

I've seen the maps drawn by both parties, and it's the same old baloney. So much for renouncing unfair political practices.

The following is not perfectly fair, but at least it starts with defensible logic. I'm sorry that, due to my busy schedule, I didn't even have the time to think about this, until after the deadline for submission of maps from the public had passed. But, I'd have to admit that these general principles would still be subject to detail-level criticism, so if I can get these general ideas to be considered, that's all I could realistically ask for.

There are three natural geographic core areas, and two more that, while conditioned on where the boundaries of the first three are drawn, also partake of geographical, political, and cultural unity:

The second district, Eastern Oregon, should go as far west of the Cascades as needed to give it 1/6 of the State's population. The spillover west of the Cascades should, as before, start with Jackson and Josephine counties.

The third district, Portland Metro, should start with Multnomah County, then go as far west of the West Hills, into Beaverton, as needed to give it 1/6 of the State's population. Washington County has more in common with urban Portland, than does the alternative choice, the northern part of Clackamas County.

The fourth district, Southwestern Oregon, should start with Curry County, then come North along the Cascades and Pacific Coast as needed to give it 1/6 of the State's population.

All three of these districts are naturally drawn, and I think with very little violence done to the boundaries they've had since we acquired a fifth Congressional district.

The next two districts are not as purely geographical, since they depend on the outer boundaries of the first three. The fifth district should start at the northern boundary of the fourth district, and go as far north, both east and west of the Willamette River and I-5, as needed to give it 1/6 of the State's population. It would very likely include Corvallis, Albany, and Lincoln County, both blue and red territories. It would mean that the Oregon Coast remains fragmented, but I would say that Newport has as much in common with Corvallis, as it does with Astoria. The second district would start somewhere in the Washington County suburbs, wherever the third district ends, and would extend to Clatsop and Tillamook counties, and as far south from there, staying west of the Willamette River and I-5, as needed to give it 1/6 of the State's population.

That leaves the new sixth district, which somewhat logically is the residual of our current districts. This should be "anybody's ballgame" with the northern end blue, and the southern end red, especially in its eastern portions. I suppose the fate of this district, and maybe of the fifth, would depend on where, and whether, the boundaries cut through Salem. And, if there is anything geographically wrong with this proposal, it's the possibility that Salem would be fragmented between the sixth, fifth, and possibly even the second districts. If there were any reason for a modest variation in the populations of these districts, it would be to try to unify this community, which is the only one I perceive as being subject to fragmentation.

I personally suspect that this would produce two solid Democratic districts, one solid Republican district, two that lean Democratic, and one slightly Republican. But truly, this should not be the point, except

perhaps as a "sanity check"--an expected 5:1 split should at least invoke raised eyebrows, since somewhere between 3:3 and 4:2 Democratic is representative of our voting populace.

There is one systematic error in what I wrote. The references to the "second district" beginning in the third-to-last paragraph should all be to the "first district". I regret the error, but the logic stands.