

November 3, 2009

The Honorable David Long
President Protempore, Indiana State Senate
State House

BY HAND DELIVERY

Dear Senator Long,

As Organization Day and ultimately the 2010 session of the Indiana General Assembly quickly approach, I wanted to reach out to you in regards to the threshold issue of redistricting.

Last week, I testified before the Census Data Advisory Committee regarding ideas found in many other states on how to reform the redistricting process here in Indiana. I welcomed and appreciated the opportunity to share my thoughts on how the redistricting process could be vastly improved in Indiana.

As President Protempore of the Indiana State Senate, your position affords you the ability to set the legislative priorities for the upcoming session. I am writing to encourage you to author legislation that significantly reforms the redistricting process by codifying criteria which incorporates the principles I have outlined in Rethinking Redistricting. I believe the 2010 legislative session provides you and the General Assembly a unique opportunity to enact into state law objective redistricting criteria outside of what will likely be a politically charged environment during the 2011 session when the maps are redrawn.

On September 8th, you issued a statement outlining your thoughts on what the rules and goals of the redistricting process should be. In your statement, you laid out three primary criteria on how the redistricting process should be approached. I was encouraged by your statement and believe there is a lot of common ground between the thoughts you shared and the criteria outlined in Rethinking Redistricting. There are some criteria not addressed by your guidelines, but those can be debated with the amendment process after a bill is filed.

In addition to the criteria outlined in your statement, you also mentioned the goal of having the most open, transparent redistricting process ever conducted in this State. I agree with your goal and strongly support making the redistricting process completely transparent. I believe you could achieve this goal 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 prior to enactment, 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 leadership of the Senate and your continued service to the people of Indiana. I look forward to working with you on this threshold issue during the upcoming session.

Sincerely,

Todd Rokita
Indiana Secretary of State

CC: The Honorable Mitch Daniels, Governor of Indiana
The Honorable Sue Landske, Assistant President Pro Tempore