

ALASKA REDISTRICTING BOARD

Verbal Testimony Summaries

Anchorage Public Hearing 10/27/2021

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ALASKA REDISTRICTING BOARD COMMUNITY PUBLIC HEARING VERBAL TESTIMONY SUMMARY

Anchorage 10/27/21 Verbal Testimony

Summary Date: 11/5/2021

Name: **Randy Ruedrich**

Affiliation: **Alaskans for Fair and Equitable Redistricting (AFFER)**

Email or Phone Contact: [REDACTED]

There were 27 districts that had changed as a result of the 2001 litigation. In searching through all of his files, Randy found the data for the 2002 map when it was compared between the 2000 and 2010 census. This was given to the board. It came out that the largest district in 2010 was overpopulated by 46% and the smallest district was underpopulated by 22%. Therefore, redistricting was in order for the 2002 map. Part of this data was about the deviations in the 2002 map. There have been several discussions on these deviations for Anchorage, which had 16 districts, 2 of which were not modified. The deviations in the 14 modified districts turned out to be 1/4 of a percent. The mean was 93% overpopulated with numbers - the highest being 1.11% overpopulated and the lowest being .88% underpopulated. The 14 districts were closely pulled together based off this data. When Randy found this data, he shared it. Fairbanks was pulled together to having an average deviation of .39%, much smaller than Anchorage's deviation. Therefore, it was most closely compliant and now is 13 times less compliant than it was in 2002. The Mat-Su Borough had too many people in the base map. In the post-litigation, plaintiffs negotiated to produce a proper map and the excess turned out to be 3.3%. The 2001 board accomplished excellent use of technology to bring deviations down and he encouraged the board to follow along with what the 2011 map did to bring the deviations down. Randy is in agreement overall with Senator Begich.

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Name: David Dunsmore

Affiliation: Alaskans for Fair Redistricting (AFFR)

As Joelle stated, one of AFFR's main focuses is to ensure that the true socio-economic integration, as required by the constitution, is recognized both within rural and urban Alaska and to look at the different cultural communities in Alaska to ensure that they are people who live, work, play, and vote together. The AFFR map is the only map that keeps the Alutiiq/Sugpiaq people across the Gulf of Alaska within a single house district. The map also takes a neighborhood-driven approach within urban Alaska to ensure distinct neighborhood communities are respected, which is why their map has resulted in the NE Community Council being in a single senate seat and respects neighborhoods like Fairview and Mountain View. The map also recognizes the connection the coastal trail has with western areas such as Turnagain. AFFR submitted a memo related to Voting Rights Act concerns that they hope the board will consider. The process for mapping focused on the Hickel process and maps were drawn to respect the constitutional requirements. Their map is likely the only map that is constitutional. Within Anchorage, their map and the Senate Minority Caucus map are the only constitutional maps. If the board looks at respecting majority/minority coalitions, the analysis submitted by AFFR, they will see it is constitutional and also compliant with the Voting Rights Act.

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Summary Date: 11/5/2021

Name: Joelle Hall

Affiliation: Alaskans for Fair Redistricting (AFFR)

Email or Phone Contact: 

On October 19th, AFFR submitted a document written on majority/minority coalition districts. They acknowledged that the court has seen both sides of this issue. This comes down to a judgement call on behalf of the board as to whether or not to create a majority/minority coalition as a protected Voting Rights Act group. AFFR hopes that the board will consider this in the Voting Rights Act process and think of protecting these voices and districts in Anchorage. The AFFR map does create these districts and it is done in conjunction with exploring some of the natural breaks in the military community and the exits that they use. The AFFR map also uses the Coastal Trail and western lakes districts as the trail is the main integrator on the westside districts. Joelle pointed out that senate pairings are available for the public to comment on with logical pairings inside the boundaries for the most part. They do not combine east and south together. They are more logical than pairing Eagle River and Anchorage. It is about time for Joelle to live in District 12, which is a small piece of Anchorage that belongs to the Mat-Su. It's time for South Anchorage to break its boundaries so she can come back to an Eagle River seat.



