

Tricia Melillo

From: Maura Chappelle <maurachappelle@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 27, 2022 2:15 PM
To: James Gray; Tricia Melillo; Regina Birdsell; Donna Soucy; Rebecca Perkins Kwoka; Ruth Ward; GovernorSununu@nh.gov; Erin Hennessey; Edith Tucker; senator@shaheen.senate.gov; Orville Fitch
Subject: redistricting and prisoners counted

Good afternoon, members of the Senate Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee, I am concerned over the redistricting of New Hampshire as a whole, and Coös as my focus

It has come to my attention that Berlin's population includes the inmates at the two prisons in the city. As felons they cannot vote and with the exception of precious few who coincidentally lived in Berlin prior to incarceration, they are not residents of the city, but in the custody of the state

If a penal institution cannot be considered a domicile for voting purposes (RSA 654:2-A), why is it permissible for representation?

According to the data being used Berlin has 9,425 people but 1,243 of that number are at the state and federal prisons meaning Berlin's residents total only 8,182. Using the inflated population count 13% of Berlin's supposed population (and 4% of Coös county) is an inmate

Also, the current drafts of the Coös districts lump Jefferson with Berlin together as District 6. The dichotomy of the municipalities and that the representatives linked them using the unincorporated area of Kilkenny is bad enough, but Berlin (even without the prisons) is eight times larger than Jefferson

We Jeffersonians will be all but drowned out-- and to add insult to injury Berlin gets more representation by having their numbers padded with the 1,243 inmates (Jefferson's population is only 1,043)

I'd like to know by what right are inmates counted in redistricting as residing in the place of the penal institution and what steps need to be taken to end the practice?

Subtracting the inmates, there are then 30,025 people in Coös county; divided into 9 districts of 3,336 people each (give or take)

Rather than putting Jefferson with Berlin, use Berlin's amended and honest population of 8,182 with Milan, Dummer, and Errol as three districts together. The four towns have communal and family ties and they also share a school district. Totalling 10,144 it is well within a reasonable deviation

This email has been CCed to my state representative and state senator, the governor's office, Senator Shaheen's office, and Orville Fitch from the Secretary of State's office

I look forward to hearing back from the senators both with answers to my questions above as well as feedback to my ideas

Maura Annette Chappelle
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NH RSA 654:2-A "The domicile for voting purposes of a person confined in a penal institution shall not include the municipality where the person is confined unless the person was domiciled in that municipality prior to confinement."

[Art.] 11. [Small Towns; Representation by Districts.] When the population of any town or ward, according to the last federal census, is within a reasonable deviation from the ideal population for one or more representative seats, the town or ward shall have its own district of one or more representative seats.

for further reading:

https://www.prisonersofthecensus.org/50states/NH.html?fbclid=IwAR0U-Chu2BAb7o6O27FmAGv7_LrstCFhnNK2pAj5MrG-aOBQcY7d5TcsezQ

<https://caselaw.findlaw.com/nh-supreme-court/1167243.html>

https://www.google.com/search?q=census+prisons&rlz=1CAEAQE_enUS968&oq=census+prisons&aqs=chrome..69i57.2487j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8

<https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/elections/states-rethink-prison-gerrymandering-2020-redistricting-process-n1282677>