

-BELKNAP COUNTY-

COMMUNITY INPUT SESSION TESTIMONY

Map-a-Thon

Granite Staters Drawing Fair Voting Maps



Chairwoman Griffin, Chairman Gray, and Members of the Redistricting Committees:

My name is Brian Beihl, and I am deputy director of Open Democracy Action, a nonpartisan nonprofit working on pro-voter reforms here in New Hampshire. We were founded by Doris "Granny D" Haddock, whose mission was to end special interest control of government and return it to the hands of the people. I live in Alton, after spending 35 years in Antrim, in the Monadnock Region.

You've been seeing a lot of me lately, and I'd like to spend a few minutes talking about why that is, then I'd like to make a proposition to the two committees.

Throughout this year and part of last year, I've been engaged in educating the public on the redistricting process, what it means to have a fair process, and ways to create better maps than have been produced in the past two decades. We've run workshops about the best practices for fair redistricting featuring national experts that some of you have attended. We've educated towns about our Constitutional provisions for redistricting, and we, with our partners, assembled the Map-a-Thon coalition, in which over 250 people have now volunteered.

We helped 74 towns around the state -- from red towns like Alton, Franklin, Londonderry and Rindge, to blue towns like Lebanon, Durham and Keene, and every color in between. Those 74 towns represented 561,000 Granite Staters. With only five losses, it was only available time and the pandemic kept that number from being a supermajority of New Hampshire voters. They varied slightly in the language, but these cities and towns were asking for a fair, nonpartisan and transparent process. You can nitpick about it being a nonbinding resolution, but tell that to the voters who braved the pandemic to come out and voted on it, making it clear they want fair maps. I'd say they took it pretty seriously.

In May, the Map-a-Thon coalition began its work, surveying NH cities and towns for communities of interest data. What we didn't get through surveys, we followed up by phone calls to town administrators. This yielded a list of 60 communities of interest criteria which the larger Map-a-Thon participants whittled down to five. The all-volunteer Mapping and Technical team was formed as a subset of this larger group, and is comprised of engineers, data analysts, software specialists, and GIS mapping experts.

Taking that criteria, our Mapping & Technical Team assembled maps from the State of New Hampshire Department of Education, Department of Environmental Services, Department of Health and Human Services and federal and academic sources. This helped us to create the overlays that you see on our maps of regional high schools, health care regions, regional planning districts, shared municipal water and sewer, shared police and fire, and a couple of others. It's important to note that these overlays can be used with anyone's maps, as they are available for the asking.

In addition to the overlays, members of the Map-a-Thon Mapping and Tech team created the analysis tools which can test our maps, and the maps of others, to see where there are weaknesses, mistakes, or intentional manipulation.

Like Mr. Joel Anderson's software, one of our team members, Phil Hatcher, developed a computer software tool which makes mapping suggestions based on the NH and US Constitutional mandates and other factors. This has been a useful tool which has already made some suggestions that we hadn't thought of.

While our maps are not perfect, we've proven that communities of interest can be implemented to retain regional high schools, shared water systems, health care regions, regional planning areas, and shared police, fire and EMS services -- some of which you've heard asked for in these hearings. This community of interest data, along with our maps, and supporting documentation is readily accessible to the committee.

Tonight, I'd like to take one more step and make a proposition. In consultation with the members of Map-a-Thon Mapping and Technical Team, we are offering our services to the two committees.

- The House Special Committee is up against a tight deadline. Our House maps are nearing completion, as close as we can get without redistricted city wards.
- We can work with you, side-by-side, joining your policy & constitutional expertise and our technical expertise.
- I have confidence that we can help the House Special committee meet its deadlines and produce a worthy product.
- While our DRA 2020 software had a limitation in being able to show floterial districts, this problem has now been solved.
- The DRA software allows for the implementation of many useful tools, including overlays, additional data sets and other tools not available in Mr. Anderson's software.
- While the Senate has more time to create its Senate and Executive Council maps, we have proposals ready to analyze which improve competitiveness, compactness, competitiveness, while being sensitive to communities of interest.

New Hampshire has a long tradition of volunteer contributions to developing legislation. I'm hoping the House and Senate committees will give our serious offer of technical support consideration, and together we can share maps we can all be proud of at future public hearings.

Thank you for your time in service to our state, for being committed to a fair, nonpartisan and transparent process, and for logging all these miles to listen to the input of your constituents.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Beihl, Deputy Director, Open Democracy
Primary organizer, the Map-a-Thon Citizen Mapping Project
brian@opendemocracy.me
603-620-8300

Aldebran Longabaugh
157 Alton Mountain Road | Alton Bay, NH 03810

October 15, 2021

House Special Committee on Redistricting
New Hampshire House of Representatives
107 North Main Street
Concord, New Hampshire 03301 | (603) 271-3661

Dear Special Committee Members,

As a Granite State citizen and registered voter, I am very concerned about the redistricting process and how it will impact the future of my home. I request you make the upcoming Belknap County listening session available by remote access so I could give verbal testimony. I cannot attend in person.

