

Testimony regarding New Hampshire Redistricting: SB 240, SB 241, SB 253, and SB 254

January 9, 2022

To the New Hampshire Senate Election Law & Municipal Affairs Committee

Dear Chairman Gray and Members of the Senate Election Law & Municipal Affairs Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I've lived and voted in Sunapee, New Hampshire, for more than 40 years and, ten years ago, watched gerrymandered maps favoring one party thrust upon voters. I now support non-partisan efforts for people-powered maps and redistricting that value good government, transparency, and redistricting best practices.

Additionally, election integrity, if it is to be more than a slogan, requires fair voting maps.

I oppose the Majority map for the Senate (SB 240), which takes the existing gerrymandered Senate map and only makes it worse. SB 240 fails to respect communities of interest and county lines and, instead, delivers too many sprawling districts that blatantly favor the Majority and incumbents. An analysis of the Majority's Senate map reveals the partisan skew: "With a nearly 50/50 vote in 2020, the map would have yielded a 15/9 majority for Republicans," according to N.H. Map-a-Thon (Granite Staters Drawing Fair Voting Maps). See the Map-a-Thon analysis.

I support the Minority's Senate map (SB 253) because it does a far better job providing competitive and compact districts.

The Majority proposal for the Executive Council (SB 241) keeps the so-called sprawling "Dragon District," from the Vermont border to the seacoast. While the map is somewhat competitive, the Minority's map (SB 254) better serves voters; it preserves county lines and allows more compact and competitive districts, fitting our "purple" state.

Granite Staters have overwhelmingly spoken out for fair maps that allow voters to choose their elected officeholders vs. politicians choosing their voters. The partisan divide in New Hampshire continues to grow along with political extremism. The Majority's voting maps will only fuel that division.

Granite Staters deserve better than partisan maps drawn in secret with no stated criteria. I urge a reset, a bipartisan Majority-Minority effort that thoughtfully considers the work of the N.H. Map-a-Thon. You can evaluate its Senate and Executive Council maps using clearly defined criteria.

While I cannot attend the January 10 hearing and hope remote testimony will return to the General Court so I and others can testify in person, I will view the hearing remotely.

I appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,
Catherine Bushueff
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