

November 5, 2009

The Honorable
Address
City

Dear Representative "Last Name",

Recently, I testified before the Census Data Advisory Committee regarding Rethinking Redistricting. I welcomed and appreciated the opportunity to share my thoughts on how the redistricting process can be vastly improved in Indiana.

I have since learned the committee does not intend to establish any guidelines or make any legislative recommendations to the General Assembly, but expects for several bills to be filed by individuals on the issue of redistricting. I, along with thousand of Hoosiers, am hopeful the issue of redistricting gets a complete and open airing during the upcoming session.

The 2010 legislative session provides the General Assembly a unique opportunity to consider objective redistricting criteria outside of what will likely be a politically charged environment during the 2011 session when the maps are redrawn. The plan I have proposed recognizes the constitutional authority of the General Assembly to draw the maps. However, if it were the will of the General Assembly to choose to create an independent commission, I believe the criteria I am proposing would still be required even with a commission redrawing the districts. Ultimately, the redistricting issue is about how the maps are drawn, not who draws them.

Currently, my office is in the process of crafting draft legislative language to implement the Rethinking Redistricting initiative in the event you are interested in adopting such language into one of your bills or amendments. Some legislators have already indicated an interest in authoring language and I thank them for it, but I am willing to make it available to all the members of the General Assembly. The proposed legislative language would codify the Rethinking Redistricting criteria that I have sent before and that is restated in the attached position paper.

In addition to the criteria I've presented, I also believe there needs to be complete transparency in the redistricting process. I believe transparency could be achieved by making the process open to the public, carrying all proceedings and meetings live via the internet, sharing a full report with the public and the media before the lines are voted on and enacted, and giving the public an appropriate amount of time to review and respond to the proposed legislative maps before they become law.

Thank you for your continued service to the people of Indiana. I look forward to working with you on this threshold issue as we move closer to the start of the 2010 legislative session.

Sincerely,

Todd Rokita
Indiana Secretary of State of Indiana

Enclosures