with north and south pairings: Districts 15 and 16, 14 and 17, 13 and 10, 12, and 11, 18 and 19, 20 and 21. These pairings make sense due to the transportation and main roadways going north to south. In summary, Brian testified in support of Districts 15 and 16 and Randy Ruedrich's proposed Senate pairings in Anchorage.



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- Alaskans for Fair Redistricting (AFFR) member, Robin O'Donoghue, urged the board to only adopt a constitutional plan that complies with the court ruling and pairs the Muldoon districts (Districts 20 and 21) together and the Eagle River (Districts 22 and 24) districts together. Doing so would address the constitutional error as identified by the court ruling outlined on the 69th page. These pairings are also consistent with most of the public testimony received by the board and were suggested to the board by AFFR.
- Anchorage resident, Kathy Hosford, testified against the Municipality of Skagway being paired with Downtown Juneau because this pairing seems to be a partisan issue. Kathy hopes the board will consider the redistricting that is fair to everyone and not rush the process.
- Portage resident, Joanne Blackford, testified that the residents of Portage have unique experiences and lifestyles. They should not be part of the Municipality of Anchorage because Anchorage handles urban concerns. Anchorage does not understand high tides or low tides and how this impacts residents. Portage residents don't receive anything from Anchorage except for political planning that they are usually not part of. Portage also does not have links to Girdwood. The State of Alaska, combined with Anchorage, spends about \$1 million per year maintaining Girdwood, but nothing is done in Portage. Kathy gave an example of a dangerous curve she is aware of at Mile Post 89 at the right-hand turn. This curve was not designed for fifth wheels. Additionally, the Portage Valley Community Council does not meet because they have nowhere to meet. Portage does not prefer to be paired with Girdwood as they do not share the same approaches. Portage prefers being paired with Kenai, where they have Attorney Generals who are privy to the impact of high tides. Kenai also has several locations along the Seward Highway. Portage would like to be defined as a rural village outside of Anchorage so they can request their proper needs and complete their planning.
As it currently stands, Portage is most understood by Eagle River as they are willing to take more calls and are overworked. Joanne urged the board to equitably release Portage from their relationship with the Municipality of Anchorage.

The board held some discussion while awaiting the next testifier:

- Member Marcum expressed appreciation for the feedback and public comments given on the Senate pairings and the rationale behind these hearings.
- Member Bahnke asked Matt Singer if he will be advising the board about potential issues with maps in relation to the court rulings. Matt Singer answered that he is available to board members to provide legal advice and/or answer questions at public board meetings. Matt Singer advised that the board finish the work publicly outside of executive session.
- April 6, 2022 (the date of the next board meeting) is the deadline for the public to submit proposals for the correction of Senate District K.
- The board agreed to begin the April 6th Alaska Redistricting Board meeting with discussion, public testimony, and action on House Districts 29, 30, and 36. Following that discussion, the board will take public testimony on all other topics, and then consider proposals of alternative pairings.
- Member Bahnke noted the importance of the board designating time to debate and discuss the proposed maps and have this discussion on record.



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Member Borromeo moved for the board to consider the maximum participation plan advanced by the East Anchorage plaintiffs and the proposed plan by Randy Ruedrich on behalf of the Alaskans for Fair and Equitable Redistricting (AFFER) for consideration of the proposed corrections to the unconstitutional now-standing Senate District K; Member Bahnke seconded the motion.

The following discussion was held on the motion:

- Member Borromeo has heard and read several testimonies supporting these plans and would like to add these two plans for consideration.
- Member Simpson supports the motion and is in favor of moving the process forward and rejected the allegation of there being a delay tactic in place.
- Member Bahnke is in support of this motion to allow the proposed plans to be posted for public viewing.
- Peter Torkelson noted that the proposal from Anchorage resident, Mike Robbins, aligns with the AFFER proposal which is covered in the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

Member Marcum moved for the board to schedule meetings as follows:

- Thursday, April 7, 2022, at 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. for public testimony
- Saturday, April 9, 2022, at 12:00 to 2:00 p.m. for public testimony
- Wednesday, April 13, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. (*no end time specified*)
- Thursday, April 14, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. (*no end time specified*)

Member Simpson seconded the motion.

The following discussion was held on the motion:

- Member Borromeo has all-day meetings on April 13 and 14 and proposed to hold a public hearing on April 8 to take public testimony. All board members who can participate can do so from 10 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. which would hopefully alleviate some pressure on April 13th and 14th.
- All members of the board were in favor with Member Borromeo's proposal.

The motion was amended to add a public hearing on April 8, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

The motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment

Member Simpson moved to adjourn the Board meeting; Member Bahnke seconded the motion.

The board adjourned at 1:11 p.m.