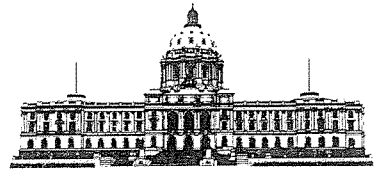


THOMAS M. BAKK

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Senate

State of Minnesota

May 14, 2011

Senator Amy Koch
208 Capitol Building
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Senator Geoff Michel
208 Capitol Building
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Senators Koch and Michel:

Last month, Senator Michel approached us separately to suggest that we “work together” on putting together legislative and congressional redistricting principles and plans. We agreed.

We told our minority caucus researcher who handles redistricting issues to expect a call from Senator Michel’s office to begin working through the details. But such a call never came.

As you know, we have strong disagreements about the process that you and the House majorities are employing to pass redistricting bills that you know will be vetoed by the Governor. Your approach has been to steamroller principles and maps through the House and the Senate.

Despite your statements made early in the legislative session, you conducted no hearings outside of the State Capitol. Meetings that dealt with legislation were announced with minimal notice.

Of the three meetings that dealt with redistricting legislation, two of them did not meet the three day notification required under Senate Rule 12.3. One bill, SC 7 (Gerlach) was added to the April 29 agenda with just 35 minutes notice. As a result, the hearings were known to just a few Capitol insiders. Among the few who did testify, the most common comment was about the poor process and the difficulty in accessing redistricting information.

On the House side, Representative Anderson’s committee conducted only three hearings in Greater Minnesota, all before the census data was released. At all three of those

hearings, people asked the committee come back to their communities once maps were drawn so that they could see them and comment on them. They never did.

We want you to know that, while you have been closing the window of opportunity, we are still open to working out a nonpartisan plan that can be signed by Governor Dayton. Since neither principles nor plans have passed the Senate, we still have the opportunity to work on something that can openly involve the public and gain the support of the Governor. To that end, our caucus is making this proposal:

1. **In the interest of promoting bipartisan discussions**, we will not be introducing any redistricting plans for the rest of this legislative session.
2. **Let's develop joint redistricting principles that are truly open and fair.** We should invite nonpartisan academics or other nonpartisan experts to vet the content and the structure of potential principles and indices to remove all partisan bias.
3. **Let's take your plan out in the community for public comment.**

We suggest one meeting in each of the current Congressional Districts over the interim. Let's open the process for the people to submit their own plans.

4. **Then let's try to come up with and pass a truly nonpartisan plan when we return next year that will be signed by the Governor.**

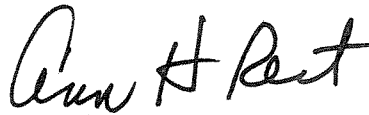
Senator Koch and Senator Michel, we still have an opportunity to pass a fair redistricting plan that restores the public's trust in the ability of the legislature to agree on something that serves *them*, not a subset of incumbent legislators.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely yours,



Thomas M. Bakk
DFL Caucus Leader
State Senator, District 6



Ann Rest
DFL Caucus Lead, Senate Redistricting
Subcommittee
State Senator, District 45