

Good day, Chairman Gray and members of the Election Law and Municipal Services Committee,

My name is Linda Bundy, and I'm from Antrim.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I will briefly address each of the four bills. The resources I used for analysis of the proposed maps are DRA 2020, which is a free web app to create, view, analyze and share redistricting maps; and the Map-a-Thon Citizen Mapping Project, which is supported by a coalition of NH groups including Granite State Progress, the League of Women Voters of NH, Open Democracy, Open Democracy Teams, and the Kent Street Coalition.

The Senate district map from 2011 was gerrymandered as demonstrated by the results of the 2020 election. Although the vote was split 50/50 between Democrats and Republicans, the Senate seats were 14 Republican and 10 Democratic. The 2020 majority map proposed in SB 240 has increased the gerrymander. More districts are safer for the majority. The predicted Senate seat split based on this map for a 50/50 vote would be 15 Republican and 9 Democratic seats. This map packs Democrats are packed into 8 districts. Only 3 districts are competitive. Some districts are sprawling, most notably District 9 which stretches for 72 miles from Hinsdale in the southwest corner of the state to Bedford in central New Hampshire. Most of this district is just one town wide. My own District 8 was shifted to include Claremont and Dunbarton, making it lean more strongly Republican and therefore less competitive. Some northern districts needed adjustments due to population changes. However, some of these are questionable. Why was District 3 expanded northward to include a number of tiny towns in the White Mountains? These towns have much more in common with the rest of Coos County. Why was Plymouth packed into District 5 with Hanover, if not to make it a safely Democratic district? By splitting 35 SAU's, it seems that communities of interest weren't factors. Because of the low degree of competitiveness, lack of compactness, and little consideration of communities of interest, I oppose this map.

The Executive Council map proposed by the majority in SB 241 took me by surprise. I did not expect to see the same map from 2011, when it has received so much publicity for the infamous District 2 that crosses the state from Vermont to the Seacoast. Even Governor Sununu said, "It's a weird one. It's like a snake lying across the middle of the state." I oppose this map because of the elongated District 2 into which Democratic towns have been packed.

The minority Senate map proposed in SB 253 is more competitive than the majority map. With a 50/50 vote, this map would be predicted to result in a Senate with 13 Republicans and 11 Democrats, giving a slight advantage to the majority. This map is also more compact. However, it does favor incumbents by leaning toward one party or the other in 17 districts, and does not significantly factor in communities of interest. For these reasons, I am neutral on this map.

The Executive Council map proposed by the minority in SB 254 is an improvement over the map of 2011. The districts are relatively compact, and 7 of the 10 counties are intact. It leans slightly Republican, but overall is competitive. I support this map.

This redistricting process is the first one I have followed closely. My understanding is that in prior decades there was nothing that compares to the openness of the current one, and I thank you for this. I do believe that remote testimony via Zoom or a similar service should have been an available option, so that more voters could testify in real time.

One question that I've had about the maps is why are they always presented in majority versions and minority versions? I had expected that the committees would present maps that had been drawn cooperatively by members of both parties. In the United States Senate a bipartisan "gang of eight" has been able to work together to draft pieces of legislation. I think that if our redistricting committees had taken a similar approach, the resulting maps would have been more competitive, thereby making candidates more responsive to all of the voters in their districts.

Thank you very much for your work on this committee and for this time to speak.