Municipality of Anchorage

October 22, 2021

Alaska Redistricting Board
PO Box 240147
Anchorage, AK 99524

Dear Chair Binkley and Members of the Alaska Redistricting Board:

The Municipality of Anchorage has reviewed the six draft maps adopted by the Board, and submits the following comments for your consideration.

These comments, which are the joint product of the executive and legislative branches, are about practical boundary considerations of proposed districts within the Municipality and are not intended to request modifications to voter distribution among districts.

The Municipality of Anchorage Geographic Data and Information Center has created a series of online maps to highlight our concerns related to proposed district boundaries. Our comments and concerns fall into three categories:

1. Clarification Needed – For this category, the proposed district boundary crosses through a parcel, often cutting through a residential structure, or separating the residential structure from the address point. We are seeking clarification from the Board as to which district the parcel's residents are assigned to, and requesting that the Board change the district boundary to clarify its intent. In the example below, the red line is a proposed boundary in the Version 3 map, and the gold line is the changed boundary proposed by the MOA. The parcels in this category are colored purple in the provided storymap.





Municipality of Anchorage

2. Minor Boundary Adjustments Requested – For this category, the proposed district boundary splits a parcel, but the intent of the Board as to which district the parcel is in appears to be clear. We request that the Board resolve these by making minor district boundary adjustments which align to parcel boundaries. See example below, also from the Version 3 map. The parcels in this category are colored green in the provided storymap.



3. Boundary Discrepancies Can Be Ignored – For this category, the proposed district boundary splits a parcel, but no development is expected on the parcel (predominantly parkland), so the discrepancy will not have an effect. It would, however, be the MOA's preference that the district boundary lines be moved to coincide with parcel boundaries. See example below, also from the Version 3 map. The parcels in this category are colored blue in the provided storymap.





Municipality of Anchorage

Visual representation of these categories, applied to all six adopted maps, can be found at [Redistricting Info Storymap \(arcgis.com\)](#), which has already been provided to you.

Thank you in advance for consideration of these comments. If you have any questions, please contact Tina Miller, Program and Policy Director, Geographic and Data and Information Center, at 907-343-6183 or christina.miller@anchorageak.gov.

Sincerely,

Adam Trombley
Director, Office of Economic &
Community Development

Barbara A. Jones
Municipal Clerk

Tina Miller
Program and Policy Director
Geographic and Data Information Center

Erika McConnell
Deputy Clerk – Elections

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Summary Date: 11/5/2021

Name: **Michelle Anderson**

Affiliation: **Ahtna, Inc.**

Email or Phone Contact: 

Michelle asked the board to include Cantwell in the interior map as it is one of the 8 Ahtna villages. The traditional chiefs always begin their messages with reminders of how they are related to the families that are living in Cantwell. Even though the road system separates the villages from Cantwell, the people connections do exist and are very strong today. Michelle discussed the economic benefits Ahtna provides to shareholders and Cantwell tribal members: 1. Dividends are distributed to shareholders based on performance. 2. Jobs are provided. 3. Village contributions are provided including to the church in Cantwell 4. Political advocacy is provided to Cantwell. This is taken seriously. 5. Owns vast private lands in and around Cantwell, considering looking at development up near the boundary There is no question that there is immense investment in the region with their land holdings, but they are most importantly, connected to the people of Cantwell. Allowing them to be separated by a political process is very unfair and causes Cantwell to feel abandoned. Cantwell has given permission for Ahtna to advocate and speak on behalf of their community to allow the Ahtna villages to remain as one people. Cantwell is served by Copper River Native Association and they have a health aide in the village for emergency situations who take people up to Healy. If there is something that is more critical, they refer people to Anchorage.