Currently all three state representatives for Alton are residents of our town, but they are shared with Gilmanton and Barnstead. Under the NH State Constitution (Part 2, Article 11) Alton is entitled to have its own NH state representative, as its population is over 3,444 (actually over 5,894 currently). Under current legislative maps, Alton could end up being represented by 2 Gilmanton residents and 1 Barnstead resident, or even 3 Gilmanton residents. Alton doesn't even share a high school with Gilmanton, so one of the most important areas of community focus is absent. While the current status is especially unfair to Gilmanton, any election could result in a situation unfair to Alton.

At Alton's March 9, 2021 election, Warrant Article #45 passed by a wide and clearly non-partisan margin, showing that the town strongly favors fair redistricting and having its own dedicated representative.

I understand you (the Redistricting Committee) are making the listening sessions available for live streaming on the House of Representatives channel on YouTube, yet there is no provision for the public (or state legislators, for that matter) to participate remotely. Considering the current increase in Covid infections, especially the Delta variant, failure to provide a means to participate remotely violates the goal of transparency. The technology for remote participation is clearly available, so it is up to you to make this process available to our citizenry.

Finally, it is imperative for you to hold additional hearings after the maps are drawn, for public input and transparency. Past committees have eroded the public trust in this process. This committee has a chance to restore it. Voting integrity starts with fair, nonpartisan maps. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Aldebran Longabaugh
she/her | 978-912-0780 | aldebranlongabaugh@gmail.com

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she/her | 978-912-0780 | aldebrantonqabaugh@gmail.com

Testimony for the Special Committee on Redistricting
Belknap County- Town of Meredith
October 19th at Belknap Mill Laconia

Good evening Madam Chair and members of the special redistricting committee

My name is Jim McFarlin from Meredith and I volunteered to create a Warrant Article at our Town Meeting for the NH Resolution for Fair, Non-Partisan & Transparent redistricting in 2021.

As in 74 other NH towns, this Resolution was passed overwhelmingly by Meredith's voters.

This is a powerful and clear message to your committee that voters across the political spectrum care deeply that this once every decade redistricting be done fairly and impartially with no more ***gerrymandering***. Our District 2 representative Jonathan Mackie testified at Town Meeting, on the record, to support restoring Meredith to our own district with our own exclusive representative.

Transparency is crucial to restore voter confidence lost in 2011's partisan, secretive and unfair redistricting which favored the party in power.

Transparency means the following:

- 1) The software algorithm and criteria that will be used must be public. Why is it not yet available?
- 2) 2020 census data for redistricting must be shared fully and openly with the public. Why is this not so?
- 3) Committee meetings must be open to the public with at least 7 days advance notice.
- 4) Detailed Redistricting Committee meeting minutes must be promptly posted publicly.
- 5) The hearings and listening sessions should be live-streamed and recorded and available on the committee's website so they are widely accessible.
- 6) Your meetings and County "Listening Sessions" like this one should be on ZOOM to allow those unable to physically attend to safely participate. Why are you not allowing this during a pandemic?
- 7) This committee must release your "draft" maps with sufficient time for public review/response.
- 8) Proposed drafts of maps must be shown at 2nd County Listening sessions for public response before they are voted on and adopted.
- 9) Soliciting the contributions of and review by professional, non-partisan redistricting experts to assist the committee with the process, structure and criteria employed in redistricting challenges.
- 10) Your maps for submittal to the legislature for final vote to approve must have a consensus of approval from New Hampshire's voters. Without this, voter trust in you our leaders and democracy will further deteriorate. You can and must restore your voters faith and defend democracy in NH. No gerrymandering (cheating). Honor your oath.

Specific to Meredith, per the November 7th 2006 Constitutional amendment on NH House redistricting, your committee must honor this amendment and restore Meredith to our own district with our own exclusive NH House representative(s). To do otherwise is to perpetuate the injustice inflicted on Meredith's voters in 2011 depriving us of our rightful representation.

In closing, thank you for listening.

Each individual member of this critically important committee must call upon your own good conscience, consider your legacy and choose to defend rather than destroy democracy in New Hampshire. You must put aside the partisan pursuit of power and provide proof you can create truly fair maps.

Good evening. My name is Sandy Mucci, and I'm a resident of Meredith. I want to begin by providing my credentials as an expert on New Hampshire's Lakes Region Communities.

I'm an 8th generation New Hampshire native born in Wolfeboro. I've spent all 70 of my summers in the Lakes Region, worked at Harts Turkey Farm in the 1960s, and in 1975 moved to Meredith with my late husband, where we raised our family. Of course, my Wolfeboro cousins still call me the Connecticut cousin because my father was from Connecticut and met my mother when he did a postgraduate year at Brewster Academy after World War II. My work and volunteer activities have brought me to most of the towns in the Lakes Region. I know this area very well.

