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Yolo's Voice Heard on State Redistricting by Don Saylor

When I started this article, the story I had to tell was about effective citizen engagement in the redistricting process. That is still the story, but a July 9 Press Release from the Citizen Redistricting Commission announced yet another change in an ever evolving process. Now instead of releasing a new set of maps for public input on July 12, the CRC will be issuing just one more final set on July 28 and will vote on August 15.

Here is how the story starts -- every ten years, legislative districts are redrawn to reflect the population census. Passed in November 2008, Proposition 11 established the Citizens Redistricting Commission to shape boundaries for state legislative, congressional and Board of Equalization districts. On June 10, the CRC released their first draft maps based on the 2010 census. The first draft sliced Yolo County into three Assembly

Districts, three Senate Districts and three separate Congressional Districts. Community action has resulted in a significant improvement in the anticipated district lines, but we need to stay vigilant over the next few weeks to assure that Yolo interests are reflected in the final maps.

Yolo Community of Interest not Reflected in First Draft: Plainly put, the voice of Yolo was diluted and diminished to non-existence in the initial version of district mapping. The 200,000 residents of Yolo County would have been parceled out to nine separate representatives as a small minority of voters in every district to which they were assigned. Woodland and Winters were in an Assembly District that excluded Davis and West Sacramento, but included Galt, Lodi and Oakley. Davis and West Sacramento were attached as suburbs of Sacramento and the northern parts of the county were assigned to Yuba County seats. Similar scenarios were drawn out for Senate and Congressional seats. In short, Yolo was dismembered and assigned outward in every set of districts. The strong voice Davis and Yolo residents have had with legislators such as Helen Thomson, Lois Wolk, Mariko Yamada, and Mike Thompson was clearly in jeopardy.

Civic Engagement Makes a Difference: Following the release of the first draft, many Davis and Yolo residents mobilized and worked together across partisan lines and city boundaries to change the direction of the CRC redistricting. Draft "visualizations" released by CRC last week group all of Yolo County except West Sacramento in the same Assembly and Senate districts. The newly drawn Assembly district primarily includes Yolo and Solano Counties. The Senate District nests this Assembly District with Napa, Lake and portions of Sonoma Counties. Yolo remains divided into three separate Congressional districts. West Sacramento is combined with Sacramento areas for all levels. These new visualizations can be found in the meeting handouts section of the web site at <http://wedrawthelines.ca>.

While not every change which we requested was included, these revisions are extremely responsive to the public input provided by Yolo County residents. Once the June 10 maps were released, the community set to work. Within hours, e-mail networks, phone calls and social media sites featured comments and dialogue on the significance and implications of the new district lines. Collective action by many emerged from these efforts and has made a difference. While many of those most active are members of the DDC, many were from other communities and not Democrats.

On June 14, the Board of Supervisors voted to transmit a letter calling for the CRC to keep Yolo County whole. Similar letters followed from the Woodland and Davis City Councils. The local group, Saving California Communities, mobilized quickly to sponsor a forum on June 22 in Davis. Reed Youmans opened the event with a call to action. Presenters included Trudy Schafer from the League of Women Voters of California, Delaine Eastin, Gary Sandy, Andrew Fulks, John Munn, Lucas Frerichs, Skip Davies, Susan Lovenburg, Jay Zeigler, Jim Provenza, Davis Campbell, and me. We closed that session with an overall call to action asking people to submit their comments and attend the CRC input session on **June 28**. (continued p.2)

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Calendar of Events

Tues., August 2, 7:00-9:00 pm, regular **DDC Board business meeting**, general members and public welcomed. Davis Library Meeting Room.

Wed.-Sun. August 17-21, Yolo County Fair. The YCDCC will greet the public and register voters at the County Fair. The Club will staff the Democratic Booth on **Sat., August 20**. If you wish to volunteer, contact Richard at <yamagata@virtual-markets>.

Sun., Sept. 11, Fall BBQ, mark the date; details TBA.

