

Dear Chairman Gray and Senate Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee members:

As I view the GOP proposed House (HB 50) districts map that the NH House has passed, and the Senate has amended, I am disappointed. I am comparing this map to one created by the nonpartisan Map-a-Thon project, and it does not stack up well. I understand there is a lot of complexity due to Constitutional and court rules, but the House and Senate committees have chosen NOT to maximize the number of eligible towns receiving dedicated house seats. They have left 56 towns without dedicated seats. The Map-a-Thon project leaves only 40 towns without a dedicated seat. The committee proposal also renders more seats uncompetitive (294 seats) compared to the Map-a-Thon proposal (268 seats). Competitiveness leads to more accountability between representatives and their constituents, and accountability is good. Why have the maps been drawn this way? It appears the proposed districts have been designed to create a partisan Republican advantage.

We can do better. We pride ourselves on being a state with a citizenship very involved in the political process. However, this House map sacrifices the political value of votes in order to create the preordained result of a Republican win. This skewed map endangers democracy and it should be modified. A fair and competitive map should be created instead.

In a competitive district candidates must appeal to voters of both political parties, as well as independents. This increases voter turnout because voters know their votes will have equal value. A huge number of voters in New Hampshire are undeclared, truly independent voters. They want candidates who are responsive to their thoughts and needs, not extremists who appeal only to a party's base. Fair and competitive districts respect the opinion of the majority of New Hampshire voters who oppose manipulation of their votes through gerrymandering.

The proposed House districts map is not competitive or fair. I ask the Senate Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee to reject this map. A new, more equitable and competitive map, more in line with that created by the Map-A-Thon project, should be adopted instead.

Thank you committee members for the work that you do, and for your time.

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