My local knowledge is pertinent because decisions are being made that affect the rights of our citizens. The lines which are drawn connecting communities need to be executed with a clear understanding of local conditions.

From Europe, all New England seems the same, and the differences between Rhode Island and Vermont are all but invisible. The entire Lakes Region may seem the same from outside the region, but it's not. The beauty and intent of New Hampshire's massive House of Representatives is to provide local representation. It's part of our unique and proud tradition. When communities that do not share common interests and goals are combined into one legislative district, as with Meredith and Gilford, both communities are disenfranchised. I know that is neither the intent nor the purpose of this Commission. Although Meredith and Gilford may appear similar from afar and share a common boundary somewhere in the middle of Lake Winnepesaukee, they are unrelated in all the important ways.

When Meredith had its own representatives, they were known in the community. We would run into them at the dump, the post office, and the bar at Harts. They shopped at the local stores, knew kids at the local schools, belonged to the local service clubs. They were part of the community. I'm sure that's true for Gilford too. Although I don't know because even though I have friends in Gilford and have done business in Gilford, I'm not part of their community, I don't see how they work.

And that is the problem with the current configuration. The geography, including Lakes and Mountains, affects the travel patterns, and there is no natural connection between Meredith & Gilford. NONE! Although that location in the middle of the lake may fulfill the letter of the law, which requires a common boundary, the spirit and intent of the law are frustrated. By combining the two towns, both are disenfranchised. Right now, Meredith is underrepresented, but the same could happen to Gilford. I encourage you to repair this mistake and return Meredith to its own district. Thank you for your time and attention.

Good evening and thank you for holding these very important hearings.

My name is Lew Henry and I live in Gilmanton.

Your Redistricting task is a very difficult one, but it is extremely important! The Redistricting's ten year life span means that having it done correctly now is paramount.

Redistricting needs to be accomplished in a fair, nonpartisan, and transparent manner, unfortunately the previous two Redistricting Plans, from 2001 and 2011, were not done this way, leading to much controversy. A lot of time and money went into, unfortunately, less than successful attempts to correct them.

So I thank you again for being here this evening seeking input into the process, and I thank you in advance for coming back here to hold a similar listening session when you have completed your preliminary mapping.

In 2011 my home town of Gilmanton was Constitutionally entitled to a single, non-shared seat in the NH House. We did not get it. Not only is this seat specified in the NH Constitution, it is also the fairest way to reach the ideal of "one person, one vote". Instead we were given two seats shared with Alton, and one seat shared with Barnstead and Alton. Gilmanton is a very different place than Alton, we share very little except a border. We do not share a school nor an Executive Councilor. Our geography is different, as we are mostly fields, forests, and farms, with very few businesses. We do not share a shoreline of Lake Winnepesaukee with Alton. Our tax structure is very different from Alton's. Because of the total lack of transparency and fairness in the 2011 Redistricting process we had no input into correcting it. This is a violation of the NH Constitution which we hope your Committee will rectify before more violations are forced on us. The next thing that could happen is placing us in a district with a non-contiguous town, which would also violate the Constitution.

I am including with this statement a copy of the letter from Gilmanton's Board of Selectmen to the leaders of the NH House and Senate and also a copy of the Warrant Article 18 that was voted on at our Town Meeting. Based on the overwhelming, bipartisan vote (435 yes, 125 no) in support of Warrant Article 18 titled "New Hampshire Resolution for Fair Nonpartisan Redistricting", our Board of Selectmen urge that the Redistricting Committee ensure a fair and transparent Redistricting plan, without gerrymandering, by holding public meetings such as you are here, and that Gilmanton be given its single, non-shared Representative in the NH House.

Thank you, Lew Henry

My NH Redistricting Committee, Belknap County Listening Session presentation (general testimony).

From: Lew Henry (lewhenry@yahoo.com)

To: housespecialcommitteeonredistricting@leg.state.nh.us; senate.redistricting@leg.state.nh.us

Date: Monday, October 18, 2021, 08:58 AM EDT

Good evening and thank you for holding these very important hearings.

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Thank you, Lew Henry

A Petition to Add a Warrant Article Resolution to the 2021 Town Meeting Warrant

NEW HAMPSHIRE RESOLUTION FOR FAIR NONPARTISAN REDISTRICTING

By petition of 25 or more eligible voters of the town of Gilmanton to see if the town will vote to urge that the New Hampshire General Court, which is obligated to redraw the maps of political districts within the state following the federal census, will ensure fair and effective representation of New Hampshire voters without gerrymandering.

Additionally, these voters ask the town of Gilmanton to urge the NH General Court to carry out the redistricting in a fair and transparent way through public meetings, not to favor a particular political party, to include communities of interest, and to minimize multi-seat districts.

