
Commission Meeting

of

NEW JERSEY LEGISLATIVE APPORTIONMENT COMMISSION

“The purpose of the meeting will be to formally organize the Commission to begin the legislative redistricting process in New Jersey”

LOCATION: Meeting via Zoom

DATE: October 15, 2021
10:00 a.m.

MEMBERS OF COMMISSION PRESENT:

LeRoy J. Jones, Jr., Democratic Delegation Chair
Al Barlas, Republican Delegation Chair
Senator Stephen M. Sweeney
Senator Thomas H. Kean, Jr.
Assemblyman Jon M. Bramnick
Honorable Philip S. Carchman
Cosmo A. Cirillo, Ph.D.
Linda DuBois
Michael B. Lavery, Esq.
Gary Taffet
Diane T. Testa, Esq.



ALSO PRESENT:

Raysa Martinez Kruger
Commission Secretary

Roshard Williams
Jessica Oestreicher
Office of Legislative Services
Commission Aides

This transcript was prepared using an outside recording not designed for transcription purposes. Therefore, portions of this transcript may not be completely accurate as portions were inaudible and/or indiscernible.

Meeting Transcribed by
The Office of Legislative Services, Public Information Office,
Hearing Unit, State House Annex, PO 068, Trenton, New Jersey

DEMOCRATIC MEMBERS

LeRoy J. Jones, Jr.
Chairman

Cosmo A. Cirillo
Stephen M. Sweeney
Gary Taffet
Diane T. Testa



NEW JERSEY LEGISLATIVE
APPORTIONMENT COMMISSION
STATE HOUSE ANNEX • P.O. BOX 068 • TRENTON, NJ 08625-0068

REPUBLICAN MEMBERS

Al Barlas
Chairman

Jon M. Bramnick
Linda DuBois
Thomas H. Kean, Jr.
Michael B. Lavery

APPOINTED
ELEVENTH MEMBER
Philip S. Carchman

COMMISSION NOTICE

TO: MEMBERS OF THE APPORTIONMENT COMMISSION

FROM: AL BARLAS, CHAIRMAN
LEROY J. JONES, JR., CHAIRMAN

SUBJECT: COMMISSION MEETING - OCTOBER 15, 2021

The public may address comments and questions to Raysa Martinez Kruger, Commission Secretary or make scheduling inquiries to Sophie Love, Secretary, at (609)847-3890. Written and electronic comments, questions and testimony submitted to the Commission by the public, as well as recordings and transcripts, if any, of oral testimony, are government records and will be available to the public upon request.

The Apportionment Commission will meet remotely via Zoom on Friday, October 15, 2021 at 10:00 AM.

The purpose of the meeting will be to formally organize the Commission to begin the legislative redistricting process in New Jersey. As required by the New Jersey Constitution, the Apportionment Commission is charged with redrawing the lines of the State's 40 legislative districts, from which the 40 Senators and 80 Members of the General Assembly are elected.

Members of the public may view the Commission's organizational meeting via the New Jersey Legislature home page at <https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/>.

Issued 10/12/21

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LEROY J. JONES, Jr. (Co-Chair): Thank you. Good morning, everyone, and welcome to the first meeting of the New Jersey Apportionment Commission.

I'm LeRoy Jones, and I am the Co-Chair of the Commission along with my friend Al Barlas, who will speak in a moment. This meeting is simply for organizational purposes. It is not a meeting in which we will be taking public testimony. Our intention today is simple, and that's to appoint our secretary and adopt our bylaws.

So with that, let me just add some comments that I'd like to make. We are charged with a responsibility that is going to basically set the landscape for this State for the next 10 years. And we are from different parties, and we have a respected jurist that is going to be part and parcel of that process.

This is just merely another step in our democracy, which is going to be transparent, which is going to be engaging of all the stakeholders -- when it's time for public testimony -- to engage their input. And it's going to be a process which there is going to be a sincere spirit of cooperation, you know, of all the members of this Commission. We are one body with different political views, but we have an awesome responsibility to the people of the State of New Jersey.

And you know, with that, I will now call this meeting to order and turn it over to my co-chair, Al Barlas, for any opening remarks that he'd like to make.