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Name: **Rich Curtner**

Affiliation: **Alaska Black Caucus**

Email or Phone Contact: [REDACTED]

Rich stated that the Alaska Black Caucus has a mission to assert the constitutional rights of African Americans, but they also support the black, indigenous, and people of color communities in urban Alaska. Membership reflects the diversity of urban Alaska and they feel the Voting Rights Act ensures minority groups are not disenfranchised during redistricting. The Alaska Black Caucus supports the proposition that the Voting Rights Act protects multiple minority coalitions in redistricting of voting districts and encourages the board to respect the multiple minority coalition districts to protect the minority representation in a redistricting process. They've reviewed the map submitted by AFFR and this map best protects the rights of minorities.

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Name: **Veri di Suvero**

Email or Phone Contact: [REDACTED]

Veri is a South Addition resident near Westchester Lagoon and shared about her and her neighbors. Veri shops at Sagaya in Midtown and Carrs on Minnesota/Northern Lights. She skis and bikes the coastal trail and only uses this trail going to Westchester Lagoon and Earthquake Park. In thinking of the watersheds, the AFFR map details both where she shops and plays. Veri spoke in favor of the AFFR map. Veri also used to live on C Street and Fireweed, which is not as far. She shopped at Fred Meyer on Seward and Northern Lights and her habits were different even if it wasn't that from her current residence. Thus, the way AFFR maps the city makes sense considering her lived experience and habits.

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Name: Tanner Amdur-Clark

Affiliation: Doyon Coalition

The coalition represents a broad range of interests across Alaska with a particular focus on rural representation that is fair and effective. The coalition has prepared and submitted maps for public testimony and certain changes/updates have been made: - They started with consultation with stakeholders statewide and have taken public testimony that have been taken into account. - Changes to the Kenai and Mat-Su were made to correct errors. - Anchorage has been significantly been redrawn and the coalition would like to receive more public input on this.

In response to testimony and commentary regarding Anchorage, they've created district lines with low population deviations while improving the compactness of the districts. Anchorage community council regions were adhered to wherever practicable. The coalition also tried to follow major natural features and road corridors throughout. Tanner spoke regarding the constitutionality of certain maps proposed to the board: - It would be a disservice to everyone if the map adopted by the board is declared unconstitutional. The board's proposed districts within the Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) are all upwardly deviated by having more than 800 people than what is ideal in each district.

An important key point is that deviations in Fairbanks are not constitutional and will be challenged and reviewed by the courts. Until the 1988 amendments to the constitution, plans did not need to justify the deviations from the ideal district size within 10%, the federal standard. This is no longer the case and now the constitution requires that each district contain a population as near as practicable to the quotient obtained by dividing the population of the state by 40. The constitution states that the population within each district must be as near as practicable to 0. Large total deviations within a particular region or borough may be evidence of other equal representation issues, but having a low total deviation within a borough does not absolve the board of its constitutional responsibility to ensure each district's deviation is as low as practicable. The coalition has presented a practicable and constitutional way to draw an area with a non-high deviation. The Alaska Supreme Court "has acknowledged that in urban areas in particular, the population is sufficiently dense and evenly spread to allow minimal population deviations, especially in light of newly available technological advances." In the 2001 cycle, the Supreme Court threw out the map because the board failed to show that the deviations in the Anchorage districts and in the Artic Slope district were as low as practicable. The board did not explain why they were unpracticable. Achieving 0 deviation is sometimes not practicable due to geographic constraints or not having available socio-economically integrated areas nearby to round out a district or region. For example, Southeast Alaska does not have enough population to have near 0 population deviations. This is the same for the North Slope and Southwest Alaska, but this is not an issue in Fairbanks. FNSB is deeply socio-economically integrated with the rest of the interior. This is also true for the communities within the ANCSA region and the Ahtna region. The Doyon map shows an entirely practicable example of how Fairbanks and the rest of the interior can be mapped without justifying compactness, contiguity, relative socio-economic integration, or the principal of 1 person, 1 vote. There is nothing impracticable about drawing Fairbanks in a way that

