

HB 50 – relative State Representative district map
Presentation to the Senate Election Law & Municipal Affairs Committee
1.31.22

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee,

I write in opposition to HB 50.

I understand the many constraints and conflicts involving the drafting of district maps for the New Hampshire House of Representatives. However, I must continue to raise the issue of the 2006 amendment to the New Hampshire Constitution, which was supported by 70 percent of voters, calling for each town or ward with the requisite population (this cycle being 3,444), to receive its own state representative. Among those many constraints and conflicts, it seems to me an amendment to our Constitution should take priority, even if it means drafting a map that increases population deviation beyond the court's standard of 10%. That standard, however, is not necessarily irrefutable. It is possible, perhaps probable, that our courts would waive what is essentially an arbitrary percentage of deviation, in order to comply with our Constitution and the will of the voters.

As in the previous redistricting cycle, the Town of Strafford does not receive its own state representative by way of the house-passed map, though it once again qualifies; instead, the house-approved map pairs Strafford with Barrington.

As you know, there is another map that is available for consideration by your committee, which decreases the number of violations of the 2006 amendment from 62 to 45, a significant improvement over the house committee's map, while maintaining current limits on deviation.

I urge ITL on HB 50, and consideration given to greater deviation, or the so-called Map-a-Thon, more fair, more competitive district map.

Bob Perry
Strafford