Sun., Oct. 23, Annual Bean Feed, mark the date; details TBA.

2012 Organizing for America grass roots planning session



Thirty active Democrats recently spent a beautiful, Saturday afternoon indoors to prepare for 2012. The meeting, called by local OFA (AKA Obama for America) supporters, Tom Haggler and Martha Beetley sketched early planning for the Presidential reelection campaign in Yolo County. Your Club and the YCDCC is committed to working closely with this volunteer group during the coming year. Now is a good time to explore opportunities to participate in the 2012 election campaign by contacting Martha and Tom, tomandmartha912@gmail.com.

(Redistricting continued from p1) This forum, filmed by Davis Media Access, is available at <<http://www.savingca.org/prog/20110622>>.

Gary Sandy's remarks at the **June 22** forum so clearly articulated our shared vision that we converted his statement to a letter. Susan Lovenburg spearheaded the effort to gather over 100 signatures for submission to the CRC by June 28. On **June 24**, Dave Pratt, Matt Williams and I travelled to Stockton to testify about the Yolo community of interest and found common cause with residents of Lodi and Galt who had similar concerns. On **June 26**, *The Davis Enterprise* published an editorial calling for Yolo County to be united. *The Daily Democrat* also published two editorials expressing a similar view. On **June 28**, 30 Yolo County residents spoke at the CRC hearing to request that Yolo be kept whole. Four Clarksburg residents spoke in favor of the first-draft, including the Republican County Chairman. Five spoke in favor of aligning West Sacramento with Sacramento rather than with the rest of Yolo.

Next steps: The CRC process is ongoing and evolving. The next set of draft maps was scheduled for release on **July 12**, but the July 9 announcement states that no second draft will be released for public comment. Instead, the CRC will issue a number of visualizations leading to publication of a final set of district maps on **July 28**. The CRC will vote on **August 15** on the final set of boundaries. The CRC will meet throughout July at McGeorge School of Law in Sacramento and each of these meetings will include a public comment opportunity. It is essential that we monitor these meetings and provide written testimony and appear as needed to assure that Yolo County continues to be heard.

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Celebrating Independence with Balloons for Children by Carl Schmid



The Club and local Obama for America volunteers (see p. 2) celebrated July 4th in Community Park by distributing voter information in preparation for the 2012 campaign. Our site, under *the* oak tree (photo I.) was perfectly located along the footpath leading to the fireworks resulting in heavy traffic. The continuing popularity of President Obama was demonstrated by an unscientific survey, the large number of visitors, who enjoyed using the cardboard cutouts of Barak and Michel (photo I.) as a backdrop for their keepsake July 4th photographs.

With enthusiastic assistance from Davis School Trustee Sheila Allen, Assembly Member Mariko Yamada and Davis City Council Member, Sue Greenwald (photos below), the Club distrib-



uted helium balloons to children in order to introduce ourselves to young families in Davis. Toward the later evening, as the fireworks approached, Sue was distributing balloons as rapidly as three helpers could fill them; the DDC balloons featuring the Club logo and web address were ubiquitously displayed throughout the park. Children certainly enjoyed the balloons.

Impressions from Wash DC by Kelsey McQuaid, DDC Board Member: As it gets hotter and more humid in DC, the political tension increases with the continuing negotiations between President Obama and the congressional leadership over raising the debt ceiling. Everyone is talking about the debt ceiling; it's almost a guarantee that wherever there are people dressed in business clothes, you will hear mention of the ongoing debate. The Democratic National Committee has been sending out releases and talking to the media about the Republican candidates who have signed the pledge not to raise the debt ceiling or who have supported the Ryan Budget. It has been a unique experience for me to live in Washington, D.C., during this debate because the city has become its own world revolving around the debt negotiations for weeks. This is a city in which no one is ever away from the news cycle and complete strangers strike up conversations about whether a deal can ever be reached while taking the Metro home. [Ed. Note; Kelsey is currently serving an internship with the Democratic Central Committee Washington.]

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