

OUR VIEW: That was so much fun, let's do it again for 90 more days

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You gotta love partisan politics in a state that's so heavily weighted to one party. Makes you wonder if Idaho Republicans won't rest until they occupy every seat - all 105 of them - in the state Legislature.

Though the thought is a little disturbing, the reality of such a legislative makeup is quite possible given the current mess with the Idaho Redistricting Commission.

The commission was charged with redrawing boundaries of the state's 35 legislative and two congressional districts based on 2010 census demographics.

The plan was relatively simple: Travel the state, hold hearings and get a sense of what people want in terms of representation. And have a new map in 90 days

The commission - three Democrats and three Republicans - heard a bunch. They got an earful from some rural Latah County residents who preferred to be in the same district as like-minded folks in Benewah County rather than those in Moscow.

Moscow Democrats, on the other hand, preferred the status quo of Latah being its own district with two Democrats and one not-so-right-leaning Republican representing the interests of the county in Boise.

What should have been an exercise in nonpartisan politics and compromise was anything but. The six commissioners seemed to each have their pet ideas about how the new districts should look. Ideally, counties should have been kept whole as much as possible.

Well that didn't work out well, especially with the northern districts.

On a map accepted by representatives of north Idaho, Republican Commissioner Lorna Finman of Rathdrum and Democrat Commissioner Julie Kane of Lapwai, Latah County got sliced and diced in more ways than a pig at a luau - becoming part of three districts in the process. Latah could end up having no legislators living within its borders or as many as nine. Under such a plan, the two Democrats would be hard pressed to hold on to their seats in the next election.

Luckily - at least for now - no official redistricting plan was presented when time ran out.

No problem. New commissioners will be appointed and the 90-day clock starts again.

The new commission is bound to have better results at nonpartisanship and reading state residents and community needs, because they couldn't do worse than their predecessors.

- *Murf Raquet, for the editorial board*