

SENATE REDISTRICTING WORK GROUP

Thursday, October 11, 2001
Bemidji, MN
1:00 p.m.

Members present:

Senator Pogemiller
Senator Belanger
Dean Barkley, Director MN Planning
Representative Anderson
Representative Sertich

Members Absent:

Senator Orfield
Senator Hottinger
Senator Scheid

Staff Present:

Peter Wattson, Senate Counsel
Vic Thorstenson, Senate Redistricting
Michael Brodkorb, Republican Redistricting Staff

Senator Pogemiller called the meeting to order 12:58 p.m.

Senator Pogemiller introduced members.

Vic Thorstenson, Michael Brodkorb and Director Barkley went over the maps.

The following people offered testimony:

Eli Hunt, Chairman, Leech Lake Tribe
Dale Hoosier, Northern Township
Mark Paulson, Bemidji Township
Jim Heltzer, Chair, Beltrami County Board
Patrick Donnay, Professor, Bemidji State University
Quentin Fairbanks, Beltrami County Commissioner
Al Thunder, Red Lake Tribal Cultural Coordinator
Richard Lehmann, Bemidji Mayor
David Harrington, resident
Michael Meuers, resident
Don Hoppe, Hiram Township Supervisor
Bobby Whitefeather, Chairman, Red Lake Tribe
Bill Walsh, Republican Staff Member

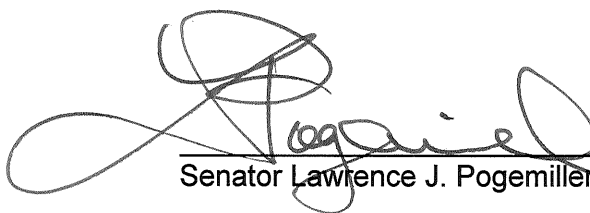
Members asked questions and held discussion.

Senator Pogemiller adjourned the meeting at 2:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:



Todd Olson, Legislative Assistant



Senator Lawrence J. Pogemiller, Chair

REDISTRICTING WORK GROUP

Thursday October 11, 2001
1:00 p.m.

Bemidji City Hall Council Chambers
317 4th St. NW, Bemidji

A g e n d a

Introductions

Questions on plans

Public Testimony

Committee Discussion

Senator Lawrence J. Pogemiller
Chair

Todd Olson
Legislative Assistant



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Editorial: Politics seen in plans for redistricting

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One of the most important tasks facing the 2002 Minnesota Legislature is that of redistricting - the process of setting boundary lines for the 2002 elections for congressional and legislative districts. The readjustments come when population figures from the 2000 Census are applied. And, so far, the process looks brutal. If lawmakers cannot come to agreement - which is a distinct possibility - then as of March 15 a five-judge courts panel will make the decision for them.

Cries of playing politics are frequent when it comes time to setting boundaries, and this year is no exception. Both the DFL and Republican parties crafted redistricting proposals last spring. Finding compromise between the two is unlikely.

At the congressional level, the Republicans recognize their political strength in the suburbs, and want to build that power base. Their redistricting plan would put inner city Minneapolis and St. Paul in the same congressional district. They would also combine the 7th and 8th Congressional districts into one, huge northern Minnesota district. Now two DFLers represent those districts, and we believe it would be impossible for one person to represent the diverse interests from Duluth and the Iron Range to Moorhead and Thief River Falls.

At the legislative level, it is the DFL which is playing games with legislative districts. The party was unable to unseat 4A and 4B Republican legislators in the 2000 elections, so they would put both districts into one under redistricting plans and force Reps. Doug Fuller and Larry Howes to face each other first. Under the House GOP plan, DFL state Sens. Roger Moe and LeRoy Stumpf would square off.

Enter Gov. Jesse Ventura, whose redistricting plan is also geared to ensure more Independence Party-likely seats based on voting patterns for him in 1998. He also advocates the single, huge northern Minnesota congressional district.

Bemidji citizens this week will have the opportunity to voice their opinion on the various redistricting plans before the Legislature as the Minnesota Senate Redistricting Working Group holds a hearing 1-3 p.m. Thursday at Bemidji City Hall. The legislative and congressional plans under consideration are also available on the Internet, at www.commissions.leg.state.mn.us/html/newplans.html.

Working Group Chairman Larry Pogemiller, DFL-Minneapolis, says that "redistricting is the constitutional duty of the Legislature, and it is our duty to abide by our oaths of office to fulfill our mandate to enact redistricting plans." But based on what has been presented, there is serious doubt that political power struggles can be set aside to find a plan that will represent Minnesota's unique geographic and demographic factors.

Thursday's hearing will be a good place to make those views known, or it will indeed be the courts next spring that will make that decision.

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BEMIDJI STATE UNIVERSITY



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REDISTRICTING WORK GROUP

DATE/LOCATION: 10/11 Bemidji

Please provide the following information for our records.

Full Name ELI HUNT Address/Phone (218) 335-8206
Title CHAIRMAN Leech Lake Res. CASS LAKE, MN 56633

Dale Hoosier 415 S. Mavis Lk Rd NW Bemidji
Northern Twp 218-751-2461

Mark Paulson 3518 Kayman Ct SE Bemidji
Bemidji Twp. 218 751-8319

Jim Helzer P.O. Box 2052
Chair Beltrami County Board Bemidji, MN. 56619

Patrick Donnan 3843 Carver Rd NE
Professor of Political Science Bemidji, MN 56601

3elt Count Commissioner
Quentin S. Fairbanks RD #1 Bx 110A
Wines, MN. 56647

AL. Thunder P.O. Box 550 - Red Lake
Tribal Cultural Ctrd. MN, 56671

Richard Lehmann 1426 Irvingside Ln SW
Mayor Bemidji Bemidji MN 56601-8855

DAVID HARRINGTON 4858 BITTERSWEET RD NE
TURTLE LAKE TWP RESIDENT BEMIDJI, MN 56601

Michael Mewers 4160 Connelly Circle
Bemidji Ward 5 Bemidji, MN 56601

DON HOPPE 4085 FORSEMAN PT DR NW
HIRAM TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR HACKENACK MN 56452

