

HOUSE No. 3770

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**INTERIM REPORT
OF THE
JOINT SPECIAL COMMITTEE
ESTABLISHED TO MAKE AN
INVESTIGATION AND STUDY OF A
NEW DIVISION OF THE COMMONWEALTH
INTO CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS,
FORTY SENATORIAL DISTRICTS
EIGHT COUNCILLOR DISTRICTS AND
ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY
REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICTS.
(Under Senate order No. 9 of 2011)**

October 25, 2011.



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

**Special Joint Committee on Redistricting
MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL COURT**

STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1053

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October 25, 2011

Fellow Legislators

As Chair of the joint special committee established by the joint order, Senate 9, 2011 to study the division of this Commonwealth into one hundred and sixty representative districts, forty senatorial districts, eight councillor districts, and congressional districts based on the results of the 2010 federal decennial census, I hereby file this interim report, voted upon in the affirmative during an executive session of the full committee on October 25, 2011, containing our proposals and legislation necessary for the proper redistricting of the House of Representatives as required by Articles CI and CIX of the Articles of Amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Sincerely,

REP. MICHAEL J. MORAN of Boston

House Chairman

Special Joint Committee On Redistricting

REP. BYRON RUSHING of Boston

REP. ANTONIO F. D. CABRAL of New Bedford

REP. JOSEPH F. WAGNER of Chicopee

REP. VINCENT A. PEDONE of Worcester

REP. STEPHEN KULIK of Worthington

REP. GARRETT J. BRADLEY of Hingham

REP. ANNE M. GOBI of Spencer

REP. ALICE HANLON PEISCH of Wellesley

REP. LINDA DORCENA FORRY of Boston

REP. SEAN GARBALLEY of Arlington

REP. MARCOS A. DEVERS of Lawrence

REP. BRADLEY H. JONES, JR. of North Reading

REP. ELIZABETH A. POIRIER of North Attleborough

REPORT OF THE JOINT SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON REDISTRICTING

The Joint Special Committee on Redistricting reports the attached bill “House of Representative Districts.”

The Committee held thirteen public hearings across the Commonwealth attended by more than four-thousand individuals. More than four-hundred members of the public offered testimony, many others offered written submissions, and Committee members supplemented the public hearings with individual meetings with a wide array of civic organizations and elected officials throughout the Commonwealth. Moreover, for the first time, the Committee established a dedicated website for the benefit of all Massachusetts citizens. More than ten thousand individuals visited the site and were able to learn about the redistricting process, view video recordings of the proceedings of every public hearing, offer their suggestions to the Committee, and even draw their own maps. The Committee expresses its thanks to all citizens, members of the General Court, and organizations which provided information and views to the Committee.

In preparing the proposed House of Representatives redistricting plan, the Committee took care to comply with all constitutional and legal requirements and endeavored to balance numerous and often competing traditional redistricting principles, including population equality, political continuity, equal electoral opportunity, compactness and contiguity, and the preservation of county and municipal boundaries and of other communities of interest. In addition to well-chronicled federal decisions, there are also a number of decisions pursuant to provisions of the Massachusetts Constitution which were reviewed and followed as best possible.

The 2010 Census revealed substantial shifts within the Commonwealth that have affected the population of various House districts. The ideal size for each House district in 2000 was 39,682 residents, whereas today, the ideal size is 40,923 residents. Given this growth, it was incumbent upon the Committee to draw new House district lines that reflected these changes in population.

The Committee made changes to satisfy legal requirements and other compelling state interests, including preserving communities of interest. The new districts range in population from 4.86 % below the ideal population to 4.88 % above the ideal, and their average population deviation is 2.38 %, within constitutional population equality standards for legislative redistricting plans.

The Committee was particularly cognizant of the demographic changes in Boston, where 53% of the residents are now members of racial or language minority groups. According to the 2010 Census, the city’s population has grown to 617,594 residents, which represents a 28,453-resident, or 4.83%, increase from its 2000 population of 589,141 residents. In keeping with this growth, under the proposed plan, minority groups will constitute a majority of ten out of the seventeen House districts which represent portions of Boston, resulting in a plan in which 58% of the city’s representatives will be from majority-minority districts. Furthermore, following the

recent suggestions of the courts concerning overconsolidation, the Committee has prepared a plan in which the fifth, sixth and twelfth Suffolk districts in Boston each includes a voting age population which is more than 50% African-American. This is also a first for Massachusetts.

The proposed plan as a whole includes twenty majority-minority districts throughout the Commonwealth, an increase from the prior ten majority-minority districts. In addition to the ten districts in Boston, the new map includes majority minority districts in Brockton, Lowell, Holyoke, and Worcester, and two each in Lawrence, Lynn and Springfield. Most of the majority-minority districts are coalitional. These changes were the natural outgrowth of the demographic changes within the Commonwealth; the Committee did not unduly subordinate traditional redistricting principles for racial considerations, but rather gave due weight to all of the competing legitimate state interests.

The new districts reflect neighborhoods and communities of interest, they preserve compactness and contiguity, and they advance equal electoral opportunity for all residents. These positive developments are the direct result of the most extensive public outreach effort in the history of Massachusetts redistricting; that inclusiveness strengthened the resulting plan, which the Committee is now proud to offer for the consideration of the General Court.

For the Committee,

MICHAEL J. MORAN of Boston,

House Chair,

Joint Special Committee on Redistricting.