does not devalue the vote of each resident, therefore, the Board Map v.3 would be unconstitutional if adopted in the final map and the coalition urges the board not to adopt this map. In urban areas, when there are strong neighborhood identities, you try as hard as you can to keep these distinct neighborhoods together. The court will be asked whether the resulting district is socio-economically integrated. It is not about comparing whether one version is more socio-economically integrated than another one. For example, on the coalition's map, there is a portion of FNSB included with the rest of the interior (Pleasant Valley and Two Rivers). The court would ask if Pleasant Valley, Two Rivers, and the resulting rest of the rural interior are socio-economically integrated. You can also show socio-economic integration by having links in a region as a whole or in an individual place. For example, the court looked at Kenai and South Anchorage and saw that the peninsula was socio-economically integrated with Anchorage and South Anchorage is socio-economically integrated with Anchorage. Therefore, South Anchorage is socio-economically integrated with the Kenai Peninsula. If we apply this to Fairbanks, we conclude that the neighborhoods are socio-economically integrated with Fairbanks. The court does not compare, they just ask whether or not it's integrated.

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Name: Brian Hove

Summary Date: 11/5/2021

Constitutionally, the AFFER map is closer to the requirements with its adherence to the Fish Creek boundary. Brian is conflicted with the Fairbanks North Star Borough and whether it is broken or not. He understands the desire to keep this area whole. As Randy Ruedrich has pointed out, it will be more difficult to justify larger deviations. If the borough cannot be kept whole, Brian prefers the AFFER map. There is a solution presented in this map.

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Summary Date: 11/5/2021

Name: **Lucille Lincoln**

Affiliation: **Ahtna, Inc. and Enrollee of Kluti-Kaah**

Email or Phone Contact: 

Lucille lives in Tazlina and testified in support of the Doyon Coalition map. It is important that the Ahtna villages remain in the same district because they are all socio-economically integrated; the same goes for Cantwell. They all have the same language, customs, traditions, and they hunt, fish, and do berry picking together. There are also relatives in Cantwell. Their village and Cantwell is very integrated in different ways. It is important for the villages to stay in one area. The other proposed maps exclude Cantwell from their village and this is wrong because Cantwell is apart of the village and they feel disconnected and abandoned. Please ensure that the Ahtna villages and Cantwell stay in the interior districts.

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Summary Date: 11/5/2021

Name: Linda Pete

Affiliation: Ahtna, Inc. and Gakona Tribe

Email or Phone Contact: [REDACTED]

Linda Pete resides in Copper Center, but was born and raised in Gakona. Linda spoke in support of the Doyon Coalition map as it is important to keep the villages together as they are socio-economically integrated. They share all the customary and traditional values, are related to the Cantwell residents, share the same values, and speak the same language. It is not right to split them up into different districts. It is important to stick together as "one people". The other maps does not include Cantwell in their district; Linda does not support these maps. Linda encourages the board the consider the Doyon Coalition map. Linda would like to be included in the Fairbanks population as there are social ties as well as ties to the Upper Tenana region where there are relatives and the same customs and values.

ALASKA REDISTRICTING BOARD COMMUNITY PUBLIC HEARING VERBAL TESTIMONY SUMMARY

Anchorage 10/27/21 Verbal Testimony

Summary Date: 11/5/2021

Name: Tom Begich

Affiliation: Senate Minority Caucus

Email or Phone Contact: [REDACTED]

Senate Minority Caucus began mapping with a blank slate, taking into account known socio-economic entities and the Alaska Constitution requirements. The map was then adjusted to meet low deviations and to meet the federal "one person, one vote" standard, a process that is referred to as the Hickel process. At the time that the map was presented, the board expressed concern about the placement of Cordova and what they numbered as District 6, the large interior district, and the placement of Galena and McGrath in a district that included Nome. They affirm that these were difficult decisions and their argument was that these placements would be acceptable due to low deviations that are acceptable within the Alaska courts. They cited prior decisions to support this. They've listened to testimony and have adjusted their starting point map to reflect the testimony while keeping constitutional premises aligned. In doing so, they've communicated with other third party groups to understand the rationale behind their decisions, and with other political parties and looked at extensive public testimony. What they know is that no map will satisfy everyone, so difficult decisions will need to be made.

