
STATE OF MINNESOTA
SPECIAL REDISTRICTING PANEL

C0-01-160

Susan M. Zachman, Maryland Lucky R. Rosenbloom,
Victor L.M. Gomez, Gregory G. Edeen, Jeffrey E.
Karlson, Diana V. Bratlie, Brian J. LeClair and
Gregory J. Ravenhorst, individually and on behalf
of all citizens and voting residents of Minnesota
similarly situated.

Plaintiffs,

and

Patricia Cotlow, Thomas L. Weisbecker,
Theresa Silka, Geri Boice, William English,
Benjamin Gross, Thomas R. Dietz, and John
Raplinger, individually and on behalf of all
citizens and voting residents of Minnesota
similarly situated,

Applicants for Intervention,

and

Jesse Ventura,

Applicant for Intervention,

and

Roger D. Moe, Thomas W. Pugh, Betty McCollum,
Martin Olav Sabo, Bill Luther, Collin C. Peterson
and James L. Oberstar,

Applicants for Intervention,

vs.

Mary Kiffineyer, Secretary of State of Minnesota,
and Doug Gruber, Wright County Auditor,
individually and on behalf of all Minnesota county chief
election officers,

Defendants.

DEFENDANT DOUG GRUBER'S
MEMORANDUM RESPONDING
TO CONGRESSIONAL AND
LEGISLATIVE REDISTRICTING
PLANS

Defendant Doug Gruber submits this Memorandum to the Panel commenting on the Congressional and Legislative redistricting plans submitted to the Panel. While the comments contained below relate specifically to Wright County, they are indicative of problems which may arise in other counties with some of the political subdivision splits proposed as a part of the plans submitted. Many political subdivisions in out state Minnesota have only one voting location. When these splits occur in those communities, a nightmare is created for county and local election officials. Different ballot styles must be prepared, resulting in additional expenditures for printing of the ballots and programming of voting machines. Additional strain is placed on election judges, who, with very little training, must insure that the voter receives the correct ballot style. In short, the potential for voter confusion and election error is increased with these political subdivision splits.

Detailed below are the comments on how these plans affect Wright County:

Congressional Plans

The Zachman and Cotlow plans respect all city and township boundaries and are preferable from the standpoint of election administration.

The Moe plan indicates a split of both Rockford City and Rockford Township between District 2 and District 3, but shows no population in the areas split off from the main portion of the city or township. This could lead to voter confusion in the future should there be development of residential neighborhoods in the areas split off.

The Ventura plan is the most objectionable, again with respect to its split of Rockford City. This plan would place most of the City (4,376 people) in District 6, with western Hennepin County, but would leave 144 people in District 7 with the rest of Wright County. The City of Rockford has only one voting location. Straddling the Crow River, Rockford already has the problem of different ballot styles for county elections (Wright and Hennepin). Interjecting two different Congressional Districts into the mix would increase election costs, make election administration more difficult and increase voter confusion.

Legislative Plan

The Zachman plan is preferable from the election administration perspective because it respects all city and township boundaries.

The Ventura plan is objectionable because it splits the City of St. Michael between Senate Districts 35 and 37. In fact, the split divides Precinct 1B in that city, a fact that could easily lead to election administration problems. The City of St. Michael, due to its size geographically, already includes portions of 3 school districts. With additional legislative district splits, the number of ballot styles necessary would be difficult to manage.

The Cotlow plan is objectionable because it also splits the City of St. Michael and one of its precincts into different House Districts (20A and 20B). For reasons stated above, election administration would be made more difficult. In addition, the Cotlow plan contains some

inconsistencies between its maps and reports. Although the maps show splits of the cities of Rockford and Dayton, the Split Subdivisions Report does not reflect this.

The Moe plan is objectionable because it splits the City of Otsego between House Districts 32A and 32B. Otsego has only one voting location and this split would go through neighborhoods on city streets, not major highways. The potential for voter confusion and mistakes by election judges handling different ballot styles would be increased under this plan.

Conclusion

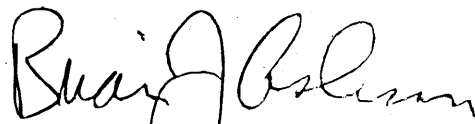
Redistricting Principle Number 7 indicates as follows:

The Districts will be drawn with attention to County, City, and Township boundaries. A County, City, or Township will not be divided into more than one district except as necessary to meet equal population requirements or to form districts that are composed of convenient, contiguous, and compact territory. When any County, City, or Township must be divided into one or more districts, it will be divided into as few districts as possible.

While this redistricting principle does allow for splits to occur, this Defendant submits that such splits are potentially more harmful to areas in out state Minnesota. This Defendant also agrees with the assertion of the Zachman Plaintiffs in their Memorandum that such splits "should occur as often as possible in metropolitan areas, where urban and suburban residents frequently cross city and county boundaries to . . . undertake numerous daily activities."

These comments are submitted to the panel cautiously, keeping in mind that any shifting of district lines to address a concern voiced may create or exacerbate another problem. However, the main thrust of these comments remains that such political subdivision and precinct splits should be kept to a minimum, especially in out state Minnesota.

Dated: January 11, 2002



Brian J. Asleson (#12056X)
Chief Deputy Attorney
Wright County Attorney's Office
10 2nd Street NW
Buffalo, MN 55313
(763)682-7342
Fax: (763)682-7700

Attorney for Defendant Doug Gruber,
Wright County Auditor