AL BARLAS (Co-Chair): Thank you, LeRoy. I'd like to start out by saying that public notice of this meeting was provided through appropriate methods and in accordance with the bylaws that the Commission

intends to adopt during this meeting, and that this meeting is being recorded, and the recording and transcription will be made available via the Commission's website.

So I would like to echo what my colleague and friend, Chairman Jones, just said. Obviously, redistricting is a fundamental tenant of our democracy; and this process I know all 10 Commission members, as well as Judge Carchman, take very, very seriously. Ideology, politics, geography – all of that aside, our goal, as we have all discussed, is to end this process with a fair and constitutional map that we can all be proud of. And most importantly, that the residents of the State can be proud of.

We will be seeking input from the public and various stakeholders, and as Chairman Jones said, we welcome it, we look forward to it. Quite frankly we need it, and we want it. And a big part of this process tends to be acrimonious; however, it is our goal and our desire -- that we have all spoken about -- that when we are done with this process, we will all be proud members of this Commission and that this Commission will not be fraught with acrimony and tension.

With that, I am proud to welcome, as well as the other nine members of this Commission, Judge Carchman, our eleventh member who has been appointed by the Chief Justice.

Judge, the floor is yours.

JUDGE CARCHMAN: Thank you, and good morning. I am honored to have been chosen to serve as a member of the New Jersey Apportionment Commission. And with your indulgence, I'd like to take a moment or two to introduce myself and describe my views as to how I will fulfill my responsibilities as the eleventh member of this body.

I am a product of the law. I have been a member of the New Jersey Bar for 55 years, and for more than 40 of those years I've served in the Judiciary. My judicial experience has taught me to consider any issue, I must listen carefully to the facts, consider the law, and at the conclusion of the proceedings, make a decision.

Yet there is another role that I have performed, and that is, where appropriate, to intervene and assist the parties in reaching a resolution of outstanding issues. When that effort was not successful, I have made the call; sometimes the calls are easy, but sometimes they're very difficult -- the hard call. What makes this different from the paradigm that I've just described is that I do not sit here as a judge, but as a voting member of this Commission.

I stress settlement as one of my responsibilities. In my capacity as the eleventh member, this role is critical -- if not paramount. I view my responsibility as attempting to bring the Republican and Democratic Commission members together in an attempt to resolve the differences between them. My objective is to find a resolution that represents fairness to both parties and the public, and one that meets the standards imposed by the Constitution and the law.

Complete success in this effort will be marked by an agreement on a single map agreed to by both sides. However, another level of success will be measured by having two maps that meet all standards, and are so close that the decision by me will be one of those hard calls.

I do have one advantage over my predecessors and that is, unlike the eleventh members of the past -- and as a result of the recent Constitutional amendment -- I am part of the process from the beginning,

rather than coming to the process late with a limited time for consideration of all of the issues. I view this as an additional opportunity to participate with the other members to resolve all issues in a fair and satisfactory manner.

I do not want my role to be misunderstood. I know that the apportionment process is political and legislative, and I am not assuming the role of a judicial reviewer. I reiterate that my role is not as a judge, but a voting member of the Commission.

I started by saying, after all is said and done, I may be required to make a difficult, hard call and cast a difficult vote. I have done that throughout my professional career, and I am prepared to do so here. The political parties that I've spoken to, and those of you that I've interacted with, are impressive in your knowledge and understanding of the law and the standards that are identified in the Federal and New Jersey Constitutions, both Federal and State court decisions; and as important, section two of the voting rights act, as well as those standards that do not appear in the law -- such as recognition of communities of interest, continuity of representation, competitiveness, and partisan fairness -- all of which serve the public interest. I recognize that members of the Commission have differing views as to how much weight to attribute to each standard, and these differences will be demonstrated in the various proposals that are before me.

What I am sure, is that all of us -- all 11 members -- are committed to producing a map that which will represent a fair and appropriate resolution of the charge of the Commission, a map that meets all constitutional and legal standards. And I am confident that, when we complete our work, a map will be in place that will serve the best interests of the parties, the voters, and, most important, the people of New Jersey.

I am committed to fulfill that objective. Thank you.

MS. MARTINEZ KRUGER (Commission Aide): Chairman Barlas, you are muted.

MR. BARLAS: You would think 18 months later I would know how this works. I apologize. So thank you, Judge.

