

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

As I view the GOP proposed congressional (HB 52) map that the NH House has passed, I am incredibly disappointed. The congressional map has been gerrymandered with district two packed with democrats and district one packed with republicans, making both districts uncompetitive. This map breaks 140 years of precedent, moves 75 towns/wards, breaks up 6 of 10 counties and breaks up too many school districts. Why? To create a partisan Republican advantage.

Is this the best we can do? No. Projects like the nonpartisan Map-A-Thon have shown a better map can be created that is much more competitive. We pride ourselves on being a state with a citizenship very involved in the political process. However, this congressional map sacrifices the political value of votes in order to create the preordained result of a Republican win. This rigged map endangers democracy and it should be thrown out. 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 congressional map is a drastic shift from the current map. It does not prioritize communities of interest. It does not reflect the legislature's responsibility to define districts based on equality rather than on partisan advantage. It is a dangerous map, and I ask the Senate Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee to reject this map. A new, more 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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