RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FAIR AND OPEN PROCESS

**Recommendation**: Hold a public hearing with public testimony on any proposed maps after they have been drawn, but before they pass through Committee. Provide adequate notice to the public about this hearing and an opportunity to review the maps before the hearing.

**Explanation**: Because of the timing of when census data is available, it is not possible to draw maps until the legislative session is already underway. In past cycles, the legislature has not held hearings on maps after they have actually been drawn. Any fair and open process should at the very least include the ability for public comment before a map is passed to a final vote of the legislature.

**Recommendation**: Allow enough time at hearings for other legislators and the public to introduce alternative map suggestions.

**Explanation**: To demonstrate any problems with proposed maps, it will be necessary to show that there are better alternatives that can be adopted. The redistricting committees are in control of how much and what type of testimony can be presented at a public hearing. The committees need to ensure that there is sufficient time and technical capability for alternative proposals to be examined which can help demonstrate flaws in the proposed maps.

**Recommendation**: Explain how the maps were drawn, and why there was any deviation from traditional redistricting principles, including county and precinct splits and population deviations. Include in the explanation an analysis of how these maps affect the ability of historically disenfranchised groups to elect candidates.

**Explanation**: Although sometimes it is necessary to draw complicated districts in order to make fair and legal maps, deviating from traditional principles can also be an indication that unfair manipulation is going on. A legislator who wishes to have a map adopted should be willing to explain why they made the choices they did and what process they followed in drawing their maps. Additionally, given Texas's history of racial discrimination and Voting Rights Act violations, a legislator should include with any map an explanation of how their map affects the ability of minority communities to elect candidates of their choice.

**Recommendation**: Don't look at partisan data (data showing which political party people vote for) while drawing maps.

**Explanation**: Manipulating maps to artificially distort political power undermines the principle of a representative government. The government should represent a fair cross-section of society and partisan manipulation makes that impossible.

**Recommendation**: Make all communications open regarding proposed maps.

**Explanation**: Legislators can try to hide behind "legislative privilege" to shield their communications from the public. Given the history of discriminatory redistricting and the federal court’s warning to engage in a fair and open process, legislative privilege should not be invoked when it comes to drawing maps. Any politician that wishes to have their map considered should be fully open and transparent about how and why they created their maps.