

September 12, 2013

Magdalena Blanco

William Hewitt

Anna Saenz

TJ Costello

Henry Johnson

Mariano Diaz-Miranda

Carmen Llanes Pulido

Maria Solis

Stefan Haag

Ryan Rafols

Rachel Farris

Arthur Lopez

Catherine Coco

Harriett Harrow

Dear Commissioners:

I was mistaken about the advisability of using the precinct and demographic data in the city's 2013 Voting Rights submission for Proposition 3. In an earlier letter to you, I suggested that this submission might contain the most accurate depiction of both the boundaries and demographics of existing election precincts. I was wrong. As Commissioner Haag indicated to me at the public hearing last night at Concordia, it appears that the city submission used 2010 or earlier precincts (not 2012). My effort today to confirm exactly what was used by the city has gone unrewarded. While the use of such obsolete data may be harmless for the existing at-large system, use of such inaccurate precinct boundaries and demographics by this commission for redistricting would be a serious problem.

The data provided by the Legislative Council used 2012 precincts (VTDs). I have forwarded this information to the commission earlier this week. Today, I spoke with the county voting registrar office about that office's earlier submission of the 2012 precincts for preclearance. The submission included both the shape files for the 2012 boundaries and the demographics (i.e. census data) for each of those precincts. It turns out that the Legislative Council had obtained and used the data from the county office and submission. The information sent to the commission by the Legislative Council had originated in the county submission. The information should be the same except that the Council data only deals with the city not the entire county.

The county will send me its shape files, with demographics (population, ethnic and racial breakdown, etc.) to me. I will send this data on to the commission through the commission's executive director. However, the commission, through its executive director or mapping firm, should also obtain the information directly from the county so that there is a clear path of transfer from the county to the commission.

Again, I cannot emphasize too strongly the need to use 2012 election precincts (VTDs) for the maps that you will draw for the city. The mapping firm that you have hired can and should obtain this shape file from the county. The best contact seems to be Ms. Melinda Avey (512-854-4454).

I hope you and your staff will not consider my effort to be helpful to be meddlesome. I only want to see this commission successful. I am only trying to use my expertise to help.

Thank you.

Steve Bickerstaff

