

Dear Senate Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee members:

The new Senate districts proposed in SB 240 are very bad for Cheshire County. If one was drawing districts of common interest, your criteria would be compact districts in which towns sharing affiliation by their county, school district affiliation and commerce center would be linked. Only partisan mapping would align towns by political party sentiment, which is the big take-away from the proposal in SB 240.

Cheshire County's 23 towns are distributed over 4 different Senate districts. The most towns remain in Senate District 10, which includes Keene and Swanzey and 12 other Cheshire County towns: Alstead, Chesterfield, Harrisville, Marlborough, Nelson, Roxbury, Sullivan, Surry, Walpole, and Westmoreland. Then to reduce Democratic votes in other Senate districts, it adds Hancock and Peterborough from Hillsborough County, and Dublin which is just the beginning of slicing narrow bands of tangentially connected towns snaking across to Bedford and Nashua to preserve Senate seats held currently by Republican Senators.

Senate District 9 in 2010 crossed county boundaries adding Troy, Fitzwilliam and Richmond to a District represented by a Bedford Republican. All three towns are part of the Monadnock school district centered around Swanzey in District 10. To make District 9 territory even more ridiculous, the SB 240 map adds Winchester and Hinsdale, two towns much more clearly aligned with Keene and Swanzey than with Bedford. The district would be 73 miles wide and take 97 minutes to travel.

Rindge, much more closely aligned with Peterborough, is split off into a district represented by a Nashua Republican in District 12. And Stoddard and Marlow are part of District 8, which now adds Charlestown and Dunbarton, crossing 4 counties, over 60 miles, taking 90 minutes to travel.

This is Gerrymandering, "the practice of setting boundaries of electoral districts to favor specific political interests within legislative bodies, often resulting in districts with convoluted, winding boundaries rather than compact areas." (Google)

Two political parties need to come together and develop one Senate Redistricting map, the way a non-partisan commission might have, had that the proposal been signed into law by Governor Sununu. That map should embrace the principle of compact areas defined by county boundaries, and common interests, like commerce and school relationships, to provide for the most representative government.

I am prepared to assist the Committee further in finding a righteous way to draw Senate District boundaries for Cheshire County communities.

Jay Kahn
Senator District 10
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Keene, NH

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Gray Amendment 2022-0013s

For display only, map does not supersede language in amendment.

- District 12- Nashua Wards 1, 2, 5
- District 13- Nashua Wards 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9
- District 16- Manchester Ward 1
- District 18- Manchester Wards 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
- District 20- Manchester Wards 2, 3, 4, 10, 11, 12