Today, the Senate Minority Caucus submits an updated map for consideration. They are not asking the board to post them, they want it to be for the board's deliberation. These maps, they hope, will give the board options they need to address concerns described by the public. All maps place Cordova with the southeast and divides southeast districts into 4 overpopulated districts by no more than 2.52 percent, which is the overall overpopulation in District 35 (an islands district). The overall deviation goes from 1.89 percent over to 2.82 percent over. This is on the record for consideration by the board as one option. There is an additional option that will not be submitted unless requested by the board and staff; the map places Cordova with Valdez and create an extensive eastern district. There would be a second district using the western part of the interior into the Dillingham area. The maps submitted today set the hard Doyon border, using the Doyon regions to the west and the south. If Cordova is not in southeast, then regardless of where it is placed, that Doyon boundary must shift eastward. There is no other way to draw a constitutional map. That being said, in doing this hard boundary, the excess population is absorbed that would have been needed from Cordova and thus becomes part of the interior map.

The maps also addresses two other key issues heard in formal and informal discussions. They slightly reform the 2 city Fairbanks boundaries using the east city boundary and seeks the excess population from the 2nd Fairbanks city district from the west. It firms up the eastside boundary consistent with testimony heard. The maps fairly allocate the excess population into the Doyon-based district and fully addresses equivalent populations due for Mat-Su and Anchorage. They also allocate the Kenai overpopulation to 20% though between 2 additional districts, taking care of the issue of how to allocate the Anchorage 12% that is necessary and also ensures the Kodiak-based district has enough population to not be over or underrepresented. This is consistent with a finding in the Kenai Peninsula

v. State and Hickel v. Southeast Conference where all excess population should go into another district in order to maximize fair representation of the excess group. Both of the board's concerns of the initial maps having Cordova added into an extensive interior district and the Galena, Ruby and McGrath communities being excluded with the Doyon district have been addressed in the updated map.

Anchorage, Fairbanks, and some Mat-Su districts have been cleaned up to be more compact. Combination 1 creates a more complete Doyon district based on the testimony of Doyon and others, puts Valdez in a Kodiak district, makes Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Mat-Su more compact, and adjusts the 4 western rule districts to balance the population.

Another option: Seward was put in with a Kodiak-based district and moves Seldovia and Valdez into the Kenai borough districts. This was done to show that there are other options, but they always bring you to the same place: You have to take 2 cuts to the Kenai borough to accommodate a large interior district Third option: The original map is changed by moving a population from the Delta Junction area into the Mat-Su borough district and taking the Denali Borough and moving that into the Doyon area. Shifts a population of about 1,600 or 1,700.

All the maps come in at 6.77% overall deviation, well under the 10% threshold. At least 4 districts contain a majority of Alaska Natives and 2 others would have fallen under the threshold of Native influence. At least 15 of the house districts would have a majority, minority, or an over 45% minority population; these should be considered in how maps are developed. They are not looking to replace the maps that are submitted, but would like to provide options to the board. Constitutional issues should be avoided so all Alaskans can have faith in the reapportionment process.

Tom referenced the 2001 redistricting cases regarding deviations. The caucus had built maps based on community council boundaries in Anchorage. They used the whole plus 5 percent and minus 5 percent deviations in creating that map. The court specifically identified that that was unconstitutional and that was a new rendition or new interpretation of the court at the time that since has been reaffirmed by the courts. Since then, they remanded the map back to the board to redraw and the maps were redrawn to have a deviation of only 1.35 percent and the court accepted it and stated this: "Newly available technological advances will often make it practicable to achieve deviations substantially below the 10% federal threshold, particularly in urban areas. " They did not specifically identify Anchorage at that point. "Accordingly, Article 6, Section 6, in many cases will be stricter than the federal threshold. This is post-adjustment of the reapportionment constitutional standard." This means, when it comes to Fairbanks, Mat-Su and Anchorage the board will be held by the court to a very strict standard reflective of at most 1.35 percent deviation that was accepted in the 2001 reapportionment process and reaffirmed in 2011.

