

October 17, 2021

Members of the Special Committees on Redistricting,

I am frequently reminded of the upside-down nature of the purchasing of goods in the marketplace, and in politics. At one time, the friendly cashier would thank the customer for shopping at their store. Familiar announcements like "Thank you," "Come again," or "Thank you for shopping with us," were regular reminders of the role of vendor with customer. That polite interaction is rare now, and I find the customer often thanks the vendor for having been served.

In the political arena, we too often forget that those we elect to office are to serve the people, the interests of the majority of Americans, 50 percent, plus one. The majority of Americans do not support government secrecy, having to jump through hoops to participate in governance, or, specific to this message, gerrymandering.

We know the critical nature of drawing redistricting maps - that the passage into law of anything other than objectively fair maps is legalized election manipulation authorized by the same court that has ruled that racism is a thing of the past; that corporations are people, with equal rights but not the same responsibilities; that by its silence failed to prevent the renewed arrival of vigilantism/bounty hunting in America; while during its continuing period of silence, fails to protect an existing constitutional right.

Our democratic republic has never been this challenged in our lifetimes. You, as members of the special committees, are in a position to inspire anew a confidence that government can do the right thing.

There is no substitute for in-person committee participation, but during the ongoing pandemic, the next best approach is remote, interactive video access, which, to date, both special committees have refused to provide.

In addition, no public or digital announcement of the criteria being used to create maps has been issued by your committees, now a mere 31 days to the map-filing deadline, which is narrowing the opportunity for public and press consumption of mapping, albeit subject to major, last-minute floor amendment.

Once again, knowing technology is available to you to assist with transparency in the workings of government, I therefore know it is possible for you to be more transparent and forthcoming in your work. It is incumbent upon you to deploy that access and that information.

Bob Perry
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