Now each Chair will take a roll call and introduce their respective members. I will begin by taking the roll call of the Republican members, in alphabetical order. Assemblyman Jon Bramnick?

ASSEMBLYMAN BRAMNICK: Present.

MR. BARLAS: Linda DuBois.

MS. DUBOIS: Here.

MR. BARLAS: Senator Tom Kean.

SENATOR KEAN: Present.

MR. BARLAS: Michael Lavery.

MR. LAVERY: Here.

MR. BARLAS: All Republican members are present.
Chairman Jones.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me-- Let's start not necessarily in alphabetical order.
Commissioner Cirillo.

MR. CIRILLO: Present.

MR. JONES: Commissioner Taffet.

MR. TAFFET: Here, Mr. Chairman.

MR. JONES: Commissioner Testa.

MS. TESTA: Present.

MR. JONES: Commissioner Sweeney.

SENATOR SWEENEY: Here.

MR. JONES: Present and accounted for.

MR. BARLAS: And Judge Carchman, obviously, we know is here.

Now I would like to entertain a motion for the Commission to adopt the bylaws as they have been prepared.

MR. LAVERY: So moved.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you. May I get a second.

MS. DUBOIS: Second.

MR. BARLAS: Commissioner DuBois, thank you.

Does any member have any comments on the bylaws as they are currently drafted? (no response)

Hearing none, I will now take a roll call for the adoption of the bylaws.

Mr. Bramnick.

ASSEMBLYMAN BRAMNICK: Yes.

MR. BARLAS: Judge Carchman.

MR. CARCHMAN: Yes.

MR. BARLAS: Commissioner Cirillo.

MR. CIRILLO: Yes.

MR. BARLAS: Commissioner DuBois.

MS. DUBOIS: Yes.

MR. BARLAS: Commissioner Kean.

SENATOR KEAN: Yes.

MR. BARLAS: Commissioner Lavery.

MR. LAVERY: Yes.

MR. BARLAS: Commissioner Sweeney.

SENATOR SWEENEY: Yes.

MR. BARLAS: Commissioner Taffet.

MR. TAFFET: Yes.

MR. BARLAS: Commissioner Testa.

MS. TESTA: Yes.

MR. BARLAS: Co-Chair Jones.

MR. JONES: Yes.

MR. BARLAS: Motion passes unanimously; the bylaws are adopted.

MR. JONES: I would like now to entertain a motion to appoint the Office of Legislative Services to serve as secretary of the Commission. Mr. Barlas.

MR. BARLAS: So moved.

MR. JONES: Do I have a second -- Ms. Testa?

MS. TESTA: Yes. Yes, excuse me.

MR. JONES: Thank you. Does any other member have any comments? (no response)

Seeing none, I'll take a roll call now on the appointment of the Office of Legislative Services as the secretary of the Commission.

Mr. Bramnick.

ASSEMBLYMAN BRAMNICK: Yes.

MR. JONES: Judge Carchman.

MR. CARCHMAN: Yes.

MR. JONES: Mr. Cirillo.

MR. CIRILLO: Yes.

MR. JONES: Ms. DuBois.

MS. DUBOIS: Yes.

MR. JONES: Mr. Kean.

SENATOR KEAN: Yes.

MR. JONES: Mr. Lavery.

MR. LAVERY: Yes.

MR. JONES: Mr. Sweeney.

SENATOR SWEENEY: Yes.

MR. JONES: Mr. Taffet.

MR. TAFFET: Yes.

MR. JONES: Ms. Testa.

MS. TESTA: Yes.

MR. JONES: Mr. Barlas.

MR. BARLAS: Yes.

MR. JONES: The motion passes unanimously; the Office of Legislative Services is now the secretary of the Commission.

You're up Mr. Barlas.

MR. BARLAS: Okay. Would anyone-- Before we get to the next piece of business, I guess, Chairman Jones, are you okay with opening the floor to any comments from our fellow commissioners?

MR. JONES: I am fine with that, Mr. Barlas.

MR. BARLAS: Commissioners? (no response)

Seeing none, I would now like to make a motion to adjourn our first meeting. Co-Chair Jones?

MR. JONES: I second the motion.

MR. BARLAS: All in favor?

All: Aye.

MR. BARLAS: Thank you. This meeting is adjourned.

(MEETING CONCLUDED)