Furthermore, as the New Hampshire State Constitution, Part 2, Article 11 allows towns of sufficient population to have their own state representatives, not shared with other towns, for the town of Gilmanton to petition the NH General Court for its own exclusive seat(s) in the NH House of Representatives if it does not already have it, ensuring that State Representatives properly represent the town's interests.

The record of the vote approving this article shall be transmitted by written notice from the selectmen to Gilmanton's state legislators, informing them of the demands from their constituents within 30 days of the vote.

Your name as registered to vote

X _____
Your signature

Your street address, as registered to vote

Date

City

State

Zip

Email

Thank You!



SELECTMEN'S OFFICE TOWN OF GILMANTON

PO Box 550, Gilmanton, NH 03237

Ph.: (603) 267-6700

Fax: (603) 267-6701

Website: www.gilmantonnh.org

The Honorable Sherman Packard
Speaker of the House
New Hampshire House of Representatives
107 North Main Street
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

The Honorable Chuck Morse
President of the Senate
New Hampshire House of Representatives
107 North Main Street
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

March 15, 2021

Re: **Vote of Gilmanton Town Meeting
Resolution for Fair, Nonpartisan Redistricting**

Dear Speaker Packard and Senate President Morse:

On March 9, 2021, the Town Meeting for the Town of Gilmanton New Hampshire voted to approve Warrant Article 18, captioned "New Hampshire Resolution for Fair Nonpartisan Redistricting" by a measure of 435 "yes" and 125 "no." A copy of the Town of Gilmanton's 2021 Town Meeting Warrant, with vote tallies is enclosed with this letter.

In accordance with the vote of the Town Meeting, the Gilmanton Board of Selectmen hereby urges the New Hampshire General Court conduct redistricting to ensure fair and effective representation of New Hampshire voters without gerrymandering. The Gilmanton Board of Selectmen further urges the General Court to carry out the redistricting in a fair and transparent way through public meetings, without favoring any particular political party, and to include communities of interest and the minimize multi-seat districts.

Lastly, on behalf of the voters of the Town of Gilmanton, the Board of Selectmen respectfully requests on behalf of the voters that, as part of the General Court's redistricting effort, the Town be given one representative that exclusively represents the Town of Gilmanton, and no other community.

Thank you for your time and attention to this letter.

Town of Gilmanton
Board of Selectmen

By: _____

Mark Warren

By: _____

Vincent Baiocchetti

By: _____

Evan Collins

Testimony for the Special Committee on Redistricting

Oct 19th at the Belknap Mill, Laconia

Belknap County- Town of Belmont

Good evening, Madam Chair and members of the special redistricting committee,

My name is Don House. I'm a resident of Belmont NH. I created Warrant Article 26 on fair, non-partisan redistricting that appeared on Belmont's March 2021 Town Election.

This warrant article passed with a strong majority of voters expressing their preference for a fair, non-partisan redistricting process. Seventy four other towns in NH have passed similar resolutions.

Transparency and fairness are crucial to restore voter confidence in our election process.

My view of transparency and fairness is the following:

1) Committee hearings should be open for remote testimony via Zoom or other technology. One way streaming is not sufficient. Forcing voters to come to an in-door meeting restricts participation and forces votes to choose between their health and the democratic process. I ask you to offer this option in future hearings that are scheduled.

2) Draft maps should be available with sufficient time for public review and commentary. I want to see the maps before your committee votes on them. When will the draft maps be available?

3) An independent, non-partisan group of NH voters should endorse any final maps that are recommended

4) Five towns within Belknap County (Meredith, Gilford, Acton, Tilton, and Gilmanton) qualify for their own separate representative according to the NH Constitution. I would expect the outcome of this process to provide these towns with their own representation and not shared with another town.

As a Belmont voter, I expect the end result of this process is that Belmont will continue to have 2 of their own state representatives and continue to share a floterial district with another town or city within Belknap County.

As committee members that have been given this important responsibility, you have a choice in showing democracy can be done in a fair and open process. I hope you choose this option and avoid the pitfalls and controversy that were associated with the process completed in 2011.

In closing, thank you for listening. I look forward to the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft maps at another similar session. I hope you will be sharing information about the next steps in the process soon.

Good evening. My name is Sandy Mucci, and I'm a resident of Meredith. I want to begin by providing my credentials as an expert on New Hampshire's Lakes Region Communities.

I'm an 8th generation New Hampshire native born in Wolfeboro. I've spent all 70 of my summers in the Lakes Region, worked at Harts Turkey Farm in the 1960s, and in 1975 moved to Meredith with my late husband, where we raised our family. Of course, my Wolfeboro cousins still call me the Connecticut cousin because my father was from Connecticut and met my mother when he did a postgraduate year at Brewster Academy after World War II. My work and volunteer activities have brought me to most of the towns in the Lakes Region. I know this area very well.