What is truly important about this is the board has not "gotten more lax" in its requirements and technology is no where near where it was in 2001 when technological advances were identified, so the board must meet the deviations. The areas in southeast cannot have unnecessary deviations that are significantly plus or minus, when it can be shown on the record that you can create socio-economically integrated districts that clearly are very close in deviations. The Senate Minority Caucus maps do that. They show that you can keep all 4 southeast districts within a fraction of each other in terms of overall population. The maps also allow high deviations, but another map can be drawn to meet all criteria with deviations that are lower than the maps presented by the board.

ALASKA REDISTRICTING BOARD COMMUNITY PUBLIC HEARING VERBAL TESTIMONY SUMMARY

Anchorage 10/27/21 Verbal Testimony

Summary Date: 11/5/2021

Name: Robin Smith

Email or Phone Contact: [REDACTED]

Robin Smith lives in South Anchorage and focused on how the board should recognize Alaska's growing diversity, but first wanted to reflect on how the AFFR map is the best for her neighborhood in Southwest Anchorage. The AFFR map is the only map that keeps the Southwest Anchorage area united into a single senate seat and creates two compact house seats based on the logical neighborhood connections. The map creates one Southwest Anchorage district centered around neighborhoods like Delong Lake, Jewel Lake, Sand Lake, etc. that form a unique socio-economic group. The second Southwest Anchorage district connects Bayshore, Southport, and Oceanview which are also very socio-economically connected.

The new data from the 2020 Census reveals that diversity in Alaska has grown with 41% of the state's population identifying as race or ethnicity other than White. This is up substantially from 2010 when only 33% of the race identified as such. Sociologist, Chad Ferrell, at UAA found that Alaska's 3 most diverse neighborhoods are in Anchorage, with Mountain View at the top of the list. According to the US Census Bureau, Anchorage is about 68% White, 12.6% Asian, 4.6% Native American or Pacific Islander, 14.8% Native and 6.7% Latino and 7.7% Black and 7.7% other race. In our public schools in Anchorage, over 100 different languages are spoken. East, Bartlett, and West are 3 of the most diverse high schools in the nation. Unfortunately, we don't see this diversity in the legislature. As one of the most diverse districts in the nation, it is only fair that our districts should reflect that diversity. AFFR's map could help Alaska achieve that representation. The AFFR map respects the distinct and diverse communities in East Anchorage/Mountain View areas. Diversity of these areas should be respected and grouped with only the portions of JBER that utilize the services of their neighborhoods. The districts also respects the community council areas. Board Maps v.3 and v.4 divide the communities of Downtown, Fairview, and Mountain View. In the Anchorage bowl, there are 16 contiguous majority/minority census tracts with 66,594 total population. The Voting Rights Act requires creating as many majority/minority districts within these tracts as possible. These multiple minority coalition districts would represent residents whose interests are more aligned than with white residents. Not only is the AFFR Map the only constitutional map, but also best reflects the diversity present in urban neighborhoods. It would encourage leaders from these diverse communities to run for office and represent their neighborhoods' distinct needs.

To show the consequences of redistricting that doesn't consider unique socio-economic communities, this example was provided: Senator Bettye Davis was the first African American to serve in the Alaska State Legislature, representing East Anchorage for 12 years. She received many accolades including the recently named East Anchorage High School change. She remained the only African American during her entire tenure. She lost her 4th election bid primarily due to redistricting changes after the 2010 census. It placed a large portion of Eagle River into her district in Anchorage proper. She lost, and we lost, that African American perspective from the legislature. Respecting multiple minority coalition districts would allow the intent of the Voting Rights Act in protecting minority representation. Robin urged the board to support the AFFR map particularly in the Anchorage area.