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Carol Maas
24729 S. Golfview Dr
Sun Lakes, AZ 85248
camaas@aol.com
H 480-895-4821 or 480-861-3754 C

R-20-0035 Petition to amend the procedures for nominations for the Independent Redistricting Commission

I am appalled that this action has been taken to remove transparency in the process of determining the Independent Redistricting Commission. The voters spoke when they voted to implement this Commission to determine fair and equal districts in Arizona and remove the appearance of political influence in representation in this Commission and its final product.

The removal of transparency for confidentiality is not furthering the trust in this process or our institutions, both of which are being eroded in our country today. Our democracy, by and for the people, should not be taken away and that is what these rulings have done to this Commission and those who will sit on it. As a voter in Arizona, I protest this and protest trying to hide the information needed for me to trust who sits on it and who made that determination. As pointed out by the League of Women Voters:

- The proposed revisions create "confidential" (i.e., shielded from the public) information in three areas: (1) a new confidential section on the application form (Revised Rule 131(d)); (2) information designated by third parties as "confidential" (Revised Rule 131(e)(1); and (3) personal notes and procedural emails created by members of Commission on Appellate Court Appointments (CACA) (Revised Rule 131(e)(2)-(3)). These proposed rules make it more difficult for the public to trust the candidate review process and to be confident that the best qualified candidates have been included in the pool of nominees.
- The purpose of the new confidential section on the application is undefined. It raises suspicions among the public that they are not hearing the full story from applicants about their qualifications and why they are applying. Is something damaging in their backgrounds being concealed?
- The ability of any third party to submit comments and to designate them as confidential is alarming. It opens the door to influences by unknown organizations and individuals. Untrue and unsubstantiated comments could be submitted about a nominee and concealed from the public. Even the names of third parties submitting comments would be held secret.
- Placing personal notes and procedural emails into a confidential category makes the process less open and transparent and circumvents Arizona public records law. It leaves the CACA commissioners free to decide what is procedural and what is substantive.
- **Secrecy is antithetical to democracy. An open, transparent, public process is essential to the fair redistricting of Arizona.**

I put forth my protest and join those who also protest against these actions of the petition to amend the procedures for nomination for the Independent Redistricting Commission. It is a blatant attempt to subvert the will of the voters who demanded transparency and fairness in this process.