
From: RICK PAYTON [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 3, 2022 10:29 AM
To: House & Governmental Affairs
Subject: Congressional Redistricting
Attachments: JPPH&galletter.docx

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Enclosed is my letter regarding Congressional Redistricting.

JOHN PATRICK PAYTON

January 3, 2022

House & Governmental Affairs Committee
Louisiana State Capitol
Baton Rouge, LA

Dear Chairman Stefanski, Chairwoman Hewitt, and Members of the Committee:

I am a retired businessman living at 3105 Palm Vista Drive in Metairie, LA. I have been active in my community, and have lived and operated my businesses in East Jefferson for my entire adult life.

Following previous Census Data, Louisiana's six Congressional Districts were redrawn to adjust for Louisiana's decreased population growth in relation to the United States as a whole, and to comply with the Justice Department's requirement for minority representation in Congress. The current boundaries were approved by the U.S. Justice Department as complying with voter representation guidelines. Since the 2020 Census data reveals Louisiana's population increased only 2.74% in the past 10 years, **only minimal changes are needed to the boundaries of Louisiana Congressional Districts.**

Current rules only require a Congressional District to be "as close to the ideal district size as practicable." The rules recommend the boundaries be redrawn **only when the Census reveals a particular District experienced a significant increase or decrease in population.** The rules define "significant" as a change of greater than 5%. The 2020 Census data reveals the change in population of Louisiana's Congressional Districts as follows:

1st District population increased by 7.6% (Currently Within Ideal Range)

2nd District population increased by 2.6% (Currently Within Ideal Range)

3rd District population increased by 4.0% (Currently Within Ideal Range)

4th District population decreased by 3.6% (-6.2% Smaller than Ideal)

5th District population decreased by 2.2% (Currently Within Ideal Range)

6th District population increased by 8.1% (+5.2% Larger than Ideal)

As you can see, the majority of Louisiana's Congressional Districts are well within the range where no change in boundaries is needed. While the 1st District experienced more than a 5% change in population, (largely from residents of St. Bernard Parish moving back after Hurricane Katrina) it is currently within the ideal population range of a Louisiana Congressional District. There are only two Districts which are slightly outside of the ideal population range of a Louisiana Congressional District. Therefore, **a large change in Congressional District Boundaries is completely unwarranted.**

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Most importantly, the current Congressional District Boundaries are based on a commonality of interests based on the economy and needs of the respective districts. The northern part of Louisiana is largely rural, agricultural and focused on Christian values. The coastal area of the state is concerned about coastal restoration and largely employed in the oil and seafood industries. The urban districts are distinctly different in needs and goals from adjacent districts. In short, each district has unique needs, and deserves representation in Congress that makes their unique needs a priority.

An Associated Press (AP) Poll conducted this past spring found 67% of respondents consider gerrymandering to be a "major problem." A similar poll conducted by RepresentUS found 89% of respondents opposed the redrawing of districts to advantage one party.

Despite the obvious will of the people, a coalition of liberal leftist groups has partnered together in an attempt to force widespread racial gerrymandering to increase Democratic Party Congressional representation. A clear example of the extent of their radical plan, is that Congressman Steve Scalise's home in East Jefferson would be approximately 30 miles from the closest boundary of his new Congressional District under their gerrymandered map.

The main argument of this leftist coalition is that black voting strength has been diluted. This argument is not valid when you consider the data from the Cook Partisan Voting Index (CPVI) which shows the current Congressional Districts are extremely balanced:

1st District (+22 Rep)

2nd District (+25 Dem)

3rd District (+21 Rep)

4th District (+14 Rep)

5th District (+17 Rep)

6th District (+18 Rep)

As you can see, in addition to being largely equal in population, all of the current districts are also fairly politically balanced as the percentage of voters in the majority party in the 2nd District is within 4 percentage points of both the 1st and 3rd Districts.

In the 1993 Supreme Court Case *Shaw vs Reno*, the Court declared that a racially-based reapportionment scheme in North Carolina was illegal. This scheme is similar to what is proposed by the coalition of leftist groups. The Supreme Court ruled the North Carolina scheme constituted racial gerrymandering under the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

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In short, **I recommend the Louisiana Congressional Districts remain largely intact.** It is most representative of the people's needs, it is fair to all voting groups, it is the will of the people, and it follows the law.

Sincerely,

John Patrick Payton

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