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Thank you, Chairman Griffin and Members of the Redistricting Committee, for affording the public the opportunity to express our hopes and concerns regarding redistricting. I would like to advise the Committee that I am a Belknap County Commissioner, but my presentation today is on my own behalf as a citizen of Belknap County, and not on behalf of the Board of Commissioners.

* The primary aim of representative districting should be fairness, and a major component of fairness (made clear by the NH Constitution and NH Supreme Court opinions) is that voting districts should be consistent with the goal of “one person – one vote”.

* A second major component of fairness in districting is to divide the state into as many voting districts as feasible to promote localized representation. The fact that the NH House of Representatives is comprised of 400 members exemplifies the preference for smaller voting districts where voters and their representatives are likely to have direct contact with each other. It should be noted that Belknap County is a relatively simple case to deal with, as it has the fewest municipal units (one city and 10 towns) of any county. Matching NH House seats to the towns and city in Belknap is much easier than in a county where there are fewer House seats available compared to the number of towns.

* The formula used to create House districts is the population of NH (currently 1,377,529, based on the 2020 census) and divide it by 400, which gives the “ideal population” number to be used in determining representative districts. At the present time, that number is 3,444. In other words, a town or area with at least 3,444 residents is entitled to its own house representative. The NH Supreme Court has also made clear that “reasonable deviation” is allowed in making these determinations.

* The danger of having excessively large, or combined districts, is illustrated by events following the 2000 redistricting. Belknap District 5, with 7 representatives, was created, comprised of 4 towns and including 40% of the county population. By 2008, 4 of the 7 representatives were from the same town. The plan clearly did not promote localized representation.

* The 2010 redistricting improved on the 2000 situation somewhat, by changing District 5, but it created other problems. The following are my suggested changes to the 2010 redistricting.

* In particular, under the 2010 plan, Gilmanton no longer had its own representative, despite meeting the “ideal population” number to warrant having its own seat. Gilmanton was instead paired with Alton for 2 shared seats, and with Alton and Barnstead for a flatorial seat. For much of the period since 2010, Gilmanton has not had a representative who resides in Gilmanton.

* The 3 towns of Alton, Barnstead, and Gilmanton all meet the “ideal population” threshold for separate representation based on the 2020 census. If the population numbers for Alton and Barnstead are combined, they exceed 10,332 (3 times 3,444), which means that the 2 towns should each have their own representative, and the combined overage should be the basis of a flatorial seat for Alton and Barnstead. Although I will defer to other speakers addressing the issue of “communities of interest”, it should be noted that Alton and Barnstead share a high school, and a superintendant of schools.

* Gilford and Meredith currently share 4 representatives, but it makes sense to split this combined district into 2, with Gilford and Meredith each having 2 representatives. Gilford currently meets the “ideal population” number for 2 representatives (over 6,888), and Meredith comes very close, with only a 3% shortfall. That minor shortfall should be viewed as a “reasonable deviation”, especially since the shortfall is likely to disappear in the coming years. In addition, other speakers will address the very

substantial differences between the 2 towns, making it inappropriate to combine them in a voting district.

* The third change I recommend, based on considerations of fairness, is to allocate a 5th representative for Laconia. Using the 3,444 magic number, Laconia falls just shy of the 17,220 figure for 5 seats, as the 2020 population of the City is 16,871. That number places Laconia at 98% of the ideal number, clearly an insignificant and “reasonable deviation”. The population of Laconia is about 26% of the county population, and 5 seats would represent 26% of the 18 representative seats for Belknap. Finally, there is undoubtedly general agreement that the City of Laconia has an array of issues and problems setting it apart from the towns in Belknap County.

* A fourth possible change concerns the currently combined district of Tilton and Sanbornton. Although Tilton meets the “ideal population” number, Sanbornton falls short by 418, a deviation of about 12%. If we emphasize the preference for smaller districts that allow more localized representation, the 2 towns would each be allotted a separate seat, but I acknowledge that the numerical deviation is greater than the prior examples.

