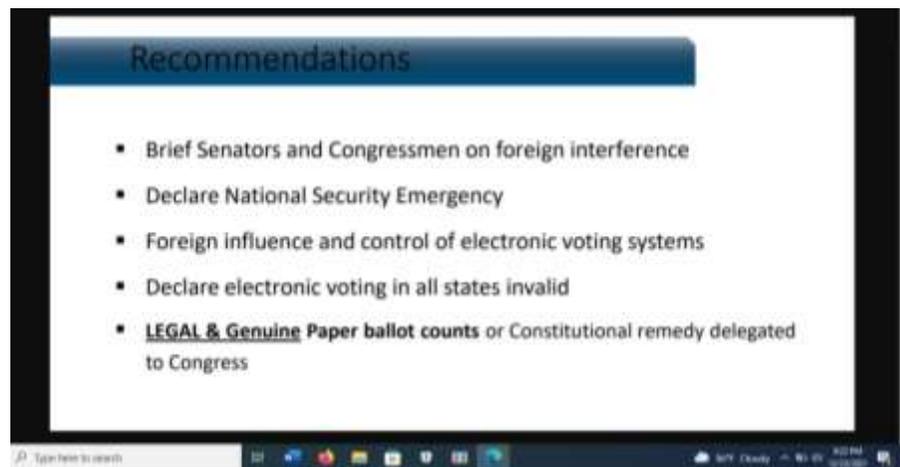


Let Us Not Welcome Our New Overlords

By Andrew Christie, Chapter Director

On the morning of Dec. 14, a few hours before three SLO County Supervisors officially signed off on the gerrymandering of the county for the benefit of the Republican Party, the editorial board of the *Tribune*, knowing that the three conservative supervisors had signaled



what was coming, observed that “using the term 'conservative' to describe people trying their damndest to kill our democracy is like calling the Jan. 6 insurrectionists 'patriots.'”

Five days earlier, former White House Chief of Staff [Mark Meadows](#) had turned over to Congressional investigators an email that referenced a PowerPoint presentation on how to prevent the certification of the results of the 2020 presidential election on Jan. 6, 2021, and declare Donald Trump the victor.

On that same day, news anchor Brian Williams signed off from his MSNBC program for the last time. “The darkness at the edge of town has spread to the main roads and highways and neighborhoods,” Williams said in his farewell. “It’s now at the local bar, and the bowling alley, at the school board and the grocery store. And it must be acknowledged and answered for.”

“Grown men and women who swore an oath to our Constitution, elected by their constituents possessing the kinds of college degrees I could only dream of, have decided to join the mob and become something they are not, while hoping we somehow forget who they were.”

Or as Dana Milbank put it in [the Washington Post](#): “The question now is whether we can pull back from the abyss Trump’s Republicans have led us to. There is no more important issue; democracy is the foundation of everything else in America.”

That includes the environment, which cannot be protected in the absence of a functioning democracy. And SLO County is now directly relevant to this question of a pull-back from the abyss.

Below, the Chair of our Sierra Club chapter reminds us of all that happened in San Luis Obispo County in the waning days of 2021, when three of our supervisors voted to restructure this

county's supervisorial districts to secure power for themselves and their colleagues by instituting permanent minority rule. This is the local version of the spreading darkness that must be acknowledged and answered for.

Here's the best way to make those responsible answer for it, and the only way to right the wrong they have done: Support the lawsuit prepared by the new non-profit organization [SLO County Citizens for Good Government](#) to halt implementation of the gerrymander and litigate a fair redistricting.

SLOCCGG is making a special ask of those fortunate enough to be able to donate \$1,000 or more to this effort on behalf of the citizens of our County. Please donate to the best of your ability, reach out to friends, and pitch in to raise funds for the cause.

Go to [SLOCCGG.org](https://www.sloccgg.org) to donate.

The screenshot shows a news article from the San Luis Obispo County News website. The article is titled "SLO County's contentious redistricting map heads toward adoption after tense discussion" and is written by Lindsey Holden, updated on December 27, 2021, at 3:39 PM. The article features a video thumbnail showing two SLO County Supervisors, Lynn Compton and Bruce Gibson, sitting at a table during a meeting. The video title is "SLO County Supervisors Lynn Compton and Bruce Gibson spar over redistricting". Below the video, there is a "Must-see TV" link: <https://www.sanluisobispo.com/news/politics-government/article256402201.html>

[Chapter Chair Chat](#)

Assault on Democracy

By Carole Mintzer, Chapter Chair

In early 2021, the first conversations I heard about the redistricting of county supervisorial districts focused on whether the Republican-majority supervisors would figure out a way to separate Oceano from the rest of District 4 and give Lynn Compton a better chance at re-election. With a new law guiding county-level redistricting, there were hopes that gerry-

mandering, when lines are drawn in favor of one political party over the other, would be held in check. That thinking was naïve.

What we saw was a wholesale effort to redraw district lines in ways that are intended to ensure a Republican majority on the board for years to come. That matters because, unfortunately, there is a huge partisan divide on how environmental matters are decided.

On Dec. 14, I spoke at the Board of Supervisors meeting before they took their final vote on the new district boundaries. We went on the record as part of community efforts to fight this egregiously gerrymandered map. Here is my testimony:

“Good afternoon. My name is Carole Mintzer and I am the Chair of the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club, serving San Luis Obispo County.

The Santa Lucia Chapter opposes the redistricting of supervisor districts in SLO County using Map 74786, and supports using alternative maps that preserve current coastal communities and current district boundaries such as Draft Maps A, B, or the SLO Chamber 2030 Map. We support those maps because we support a functioning representative democracy, and because the Board of Supervisors makes many decisions that affect our local environment, including land use, energy sources, and water quality.

Contrary to Finding B in the resolution you are voting on today, Map 74786 does NOT respect the geographic integrity of local neighborhoods and local communities of interest. Separating the Latino communities of Nipomo and Oceano serves to dilute and nullify the voice of the Latino population in South SLO County. Breaking up the north coast means Los Osos, Morro Bay, and Cayucos would be in three different supervisorial districts. These communities in many ways operate as one, sharing schools and economic interests. This separation also violates Election Code 21500 c5, which says you should draw maps in a manner that nearby areas of population are not bypassed in favor of more distant populations. Los Osos is next door to Morro Bay, but its nearest coastal neighbor in the proposed District 5 is Avila Beach, separated by open space and a nuclear power plant.

Election Code 21500(d) states, “The board shall not adopt supervisorial district boundaries for the purpose of favoring or discriminating against a political party.” Yet, that’s exactly what you are doing, with full knowledge of the effects of these changes. The analysis demonstrating this fact is part of the administrative record. Therefore, the three Republicans on the Board cannot say they have chosen this map, which has the full-throated support of the Republican Party, and yet “don’t know” that it favors one party over the other. Reasonable people, upon hearing how the map plays out regarding party registration, would have stepped back and taken another course. After all, you have other options. You could choose a map that is very similar to our current boundaries and doesn’t come with the partisan baggage of the map you have chosen.

It seems far more likely that a permanent 3-district majority that shuts out the progressive, coastal vote, where many voters will be denied their vote in 2022 and now have to wait until 2024 to choose their supervisor, was just too tempting to resist.”