

REDISTRICTING VOTING PROCEDURE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (MICRC) is now moving toward final votes on the redistricting plans that will serve us for the next decade of elections. It is important for the MICRC to establish clear voting procedures for adopting congressional, state Senate, and state House maps. Such procedures will assure trust and faith in the newly adopted redistricting plans and the integrity of those who are establishing new voting district lines, clearly demonstrate the commission's mission and values, prevent legal disruptions jeopardizing timely decision-making and assure fair and transparent elections for Michigan.

To that end, Michigan State University's Institute for Public Policy and Social Research recommends that the MICRC give due consideration to:

- Enable consensus to emerge before moving to formal votes. Establish procedures for informal collaboration, such as an informal straw poll or a round of discussion with each commissioner voicing which plans they like best, which they deem acceptable, and which they do not like. This would allow commissioners to assess the overall attitudes toward each map, perhaps enabling a consensus judgement.
- Before any formal votes, spell out the details of all rounds of voting and discussion procedures so that the commissioners and the public understand (before voting up or down on any particular map) how consideration and voting will proceed. The voting process should maximize the commission's sincere, impartial beliefs and minimize strategic votes. The Michigan Constitution is explicit about the final steps of the voting agenda (if Commissioners are unable to adopt a plan by a qualified majority vote), but the Commission should strive to reach agreement before moving to a broader range of plans or risking a random selection process. The detailed roadmap should include tie-breaking procedures. We recommend a flowchart of the voting procedures to enable public comprehension.
- Make every effort to resolve complexities and ambiguities before they arise. It is difficult to address every contingency, but good faith efforts should be made to establish professional deliberations and outline solutions before problems arise. For example, the Commission should be clear and consistent before voting begins about what circumstances would allow for the consideration of individually-submitted maps. It should also determine in advance how the "top half of plans" will be determined for the Borda count procedure if an odd number of plans are under consideration, and what will happen in the case of failure to rank all alternatives by all Commissioners. We do not judge any of these decisions as monumental, but they need to be clear before voting begins to avoid controversy late in the process.
- The Commission should not be in a rush to establish full voting procedures this week. Recommendations from the Secretary of State's office should be introduced with time for public and expert feedback to identify problems that may arise.

We stress in making these recommendations that redistricting a state of Michigan's size and importance is a delicate and complex task. We commend the MICRC and staff for this bold undertaking. Establishing voting procedures can be achieved collaboratively and with due diligence, rather than urgently, during this month in which you conclude.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit this set of recommendations, and look forward to your questions and consideration.