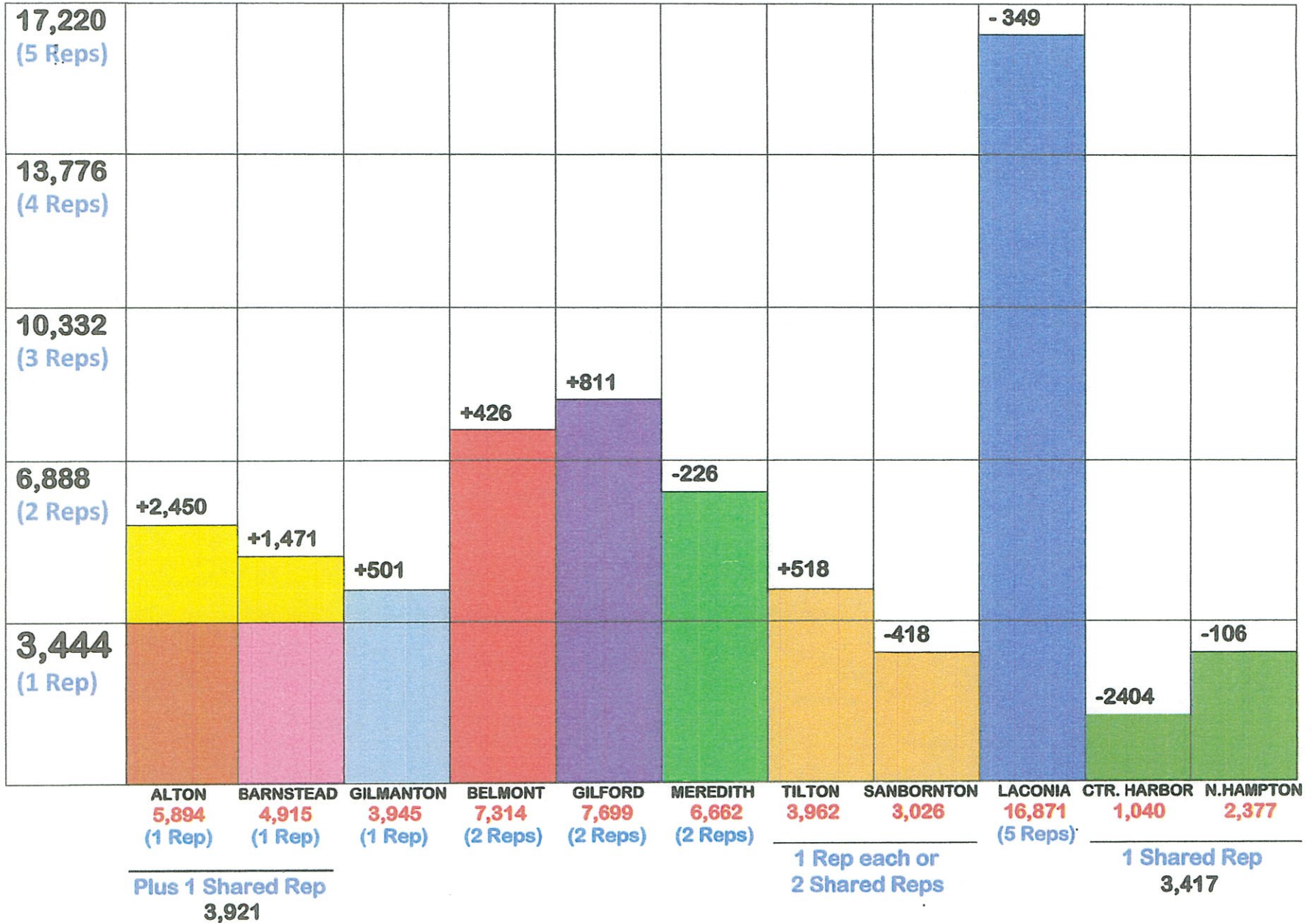
* In my view, Center Harbor and New Hampton would necessarily continue to be represented by one combined seat, based on the population numbers.

I have attempted to make this presentation clear and not too “in the weeds”. And I hope that the Committee will find the graphics I have provided in a separate packet helpful.

Let me just say in closing that those of us who are taking an interest in the redistricting process hope very much that the Committee will have a second round of sessions after the preliminary maps are drawn, to allow for input on those proposals.

BELKNAP COUNTY

Population



Request to the General Court regarding Redistricting.

10/18/2021

To the NH Redistricting Committee

For every Gilmanton resident who pays a tax bill, the fattest part of that bill is for education. When we pay that bill, it is like being forced to buy expensive new shoes, or a fancy bicycle. Since we must educate our children, we can take pride in that purchase, because it is for our children and their futures.

But the situation is this: For the same service of education, the Alton resident must only buy an average priced pair of shoes, or a discount store bicycle. They get the same result but pay less money. I feel differently about this situation as a resident of Gilmanton than a similarly situated resident of Alton. The policies of the State impact us differently, so we are very likely to have different views on this subject.

It is a disease of the current Political climate that we can look at something that has a plain truth on its face and call it its opposite. Following the path of redistricting as it has proceeded up until now would be an example of doing exactly that.

I would like to join the Gilmanton Select Board in urging the New Hampshire General Court to conduct redistricting to ensure fair and effective representation of New Hampshire voters without gerrymandering. I also join them in further urging the General Court to carry out the redistricting in a fair and transparent way through public meetings, without favoring any particular party, and to include communities of interest and to minimize multi-seat districts.

Yours Truly

Nathaniel Abbott, Gilmanton NH
Elizabeth Abbott, Gilmanton, NH

Comments on Redistricting Belknap County

State Rep. Timothy Horrigan (Strafford 6; Durham); October 19, 2021

Our state constitution specifies that state representative districts should be contiguous. The current plan, which was put together in 2012 includes a district which fails to meet even that simple requirement. Gilford and Meredith's shared boundary is way out in the middle of Lake Winipisaukee, but they also share a state representative district.

