



City of Phoenix

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

NEWS

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STATEMENT FROM VICE MAYOR MICHAEL JOHNSON

My fellow colleagues on the City Council approved an alternative redistricting map on Tuesday, July 3, 2012. Mayor Stanton, Councilman Valenzuela and I voted in opposition to the motion. The final steps in this process have been both disheartening and disgusting. I have had a front row seat to the disintegration of public process and community trust at the last two Council meetings. I was appalled when Councilman DiCiccio presented a map on June 19th that no one had seen except himself and Councilman Nowakowski, and even more stunned when that map was approved to be sent to the U.S. Department of Justice on July 3rd. For the past 11 years, I have worked to build community trust, not only for myself but for the city's entire government system. I encourage District 8 residents to get involved. I want all residents to engage because their expertise and opinions make us a stronger community.

Since December 2011, the city of Phoenix has been following a redistricting plan according to the requirements of the Phoenix City Charter. Public hearings and meetings were held in each district from January to May, providing education on the process and a forum for residents to make recommendations and submit their own maps. More than 200 residents attended the meetings and more than 600 attended the hearings. The community was engaged as I'd hoped. Unfortunately, the City Council decided to approve a map that completely circumvented the public. A large amount of residents who attended the June 19th meeting voiced their support or submitted comment cards in approval of the staff recommended map, and an even greater amount voiced their disapproval of the alternative map on July 3rd. The map that was seemingly drawn by only two Council members had not been seen by the community,

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robbing them of an opportunity to review and provide input to ensure transparency.

Although the majority of differences between the staff recommended map and the alternative map impact the lines drawn for District 8, the Council's failure stretches across all of our city's 519 square miles. We, as elected officials, must be the first to stand by and uphold a value on public process. We must support and practice public transparency. If the equity of the redistricting process can be compromised, what will be the next victim? I hope the current outcome of this process does not deter residents' interest from being involved. Become even more active. Take time to ask your Council member why they chose their vote during both Council meetings for a map that held no public input. Hold us accountable to upholding your wishes.

I am concerned that the level of transparency the Council owes the public may be in jeopardy by the time we reach the next Census in 2020. We must lead with transparency and integrity at the helm, and not cast it away when it becomes inconvenient for personal gain.

I chose to vote for the staff recommended map on both June 19th and July 3rd because it reflected my loyalty to our residents and my belief in our public process with full transparency. I love my city, and I luv District 8!

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