

4/7/22 Testimony of Barbara Kahlow before the Subcommittee on Redistricting
on B24-700, ANC Boundaries Act of 2022

I am testifying on behalf of the West End Citizens Association (WECA) about B24-700, Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) Boundaries Act of 2022. WECA, which began in 1910, is one of the oldest citizens associations in DC. I am an officer of the WECA and a former officer of the Foggy Bottom Association (FBA). I was appointed by Ward 2 Councilmember Brooke Pinto to the 2022 Ward 2 Redistricting Task Force. This was my fourth Census Ward 2 redistricting appointment, i.e., I served in the 1990, 2000, 2010, and 2020 Census task forces. This time, there were only 2 task force appointees from each ANC. I was one of the 2 for the Foggy Bottom-West End ANC-2A.

Today, I would like to (a) compare this year's 2022 process to those of the last 3 processes, and (b) discuss this year's map for ANC-2A.

Process Observations

First, this year's process was much more personally time consuming and **unpleasantly adversarial**.

Prior process worked better

- The processes after the 1990, 2000, and 2010 Censuses officially involved more neighborhood residents as team participants (6 or more on each team). They had in-depth knowledge about ANC-2A and began by identifying principles (e.g., protecting the Foggy Bottom Historic District and minimizing SMD boundary changes).
- The results were more congenial and faster and with universal agreement except for one objector to the final map for 1990.

2022 process problems

- This year's process included votes by task force members without in-depth knowledge about ANC-2A but who voted on external ANC-2A boundary issues nonetheless and did so without respecting testimony by the WECA, the FBA, the Foggy Bottom-West End Village, and the Friends of the West End Library and most Foggy Bottom-West End neighbors.
- All organizational witnesses and all but a few neighbors testified for maintaining the identical external boundaries with only one change – to add the other half of the Francis field/school split Census block if Dupont Circle was agreeable (which was the case).
- In addition, this year's process subjected me to inappropriate lobbying by a current ANC-2A Commissioner for revised SMD boundaries to benefit him.
- The 2022 task force mainly addressed external boundaries, which should have been decided early-on in the process, and short-changed consideration of internal SMD boundaries.
 - An example of a specific problem was late identification of external boundary issues between ANC-2A and ANC-2B. On February 3rd, I sent an e-mail captioned "Q about boundary issues with ANC-2A" to all task force members for the 3 nearby ANCs (Dupont ANC-2B, Sheridan-Kalorama ANC-2D, and Georgetown ANC-2E) asking if there were any external boundary issues.

- Later, a Dupont task force member pushed taking over a large West End rental building with 688 residents which has been in ANC-2A over 30 years and which Foggy Bottom-West End organizational witnesses wanted to retain.
 - Another example of a specific problem was moving the NE corner of Dupont ANC-2B (with 1,123 residents, including minority residents who did not want to be moved) to Logan ANC-2F.
- Both task force-voted changes in the 2 cited examples (moves of 688 and 1,123 residents) were incorrect in my view and left lots of bad feelings.

ANC-2A Map

I am supportive of the final ANC-2A internal boundaries for the 9 SMDs. My detailed recommendations were developed after 1-on-1 meetings with many key ANC-2A leaders.

- In Foggy Bottom South of Penn. Ave., the result as I had recommended:
 - kept the heart of Foggy Bottom Historic District in SMD 03
 - saw no change to SMD 04
 - kept Columbia Plaza in SMD 05,¹ i.e., separate from the Watergate (in SMD 04)
- In the West End North of Penn. Ave., the result:
 - created 2 compact SMDs 02 and 06.

With respect to the final ANC-2A external boundaries:

- I am pleased that, as I had requested (and as noted earlier), the other half of the split Census block with Dupont ANC-2B (111 residents) was added to ANC-2A
- However, these changes added no value to the integrity and functionality of ANC-2A:
 - (as noted earlier) ceding to Dupont ANC 2-B a large rental building with 688 residents
 - adding from Dupont ANC 2-B a Census block North of the West End with 322 residents
 - adding from Dupont ANC 2-B 5 small Census blocks North of the White House with 40 residents.

Recommendation

The bottom line is that I recommend that future Redistricting efforts return to the less adversarial and less time-consuming ANC community teams process used after the 1990, 2000, and 2010 Censuses.

¹ The new 05 will be a majority-minority SMD.