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LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON DEMOGRAPHIC
RESEARCH & REAPPORTIONMENT



THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK
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September 26, 2011

To:

Senator Michael F. Nozzolio
Assemblyman John J. McEneny
Assemblyman Robert Oaks
Dr. Roman Hedges
Welquis R. Lopez

From:

Senator Martin Malavé Dilan

Re: Scheduling and LATFOR map drafting sessions

As LATFOR concludes its pre-initial redistricting plan hearings, I believe it would be beneficial to this task force and the public to discuss issues relating to the process.

The legally mandated database for Senate and Assembly redistricting will not be available to LATFOR or the public until October 5, at the earliest. It is of the utmost importance that the ongoing subtraction of the prison population from their places of incarceration and their reallocation to their prior places of residence be completed and made public in a timely manner.

LATFOR's delay of many months in performing the duties assigned to it by Chapter 57 of the Laws of 2010 must not be the pretext for denying the public an opportunity to offer legally correct redistricting proposals to LATFOR before initial proposals are considered. The public must have access to an updated and corrected population database to develop proposals for LATFOR's consideration.

In addition, a reasonable deadline should be set ensuring that those wishing to submit initial plans are given the opportunity to have those recommendations considered in LATFOR's own initial proposal. Likewise, LATFOR must also accept and consider alternative redistricting plans submitted during the second round of hearings regarding LATFOR's initial redistricting proposal. In the spirit of openness and transparency, LATFOR's own initial plan, and all submitted initial and alternative plans, must be open to public review and discourse.

In continuing to keep the redistricting process as transparent as possible, I suggest that upon implementation of Chapter 57, the amended population database—reflecting the subtractions and reallocations—be made available to the public in the form of user-friendly data files.

Concurrently, the same data must be shared with local governments as mandated by Chap. 57.

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Public notification regarding these actions should include:

- the deadline for public submissions of plans for Congressional, Senate and Assembly districts, if those are to be considered by LATFOR in developing our own initial proposals;
- the release date of LATFOR's initial Congressional, Senate and Assembly proposal;
- the dates (first and last) of the second round of public hearings, where the public will be able to comment on the initial plans and offer alternatives (consideration of hearings that would begin in the afternoon and continue - or resume - in the evening); and
- the target date for submitting a final report to the Legislature.

The above criteria is essential to both the public and LATFOR staff, especially as we begin our own review of plans and conduct drafting sessions. Further, public LATFOR drafting sessions should be considered to bolster public access and awareness as plans are developed. The California Citizens Redistricting Commission not only held public drafting sessions, but also webcast them live and provided time for additional public comment throughout the process.

The public has asked for a fair and transparent redistricting process. The last thing LATFOR should do is draft plans in the proverbial "back room."

I look forward to discussing these issues with you at our October 5 public meeting.