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THURSDAY, JUNE 2, 2011

Thursday, June 2, 2011
(Statewide Session)

Pg. 26

Status Report on Redistricting

Senator McCONNELL was recognized to give a status report on Redistricting to the members of the Senate.

REMARKS NOT ENTERED INTO SENATE JOURNAL

REMARKS FOR SENATE FLOOR

Gentlemen of the Senate:

I need to briefly update you on where we are on our Senate and Congressional redistricting plans.

I want to thank you for the time you have taken to talk with staff concerning redrawing Senate districts. Staff has collected a great deal of information through the public hearings and through input received from the public and members.

As you all know, once the staff Senate plan is prepared and posted on the website, there will be a public hearing with an opportunity for the Redistricting Subcommittee to receive public comment. Then the Redistricting Subcommittee will meet and once the plans are reported out of the Redistricting Subcommittee, they will go to the full Judiciary Committee, and then be reported to the Senate floor.

The focus for now will be on the Senate district plan. There are many good ideas that are still being discussed on a proposed Congressional plan, but they all need to be given as much thoughtful consideration as they deserve. Once this body has adopted a Senate plan, we will then focus on proposed Congressional plans, but for now, I am asking us all to concentrate on getting a Senate district plan out.

In order that we accomplish our constitutional tasks with diligence and deliberation, and also so that we have the time to receive and take into account public comment and to make the most efficient use of our limited staff time, I would like to announce the following schedule, which will be posted on the website:

The staff plan for the Senate districts will be posted for public review on our redistricting website by the end of today, Thursday, June 2.

A public hearing on the staff plan will be held by the Senate Redistricting Subcommittee on Tuesday, June 7. The hearing is scheduled for 5:00 P.M. in Room 308 of the Gressette Building.

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1

Notices on this public hearing have already been posted on the website and around the complex here.

A Redistricting Subcommittee meeting is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, June 8, followed by a full Judiciary Committee meeting on Thursday, June 9. Times and locations will be posted shortly.

It is my hope that the report from the full Judiciary Committee will be on the Senate desks on Tuesday, June 14, when we return after sine die. Hopefully, the Senate plan will be ready for debate on the Senate floor on Wednesday, June 15.

We have taken a long time to finish this plan, trying our best to listen to all concerns and keep within the criteria established by the subcommittee. However, if a Senator wants an amendment to be submitted for discussion at the subcommittee or Judiciary Committee meetings, you must coordinate with Debbie Hammond to meet with our chief counsel and staff. Please be aware that any amendments to a redistricting plan take a good deal of time to prepare. There must be enough time for amendments to be correctly drawn, as well as enough time for staff to verify amendments and help you perfect them. For those of you who have not participated previously in redistricting, and as a reminder to those who have, these amendments cannot be drafted in a few minutes. Prior to any hearing where amendments will be considered, including those for floor debate, staff will need at least 48 hours to prepare and verify each amendment. Please be mindful of that time constraint as we go forward in our discussions on the redistricting plans.

Please be aware that the House is already in the process of formulating plans. While the House and Senate respect each body's decisions about that body's districts, we must jointly pass those plans as well as a congressional plan.

I urge you to be cognizant of the schedule and any updates in that schedule.

I'll be glad to take any questions.