



I wanted to start off by just giving a brief background on exactly how Common Cause was involved in this past redistricting cycle at the local level. We had a dedicated team of three full-time staff and four contractors who monitored the redistricting processes in over 60 local jurisdictions all over the state. In those cities, counties, and school districts the Common Cause team provided assistance on legal requirements pertaining to local redistricting and outreach best practices, oversight of redistricting hearings and advocacy to address issues identified, and close partnership with community-based partner organizations. We recorded 328 instances of direct assistance provided by members of our team to local organizations and jurisdictions during the 2020-2021 redistricting cycle. This included work in 15 Central Valley jurisdictions, five San Diego-area jurisdictions, 24 LA County jurisdictions, and San Francisco.

I mention this because I want to be clear that our role during this cycle was not to comment, or advocate, for specific maps in any jurisdiction, but rather to provide technical assistance and guidance, and act as a watch dog, around the actual processes that localities were undertaking, particularly in the context of FAIR MAPS Act compliance.

#### **SLIDE 2**

This slide is mostly just a refresher of much of what was covered at your last meeting by my colleague Julia Marks with Asian Law Caucus. But one thing I did want to note since I am getting into some detail on the commission designs in some other jurisdictions is that one very good example of a Hybrid commission that did an excellent job this cycle was the city of Escondido. I really want to emphasize that there is no one size fits all when it comes to how commissions are structured and designed and all major policy considerations laid out here, and in our 2017 report, are important to consider together and not simply in silos when you are thinking about what will work best for San Francisco.

#### **SLIDE 3**

So historically, California has considered three different composition models that you can see here. If you all are interested, my team did put together a spreadsheet of all California Counties and 70 Cities that lists what type of commission they have, if any, AND the commission composition method they utilize. And I'm happy to share that with you all after this meeting. What I'd like to note for you all here as you consider future changes is that in Common Cause's opinion, we have seen high quality, apolitical commissions operate with integrity regardless of which composition method has been adopted, but Common Cause endorses the method where no partisanship is considered at all.

And lastly, when it comes to commissioner qualifications, my understanding is that San Francisco has no objective qualifications to serve and it is largely up to the appointing

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authorities to determine that. Most, if not all, of the successful commissions we saw this cycle had very clear and consistent minimum qualifications for commissioners. At minimum, all appointing bodies should follow the same, uniform best practices around transparency, public input, accessibility, and outreach.

#### **SLIDE 4**

These are additional considerations that our outlined in much detail in our 2017 report and I know I only have 15 minutes with you tonight, so I'd just like to give some specific examples from the Bay area here.

- For During Service Restrictions, Sacramento is a good example: In Sacramento commissioners may not contribute to or volunteer for a campaign for city office while serving on the commission.
- And for Post-Service Restrictions: In Oakland, commissioners may not run for office in the districts they drew for 10 years and cannot, for four years following their service, be hired by an elected official, register as a city lobbyist, or receive a non-competitively bid city contract.
- For Administration (meaning provisions related to the smooth functioning of the commission, including its budget, staffing, and map adoption requirements and deadlines) Sacramento is also a good example to look to and I believe they also include impenetrable procedures in their administration language.

#### **SLIDE 5**

Okay, so getting into some specifics on other local commission designs. As you'll see here, San Francisco is a major outlier in the Bay area when it comes to actually getting its commissioners onboarded. Many major Bay area jurisdictions use either random selection or a robust open application process.

While San Francisco does have one independent appointing body in you all, The Board of Supervisors obviously has a very vested interest in the outcome of the redistricting process. Independent Commissions, particularly ones with no political appointing bodies, were less likely to draw gerrymandered districts, more likely to keep communities together, more transparent, and more likely to listen to public comment.

Additionally – Berkeley, Oakland, and Sacramento all have 13 person commissions with alternates.

Berkeley, Oakland, and Sacramento also have a long list of ranked redistricting criteria laid out. The FAIR MAPS Act, the state redistricting process, and numerous local jurisdictions with their own charter requirements use detailed ranked criteria.

#### **SLIDE 6**

So similar to California's State Citizen Redistricting Commission, commissioners in LA County and San Diego County demonstrated consistent prioritization of community testimony over

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partisanship and produced maps generally regarded as fair, balanced, and representative of the constituents for those respective jurisdictions. And likewise, Common Cause has frequently been referencing Long Beach as a great example of a city process that went really well. I'm using these 3 jurisdictions as some deep dive exemplars simply because we feel they performed the best this cycle, but that's not to say that other Bay area jurisdictions didn't also do great.

And once again, I'd note that all three of these jurisdictions used an open and competitive application process versus an appointment process.

#### **SLIDE 7**

**Long Beach** (meetings began the first week of November 2020 and their first three meetings were dedicated to training for the commissioners that was provided by Redistricting Partners which is the demographer that they contracted with)

They also established early on that they would hold at minimum 9 hearings, including 1 in each district.

In Long Beach, the City Clerk initiates an open application process for registered voters who voted in the last Long Beach election or who have lived in Long Beach for at least one year. Ineligible applicants are then removed from the applicant pool and the City Clerk refers at least 25 applicants to the screening panel.

The screening panel then narrows the pool down to 20-30 of the most qualified applicants who are reviewed based on several qualifications, including relevant analytical skills and familiarity with Long Beach's neighborhoods.

The chair of the screening panel then randomly selects one applicant from each of the nine city council districts. These are the first nine commissioners to sit on the commission. Those nine commissioners then select 4 more applicants from the remaining pool to serve on the commission that they feel reflects Long Beach's diversity. You'll see a similar process in San Diego County in this chart.

If San Francisco does choose to move forward with charter language changes, we'd encourage it to include something about conduct. Long Beach's charter says that each commissioner will sign the City's ethics pledge. It also says that the commission, once appointed, will create a document that outlines its guiding principles.

**Los Angeles County** (meetings began in mid-December 2020)

The LA CRC had a full public outreach plan that was approximately 37 pages with a translated materials outreach kit. They also had roughly 7 public hearings that were held in Spring 2021 before the release of Census data, followed by I believe 2 public hearings in Fall 2021.

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As you can see, their outreach plan really worked with the number of applications received. They also had thousands upon thousands of public testimonies submitted for the commission's consideration. It was an exceptionally participatory process in LA County.

**San Diego County** (meetings began the first week of November 2020)

In the number of commission applications column, I've included a really great link that shows the spread of applicants among the county's districts.

And this is not listed on the slide, but I'd also highlight, if you're looking at the map deadlines for these 3 jurisdictions, that Oakland's Redistricting Commission held its first meeting more than 14 months before its map deadline and San Jose's Redistricting Advisory Commission began convening 11 months ahead of its map deadline. Based on best practices from other jurisdictions we have monitored, we recommend that San Francisco's redistricting body convenes at least 12 months before the final map deadline.

**SLIDE 10**

- In cities like San Francisco, with many communities of interest to balance, having more time to find solutions can lead to better outcomes.