

# The Connecticut General Assembly

## REAPPORTIONMENT COMMITTEE

### SENATE

Senator Donald E. Williams, Jr., Co-Chair

Senator John McKinney  
Senator Martin M. Looney  
Senator Leonard A. Fasano

Sandra Norman-Eady, Project Coordinator



### HOUSE

Representative Lawrence F. Cafero, Jr., Co-Chair

Representative Christopher G. Donovan  
Representative Sandy H. Nafis  
Representative Arthur J. O'Neill

## REAPPORTIONMENT COMMITTEE

### MEETING MINUTES

**AUGUST 17, 2011**

**2:30 PM in Hearing Room 1C**

Senator Williams called the meeting to order at 2:35 pm.

The following committee members were present:

**Senators:** Donald E. Williams, Jr. 29; Martin M. Looney, 11; John McKinney, 28; Leonard A. Fasano, 34

**Representatives:** Lawrence F. Cafero, 142; Christopher G. Donovan, 84; Sandy H. Nafis, 27; Arthur J. O'Neill, 69

#### I. Approval of the May 16, 2011 Minutes.

A motion was made by Senator McKinney and seconded by Representative Nafis to approve the May 16, 2011 minutes. The motion was approved by acclamation.

#### II. Senator Williams listed the three items to be discussed.

1. Application of the Freedom of Information Act's provision on committee agendas to the Reapportionment Committee, regarding the committee agenda which was raised in the press.
2. Public comment on the redistricting process, and how the public can participate in submitting their plans and guidelines to make it easier for them to offer their suggestions.
3. Comments from members.

Senator Williams discussed the Freedom of Information Act as it relates to the work of the Connecticut General Assembly. The act's deadline for posting meeting agendas does not apply to legislative

committees, including the Reapportionment Committee. He further clarified that notice of today's meeting was posted approximately a week ago on the General Assembly's website and in the legislative bulletin.

Representative Cafero reminded the public that they can continue to submit comments to the committee until August 31<sup>st</sup>. He stressed that it is critical to the reapportionment process for the public to have the opportunity to submit maps, comments, and ideas. Representative Cafero then discussed the following guiding principles that he and Representative O'Neill will use during the redistricting process. He explained in detail the following six guidelines, which were derived from the federal Constitution, the Voting Rights Act, and case law:

1. "One person, one vote" set forth in the Federal Constitution in the Equal Protection Clause of the federal constitution;
2. Fostering the creation of, and protecting, predominately minority districts;
3. Concept of political fairness;
4. Preservation of communities of interest;
5. Compactness of districts; and.
6. Contiguous districts.

Representative Cafero concluded by stating that it is important for the public to hear these guidelines. It may prove helpful to them in submitting their ideas.

Senator Williams restated the committee's task and mandate to proceed with reapportionment following the law, following the statutes, and the constitutional mandates that are required for reapportionment. Senator Williams also stated it will be the committee's duty and challenge to resolve any differences among the guiding principals in a way that is as fair as possible for people in the state.

Senator Looney added that the law does not allow any deviation in the creation of congressional district, but courts have upheld a 5% variance either way for legislative districts. For example, the ideal number in each of the 36 Senate districts would be 99,280 but the courts have allowed a 5% deviation.

Representative Cafero added that since the last reapportionment cycle, the Larios decision has specified that any deviation must be justified by other factors. Representative O'Neill stated that when he served on the previous reapportionment committee, the 5% variation was allowed without explanation. He said that after Larios any deviation must be explained. Senator McKinney said it was important to discuss the principles that Representative Cafero presented. They could be used as a model for our deviations.

Representative Donovan addressed the issue of districts. He stated the committee should set a target number of districts for developing a plan. The suggested target for the House would be 151. Senator McKinney also suggested, for planning purposes, that the 36 Senate districts be maintained as a targeted number. Both agreed that the target numbers would be helpful to the public.

Senator Williams agreed that it important for the public to be given specific district numbers on which to focus, so that they can meaningfully contribute over and above the testimony that was heard at the six public hearings in the five congressional districts around the state. He added that the committee is suggesting the number of districts, not deciding on them today. Representative Cafero added that the target is 151 House seats and 36 Senate seats, but that it does not preclude the public from submitting a

plan with different numbers. The committee has the ability to set, for the House, from 125 to 225 seats. Senator Looney stated the first reapportionment in the early 1960's set the number in the Senate at 36. The House was set at 193 and was reduced to 177. The next process in the 1970's set the House at 151 where it has remained. He added that the Senate has a range of 30 to 50 seats.

Senator Williams restated that the public is encouraged to submit information through August 31, 2011. The committee has a deadline of September 15<sup>th</sup> to process all of the information and arrive at a decision. If a decision is reached on reapportionment prior to September 15<sup>th</sup>, it will be brought to the General Assembly for a two-thirds vote approval. In the two previous reapportionment cycles, the committee did not reach a decision by September 15.

Representative O'Neill added that if a decision is not reached by September 15<sup>th</sup>, the committee will dissolve. The governor would then appoint a commission upon the recommendation of the caucus leaders, and the new commission would appoint one additional member. The commission would have a new deadline to complete its work.

Representative Cafero asked that the committee plan to meet prior to September 15<sup>th</sup> to report to the public regarding the committee's progress.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:55pm.

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Mary Kula