

PANEL: The Commissioner Role

Connie Malloy



Connie Malloy serves as Chief Executive Officer of the Panta Rhea Foundation, catalyzing a just and sustainable world. She also serves as a strategic advisor to individual donors, families, foundations and philanthropic collaboratives.

Connie served as a Commissioner and Chair of California's inaugural Citizens Redistricting Commission from 2010-2020, and now consults and trains on independent redistricting. She is a Board Director for the national Funders Committee for Civic Participation, and for Southern California Grantmakers.

Connie previously served as Portfolio Director at The James Irvine Foundation. During her seven-year tenure she deployed over \$200 million in grants to support economic and workforce development, expand voting access, social impact bonds, and the foundation's annual Leadership Awards.

Prior to her funder roles, Connie oversaw programs at Urban Habitat where she launched the Boards & Commissions Leadership Institute. The institute trains leaders committed to advancing social justice for service on local and regional boards and commissions and provides individualized support throughout their leadership roles.

Earlier in her career, Connie served as a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Fellow and Peace Corps Volunteer in Bolivia. Connie earned her master's degree in urban planning from the University of California, Berkeley, and a bachelor's degree from La Sierra University in Riverside, CA.

Cynthia Dai

Dai is founder and CEO of Dainamic Consulting, Inc. a San Francisco-based strategy and interim executive firm that accelerates growth. Her diverse clientele includes social enterprise and public sector organizations such as Benetech, Digital Divide Data, Frameline, Sutardja Center for Entrepreneurship and Technology, UnidosUS (formerly National Council of La Raza), and the Skoll Foundation; global companies like Canon, Cisco, Intel, Microsoft, Motorola, Philips Electronics, and Toyota; as well as Silicon Valley startups such as Gigster, Pacific Data Images (now PDI DreamWorks), Persistence (acquired by Progress Software), and Salon.com.



Cynthia was one of 14 selected to serve on California's inaugural 2010 Citizens Redistricting Commission, widely considered the gold standard in independent redistricting. The CRC eliminated partisan gerrymandering in under eight months with fair electoral maps, upheld by the California Supreme Court in multiple unanimous decisions and approved by voters with a 2-to-1 margin. This work was recognized

by an Innovation for Public Engagement in Government grant from Harvard Kennedy's Ash Center. In addition to participating on the CRC's rotating leadership, Cynthia chaired the effort to deploy multi-partisan Commissioner teams to share our model via 30+ visits to support reform advocates in a dozen states.

This summer, Cynthia was a 2020 Census Enumerator. She is active in the Open Primaries movement and speaks on ranked-choice voting.

Also an educator and mentor, Cynthia launched an entrepreneurship program in China and works with accelerators like the European Innovation Academy and Global Social Benefit Institute. She previously served on the boards of the Miller Center for Social Entrepreneurship, Lyon-Martin Women's Health Services, and Habitat for Humanity San Francisco.

Cynthia earned an MBA from the Stanford Graduate School of Business and a B.S. in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science with honors from UC Berkeley.

Carlos Marquez



Carlos Marquez is the owner of CM3 Advocacy LLC, a Sacramento-based government affairs firm that represents public education and healthcare clients. He joined the team at Redistricting Partners in 2020 with over a decade of local government and statewide policymaking experience. Most recently, Carlos served on the executive committee of Proposition 13, a statewide public school bond campaign.

Prior to founding CM3 Advocacy in 2019, Carlos served as Senior Vice President, Government Affairs at the California Charter Schools Association (CCSA) where he managed the organization's legislative, budget, and regulatory priorities and interfaced with a host of school districts, county offices of education, city councils, the state legislature, and several state agencies.

In 2011, Carlos steered the citizen-led San Diego Redistricting Commission, as Vice-Chair, in adopting a map that was lauded fair, on-time and under-budget. Additionally, under Carlos' leadership, the San Diego Redistricting Commission produced a map that preserved high-ranking communities of interest and established two new empowerment districts.

Since then, Carlos has helped advance the missions of national advocacy organizations that include the American Civil Liberties Union, United Way Worldwide, Service Employees International Union, and the LGBTQ Victory Fund.



