



**BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES
AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORT**

COMMITTEE: California Voting Rights Act **MEETING DATE:** October 26, 2020

PREPARED BY: Trustee Betsy Kahn **LOCATION:** Virtual Meeting

At our March 2020 Board meeting we reviewed a proposal by Doug Johnson (National Demographics Corporation) to guide us through the process of demographic analysis leading into the transition from at-large Library District Trustee elections to district elections. Our Board has been taken up with weighty and time-consuming issues in the months since, and we essentially tabled this project. This month I attended a CSDA online webinar entitled “Voting Rights and Redistricting Update,” which originally aired on September 9, 2020. The hosts were Doug Johnson and David Soldani (an attorney with the firm of Atkinson, Andelson, Loya, Ruud & Romo). This report is intended to give the Board an update on the CVRA landscape, highlighting some pertinent information from this webinar.

2020 Census Schedule Update

- 12/31/20: State totals deadline (used only for apportioning Congressional districts)
- 3/31/21: “Small demography” data release (local census data)
- Early- to mid-April 2021: Finalized “prisoner adjusted data” (prisoners counted according to last place of residence)

Timing Considerations

- Important to secure legal and technical assistance ASAP because there is going to be a huge demand in 2021.
- Demand not only from at-large jurisdictions converting to district elections, but in the upcoming post-census year well over 500 jurisdictions must also go through re-districting processes (up from about 150 after the 2010 census).

Pico Case Update

- Appeals Court ruled that “the increase in a protected-class voting strength in a district-based system must be numerically significant,” and that in Santa Monica the increase from 14% to 30% Latino voters in a proposed district was *not* numerically significant.
- Plaintiffs are appealing to the State Supreme Court, and may also seek a legislative solution.
- Demographers could do an analysis of our community to see if it would even be possible to draw a majority protected-class district, but that would only be worth doing if we intended to fight the change from at-large to district elections.

Demand Letters

- Attorneys continue to send them, and special districts are a particular target.
- Because of the pandemic, Governor Newsom issued an Executive Order that stops the 45-day and 90-day “safe harbor” clocks; they will restart the day the order is lifted.
- The main plaintiffs’ lawyer insists that this is unconstitutional, but the process requires public hearings that are difficult to conduct effectively during the pandemic.
- We have an advantage from having been proactive and stating our intention to enter the process voluntarily, in that we are not bound by the 90-day timeline. That gives us more time to invite additional public comment and interaction, which will result in a more authentic, well-informed outcome.

Review of the Districting Process

- Two hearings prior to crafting maps
- Two hearings to discuss draft maps
- Board vote
- County Registrar implementation

Special District Mapping Criteria

- Required Federal Laws
 - Equal population
 - Adherence to the Federal Voting Rights Act
 - No racial gerrymandering
- Traditional Redistricting Principles (“Goals,” not requirements)
 - Communities of interest
 - Compact and contiguous
 - Visible boundaries (natural and man-made)
 - Respect voters’ choices about continuity in office
 - Planned future growth of community

Facilitators’ Contact Information

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