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Redistricting Commissioners

The final stage of selection of the Citizens Redistricting Commission in California begins tomorrow, November 30, 2010. The first eight members of the Citizens Redistricting Commission will meet for the first time to get to know each other and learn about their mandate, which includes picking the last six commissioners for a total of fourteen.

Stated David Pacheco, President of AARP California, “The Bureau of State Audits conducted recruitment, screening, and drawing processes that yielded the first commissioners. In the first eight, we have a partial commission made up of 12.5% Latino, 50% Asian, 12.5% Black, and 25% White; as well as 62.5% women and 37.5% men. But if you open each book cover, you will discover a group of people who have a real richness of experience and background that transcend these statistics.”

The current eight commissioners include: **Vincent Barabba**, a former Director of the U.S. Census Bureau appointed by Presidents Nixon, Ford and Carter; **Cynthia Dai**, a UC Berkeley academic who launched the Tsinghua-Berkeley Global Technology Leadership program; **Connie Galambos Malloy**, an urban planner who served five years on the board of Adopted & Fostered Adults of the African Diaspora and works for Urban Habitat; **Jodie Filkins Webber**, a litigation defense attorney who also mentored incarcerated adolescents; **Stanley Forbes**, a former Davis City Councilmember, bookstore owner and family farm operator; **Elaine Kuo**, who worked as a caregiver for the last five years, before which she was a tutor for recent immigrants and a Senior Research Analyst at UCLA; **Jeanne Raya**, an insurance broker who served on the San Gabriel Chamber of Commerce and as President of La Raza Lawyers of California; and **Peter Yao**, Councilmember of the City of Claremont and former Director of Engineering at Raytheon.

“You can learn about each of these commissioners and the others in the pool of applicants from which the final six will be selected at www.wedrawthelines.ca.gov. The applications, the financial disclosure forms, the interviews, and even the public comments are all available online. This level of transparency was inconceivable when the legislature was drawing district lines,” commented Janis R. Hirohama, President of the League of Women Voters of California.

“The commissioners have an important and difficult task of picking the last six to represent California’s diversity. There is a deficit of people from Southern and Central California, as well as Latinos, Whites, and possibly Native American and Pacific Islanders. Additionally, the commissioners should look for people with voting rights law knowledge,” said Kathay Feng, Executive Director of California Common Cause.

Jim Mayer, Executive Director of California Forward said, “It is important that the commissioners reflect the diversity of the state, and also possess strong analytical skills, impartiality and the desire to work together to earn the trust of voters by drawing reasonable districts. The commissioners selected so far are a great start, and we strongly encourage them to fill the six remaining openings so the full commission is as representative and qualified as possible.”

The Commission meeting begins at 9:30 a.m. tomorrow, November 30, 2010 and goes at least through Wednesday. The Commission may meet until December 17 to complete their business. Every meeting will be streamed live online at www.wedrawthelines.ca.gov.

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