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Dear Commissioners:

As always, you are doing a great job. However, one problem in the commission's depiction of the demographic data was demonstrated in the article in the Statesman on Sunday. The failure to distinguish Hispanic and non-Hispanic whites gives a very false impression of the proffered districts.

As you know, the census category for race does not include Hispanic. All Hispanics are also included in one of the race categories (e.g. white, black, other). This can lead to confusion (especially among the general public) about the make-up of the districts. For example, the news article and graphics on Sunday showed District 1 as having a "white" percentage of 47%.

This confusion is unnecessary. Governments with significant Hispanic populations are accustomed to dealing with this issue. The PL94-171 census data consists of four tables or sections. The P2 (total population) and P4 (VAP) are the tables commonly used in Texas because they show those persons "not Hispanic or Latino." These two tables separate out the Hispanic population as it is on the questionnaire. If you use tables P1 and P3 (as apparently has occurred in the commission's work) then the Hispanic population is mixed in with the other entities. The VAP tables follow this same pattern.

Citygate just needs to switch out the P1 and P3 tables (TA and VA fields) for the P2 and P4 tables (TN and VN fields). If this is done, you will have the non-Hispanic whites in their own separate category. It will show, for example, that there are approximately 32% non-Hispanic whites in District 1 (not 47% as suggested by the demographic numbers in tables P1 and P3). Those tables in Autobound are denoted by "TA" for tables 1 and 3 and "TN" for tables 2 and 4.

I also again want to emphasize the absolute need to look at CVAP (citizen voting age population), SSRV (Spanish surname registered voters), and a functional analysis of Districts 1-4. A functional analysis should help you explain the adequacy of districts 1-4 as minority opportunity districts. Under any circumstance it is simply unwise to ignore this data. It would take one day or less for your staff to obtain this data and perform the analysis.

Thank you.

Steve Bickerstaff