

Testimony to Charter Revision Committee

November 3, 2011

Good Evening. I am Frances McIntyre, a long-time Austin resident and community volunteer. I am here tonight to express support for the inclusion of an Independent Citizens' Redistricting Commission as we move toward proposed Charter Amendments that reflect Geographic Representation for our city council.

I have been around for almost all of the times that Single Member Districts have been studied, debated and failed at the ballot box. I believe that this year is different, and that there is a clear possibility that Geographic Representation has more support citywide than in any previous year. We could very well have a new form of representation on the City Council in the near future.

Because of that likelihood, it is very important that we have in place, a method for Redistricting.

With a larger Council, from districts, Redistricting themselves could be a nightmare that we want to avoid.

In order to assure fairness, transparency, and public involvement, an Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission, as set out in Austinites for Geographic Representation's (AGR) petition should be on the ballot.

This Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission proposal sets out, in detail, the duties of the Commission, the process for choosing Commission members, how they are selected, criteria for districts or boundaries and a detailed transition from the seven-member council elected at large to district representation. It is thorough and complete.

Since there have been others promoting this Independent Commission before me, (like Stewart Snider, President of the Austin League of Women Voters and others), I would add that it is a necessary and important part of any effort for Geographic Representation and that it will gain public support from citizens in all parts of Austin.

I encourage you to study this proposal and seriously consider the value of it as we prepare to vote in a plan for geographic representation.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak to you.

Frances McIntyre

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