Art. 11, Part 2nd states in part:

When the population of any town or ward, according to the last federal census, is within a reasonable deviation from the ideal population for one or more representative seats, the town or ward shall have its own district of one or more representative seats.

Article 11 goes on to talk about how to handle “excess” population by creating at-large or floterial districts “conforming to acceptable deviations.” We legislators decide what is “reasonable” or “acceptable” but we do have to take federal voting rights law into account, including the principle of “one person one vote.”

In 2012, the General Court decided that state representative districts could not vary by more than 10% (or plus or minus 5%.) This made it almost impossible to meet the spirit of Article 11, Part 2nd, since the Granite State is a small state with a large legislature, where state representative districts can't cross county lines and where towns and city wards can't be split in two. Our next door neighbor, Vermont got away with a plan where state representative districts varied by 20% (plus or minus 10%) even though Vermont towns can be split in two.

The first problem with drawing district lines for Belknap County is that the county is theoretically entitled to 18.498 representatives out of 400. On the other hand, we don't have to worry about the ward boundaries in Laconia, since this rather small city is just barely big enough for 5 representatives but has 6 wards. I created a plan with 18 representatives (3539.17 residents/rep) where the ratio of residents to reps varies by 17.83%.

- 1.Center Harbor (1040) & New Hampton (2377); 1 rep; deviation -0.80%
- 2.Meredith (6662); 2 reps; deviation -3.29%
- 3.Laconia (16871); 5 reps; deviation -2.04%
- 4.Gilford (7644); 2 reps; deviation +11.76%
- 5.Belmont (7314); 2 reps; deviation +6.17%
- 6.Sanbornton (3026) & Tilton (3962); 2 reps; deviation +1.44%
- 7.Gilmanton (3945); 1 rep; deviation +14.53%
- 8.Alton (5894) & Barnstead (4915); 3 reps; deviation +4.60%

Representative Sallie Fellows
Grafton 8 - Holderness, Hebron and Plymouth

Date: October 19, 2021

To: Redistricting Chairperson Griffin and Committee Members,

Thank you for providing an opportunity for community input. There are three things I respectfully ask you to consider.

I have a suggestion that you might find helpful in trying to keep all districts within the 5% deviation limit. This is most likely to be useful for counties with smaller populations where the perfect seat allocation (which is a two-digit decimal number) includes a fraction close to one-half.

For example, Grafton county, with a population of 91,118, has a perfect allocation of 26.46 seats. While I was able to successfully map 27 seats (the current allocation) with just a few adjustments to the current configuration, I couldn't map 26 seats, even when using 3 or 4 floterials, and keep within the 5% deviation from the statewide target of 3,444. What I discovered was that only 3 seats were below the statewide target. The other 23 were over the target. The only one outside the 5% range was over by just 5.47%. So, I wondered why so lopsided, with 3 under and 23 over.

Since Grafton's allocation of 26 seats is nearly one-half a percent below the perfect allocation of 26.46 seats, there are 1,574 extra people that must be squished into 26 seats. That's an average 61 extra people, or 1.76% of the target, for each seat. If that excess could be evenly distributed over all seats, each would have a deviation of plus 1.76%. A deviation of that magnitude is more than 1/3 of the way to the maximum allowable deviation of 5%.

My suggestion, is to develop county maps based on the statewide target of 3,444 people per seat, but if a few seats are a bit outside the 5% limit, test the deviation using a target that is the county population divided by the number of county seats. (For Grafton that would be 3,505.) If all the seats are then within 5%, I suggest the map should be deemed acceptable.

My second request is that after preparing draft maps please provide a second opportunity for community input. It is the people who live in each town who know which other towns are part of their community. This is particularly important for Grafton county, because it does not have a representative on the Redistricting Committee.

It is generally accepted that public schools are an important element of shared interest. My third request is that instead of using SAUs as the school link, you use high school of attendance. The only common denominator that all SAUs provide is shared SAU staff. Some don't include a high school, and some have districts that use different high schools. NHDOE publishes two high school lists, but neither has all towns by high school attended. I can provide you with a spreadsheet that can be sorted by town or high school.

Testimony for the Special Committee on Redistricting
Belknap County- Town of Meredith
October 19th at Belknap Mill Laconia

Good evening Madam Chair and members of the special redistricting committee. My Name is Steve Merrill and I have been a resident of Meredith NH for over 20 years.

I am here today to express my concern for the future of our great republic. Over the past few decades I have witnessed the deterioration of our norms and the decay of our core institutions. A deterioration which has accelerated over the past decade. A deterioration that began in our nation's capital and now has bled into our great state. A deterioration that if left unchecked could undermine the very foundation of the country we all love.

