

June 24, 2021

Dear Escambia County Board of County Commissioners,

There has been much debate in the popular media and in political circles about Voter Rights and Protections. It was a hot topic during the last presidential election and 23 states have recently adopted legislation pertaining to voter rights and protections. This has generated a significant amount of discourse and accusations across the country. Voting rights begin with preservation of the one person, one vote concept. Voter equality is paramount and everyone deserves equal say and representation.

The county's population has changed. It may not have grown much in total, but the demographics have certainly changed. The population within the confines of Escambia County is mobile and the geographic distribution is different now than it was 10 years ago.

The public wants assurance that the interests of the community are being protected and that minority communities have not been diluted. The best way to provide that assurance is to include the general citizenry in the redistricting process. There are a handful of charter counties in Florida that have included redistricting bodies (Commissions, councils or committees) in their charters.

We recommend that the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) demonstrate a commitment to an open and fair process by appointing a Citizen Advisory Committee to immediately develop and implement a redistricting plan. This committee should have no fewer than 5 and no more than 15 unrelated members who are not currently serving on the Escambia County Board of Commissioners. The final authority for adoption ultimately rests with the BOCC.

It would be helpful to invite the County Supervisor of Elections to serve as an advisor or consultant to the committee. The pandemic has put redistricting on the back burner, but it should be revived immediately. There is a sense of urgency to complete this process in 2021, as required by state law, and well in advance of the 2022 election cycle. There is no time like the present to get started.

Sincerely,



John L. Peacock, Jr.

Hon. Jerry Louis Maygarden

Dee Dee Davis

Brian Wyer

Jane Spruill

Paula Montgomery

Julian MacQueen

Connie Bookman