



Morgan County News

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REDISTRICTING NEWS

Committee finalizes two of three plans to present to county commission

The redistricting committee made real progress at the meeting on Sept. 20. Two of the three plans that the committee is preparing to present to the county commission for their consideration were voted on as being finished and ready to present.

These were plan B, which has 9 county commissioners and results in a disparity of 1.5 to 1 in the representation of voters in the district that contains the prison. And plan C, which has 13 county commissioners and results in a disparity of 1.9 to 1 in the representation of voters in the district that contains the prison.

Plan A will be worked



Jerry Zorsch

on at the next meeting and we hope to be able to finish it at that time. In Plan A there will be 18 county commissioners in 6 districts which will result in a 3 to 1 disparity in the representation of the voters in the prison district over the voters in the rest of Morgan County.

At this meeting I also presented to the committee a copy of a letter that had been sent to Tom

Fleming, the Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury, from Peter Wagner and Aleks Kajstura from the Prison Policy Initiative, a national group that is working to end prison-based gerrymandering.

Prison-based gerrymandering is what causes the disparity in representation between the voters in the district with the prison and the rest of the county. Whether it is the 1.5 to 1 of the 9 commissioner plan or the much larger 3 to 1 of the 18 commissioner plan.

I also informed the committee that after a phone conversation with an attorney, it was my understanding that those interested in ending prison-based gerry-

mandering were looking for a test case somewhere here in Tennessee. There are many other counties in Tennessee that have prisons besides Morgan County. The Tom Fleming letter was 6 pages long. Four of the 6 pages focused on Morgan County. I did not think that was a good sign.

The U.S. Supreme Court has said "The weight of a citizen's vote cannot be made to depend on where he lives." Reynolds v. Sims

With all the problems that Morgan County is already dealing with, I sincerely hope that we do not end up having to defend the redistricting plan we adopt in Federal Court.