Dear Election Law Committee members;

I live in Alton, which was one of the many NH towns where the voters approved the NH Resolution for Fair Nonpartisan Redistricting by a very wide margin last year. The huge support for that resolution made it clear that voters of all parties want fair maps with no gerrymandering. Similar views were expressed with near unanimity at the listening sessions held by the House committee in each of the counties. Unfortunately, the NH House chose to thumb its nose at the voters when it approved gerrymandered districts, and failed to support towns that should have been entitled to their own representative(s). It is now your turn to weigh in on these issues, and to correct the course of action taken by the House.

I appreciate the time and effort all of you are putting into the task of redistricting as a member of the Senate Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee. However, the maps presented by the majority were disappointing. The Senate map has winding districts that are not compact. The goal should be greater competition, not less, and the state legislature should not be putting its thumb on the scale to benefit one party over the other. In addition, submitting the same Executive Council map that has been frequently held up as a classic example of gerrymandering was a disappointing surprise. Even Governor Sununu said that this map is a weird one.

The Congressional map coming to your committee from the House also elicited criticism from the governor. He has said he wants the New Hampshire Senate to change the congressional redistricting map that passed the House earlier this month. The current proposal has been widely criticized and even ridiculed as a blatant overreach that essentially disenfranchises a large number of voters.

I hope that your committee can work together in a bipartisan fashion to draw maps that improve upon these initial ones by being more fair, competitive, and compact. These compromise maps can then be brought forward as amendments.

Thank you,
Ruth Larson, Alton