CAPITOL WEEKLY

COVERING CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Drawing CA's political lines: One person's foray into redistricting



BY **CONNIE MALLOY** POSTED 07.22.2020

Ten years ago, I sat in my office cubicle. I squinted to make out the grainy online image of Elaine Howle, the California State Auditor, pulling out a series of bingo balls. My desktop speaker crackled, and it was hard to read the numbers on the balls. I kept the volume low so my coworkers couldn't eavesdrop.

My cell phone rang and I let it kick to voicemail. I quickly searched online and reminded myself that the number was from the Sacramento area code. When my phone rang again a minute later from the same number, I answered the call.

"Is this Connie Malloy?" an official sounding voice asked.

"Yes, it is," I replied.

"This is the California State Auditor's office. Are you still willing and able to serve on California's Citizen Redistricting Commission?"

I had only a hazy concept of what I was being asked to do. I'd just recently discovered one of democracy's dirtiest secrets: Politicians in the United States pick their voters, not

the other way around. They do it by drawing their own electoral district maps behind closed doors with their staff and high-paid consultants.

California voters had approved two ballot initiatives to solve this. It was the first time everyday people would use fair criteria in a transparent process to draw the state's Assembly, Senate, Board of Equalization, and Congressional districts that would be in play for the upcoming decade.

Over 30,000 people had applied to serve on the redistricting commission. I never thought that I — a newly minted urban planner barely in my 30s who had never served on any board or a commission — would get selected.

But I had filled out forms, written essays, disclosed everything about my multi-racial families by birth, adoption, and marriage, and made it through a grueling 90-minute interview with three auditors that was live-streamed and archived. I hadn't done all that for nothing.

“Yes,” I said. “I'm ready to serve.”

In 2011, my fellow 13 Commissioners and I had less than eight months to build a cohesive team of people who had little in common but our shared mission. With a 1-year-old baby in tow, I crisscrossed the state for seven months.

Our Commission held 34 public hearings and pored over tens of thousands of written testimonies — letters, emails, reports, computer-generated and hand-drawn maps. The public had never had a chance to weigh in about their districts before, and boy did we get an earful about the districts of the past.

In accordance with the voters' intentions, deliberations and decisions on boundaries were made in public, streamed live with full transcripts. We followed the voter-approved criteria now embedded in our state's constitution, in order of priority:

- Create districts of equal population to ensure “one person, one vote.”
- Comply with the the Voting Rights Act, ensuring minority communities may also elect representatives of their choice.
- Make geographically contiguous districts; the different parts of a district have to connect.
- Respect city, county, neighborhood, and community of interest boundaries, and their divisions.
- Where possible, draw compact districts.
- Where practical, nest Assembly districts inside of Senate districts, and Senate districts inside of Board of Equalization districts.
- Do not favor or discriminate against an incumbent, candidate, or political party.

All the politicians in Sacramento wanted us to fail. The media attacked our every move. But we drew the 177 district maps and reports, integrating public testimony with Census

data and voting rights law. We approved and certified the maps across party lines: Republicans, Democrats, and independent voters like me...on time and under budget.

I don't kid myself that our work was perfect, that we couldn't have used better data, more time, or extra resources. But now, as my term just closed, I can celebrate that that our maps broke new ground: they reflect California in a way previous maps never did. They withstood challenges in the courts and on the ballot, prevailing each time for the process we used and the product it resulted in.

As I've traveled California in recent years, I hear stories about homegrown leaders who've emerged and communities who finally have a voice with their elected officials. Around the country our Commission's work has become a rallying cry to challenge and reimagine how districts get drawn, in service of a healthy democracy.

To the first eight incoming Redistricting Commissioners getting trained up in Sacramento this week, and the six more to be chosen: I wish you all the best. You'll be able to draw on our Commission's templates, and you've got more time to get the job done. But the Census data will come late, and it may not paint a full picture of who we are as California. Mid-pandemic you'll have to build a virtual team with limitations on if and how to meet or travel. The political backdrop you face is more polarized, and questions around power, race, and California's economy loom larger than ever.

Fellow Californians: Let's cheer the Commission on, watchdog them like hell and help them draw the next decade's maps. That's truly democracy at work!

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Editor's Note: Connie Malloy is a Pasadena resident who served on California's inaugural Citizens Redistricting Commission from 2010 to 2020. She leads a charitable family foundation and serves on the board of Southern California Grantmakers.