The reasons for this state of affairs are numerous and complicated but at the core it comes down to greed; greed for money, greed for power. The financial greed can be seen in the lobbying industry, social networking companies, political parties, and our news media to name a few. Fear and hate sell and too many are all happy to sell it. The greed for power can be seen in legislative chambers and conference rooms around the country, including this very room.

Certainly one significant influence on this insidious decay has been partisan gerrymandering which has grown more powerful and more effective with the information technology revolution of the past 30 years. Modern computing technology combined with modern data analytics enable politicians to leverage voter data to maximize their probability of remaining in power against the will of the people. Just as Facebook, Apple and Google can predict which ads you're likely to click on, voter analytics can predict how groups of people are likely to vote.

With a background in physics and engineering and experience teaching statistics at the university level, I have the good fortune or perhaps misfortune of understanding just how powerful this technology is and how it can be used to undermine the principle of one person one vote which is at the core of our system of government.

In 2010, a wave of republicans swept into our state capital and boldly asserted their authority over our voting system. The gerrymandering that resulted left one party with an unfair advantage in elections for the ensuing decade. To achieve this goal, legislators chose to sacrifice the independence of Meredith and many other towns by taking away their representation. Though Meredith leans Republicans (or rather because of this fact), we were combined with Gilford to form a single district with 4 representatives. Never mind that the only border we share is on the lake or that we share no resources or infrastructure. The obvious objective was to increase the number of house seats in the "r" category for the next decade. And it worked!

The results of the 2010 gerrymander also had a profound impact on our state senate. From 2010 to 2020, Republicans controlled the state senate for 8 of the 10 years in spite of losing the overall vote total (i.e. the combined total of all 24 state senate races) by about 1.6%. The democrats needed a wave of their own to take the chamber for only 2 of the 10 years in the decade. In 2018, Democrats won the total vote count for the 24 seats by nearly 8% (53.9% - 6.1%) but only won 14 of the 24 seats. In 2012, the totals were 51-49% for the democrats, yet the republicans

won 13 seats and thus chamber control. In 2014, the tally was 50.3%-49.7% again for the democrats. This time the Republicans picked up a seat, winning 14 that year. You heard that right, Democrats won more votes, but lost the election in both 2012 and 2014. In 2016, the Republicans finally won an election. The count was 50.3% - 49.7% and you guessed it, the Republicans held the chamber, 14-10. Democrats needed an 8% point margin to win the same number of seats. The Republicans could win or lose by 1% and still win 14 seats.

We have an evenly divided state and yet 16 of 24 state senate districts were controlled by a single party for the entire decade. Please don't repeat this mistake.

For the good of our state, for the good of our people, please restore fairness to our electoral process. And please restore Meredith's independence. Give us back our seats.

Let's Re-Draw the District 2 Belknap Maps allowing Meredith and Gilford "Fair Representation."



Meredith and Gilford share a "nautical" border only, somewhere in the middle of Lake Winnepesaukee.

Why it makes sense?

- Under the NH Constitution (Part 2, Article 11), towns with a population of 3,444 or more, or a "reasonable deviation" from that, are entitled to their own state representative. With a 2020 census population of 6,662, Meredith should have 2 designated representatives. The deviation from 6,888 (3,444 doubled) is reasonable and minimal. In fact, Meredith's population is increasing. At the time of the 2010 census, it was 6,241, so it has added 421 during that period.
- The towns of Meredith and Gilford are NOT contiguous. In addition to the federal requirements of one person, one vote and the Voting Rights Act, **NH State law requires that state legislative districts "be contiguous, and maintain the boundaries of towns, wards, or unincorporated places."** The closest driving distance between the 2 towns is almost 9 miles. The 2 towns share no borders other than a nautical border on Lake Winnepesaukee (see above photo).
- The towns of Meredith and Gilford do not share any elementary, middle or high schools or any other municipal services.
- With Meredith and Gilford each having their own 2 legislators, representation will be spread evenly, ensuring the most equitable representation from officials that live in their respective town. Local representatives are more knowledgeable about issues facing individual residents, businesses, and schools in their own town and therefore can be more effective advocates. In addition, having 2 representatives per town prevents any one town from having all 4 state representatives in any one term.

Testimony for the Special Committee on Redistricting
Belknap County - October 19, 2021

Madame Chair and members of the Special Redistricting Committee,

My name is Lynn Montana and I am from Meredith.

I am grateful for this opportunity to speak at this very important public session, on a extremely important subject; the Constitutional Nonpartisan Democratic procedures of redistricting.

Every NH Voter has the right to expect this special committee to follow the Non Partisan and Independent process for fair and transparent redistricting.

Unfortunately in 2010..." REDMAP (short for Redistricting Majority Project), was a adopted by the Republican State Leadership Committee of the United States to increase Republican control of congressional seats as well as state legislators, largely through determination of electoral district boundaries.

The project made effective use of partisan gerrymandering, relying on specific mapping software, where there was a Democratic majority but which they could swing towards Republican with appropriate redistricting. The project was launched in 2010 and estimated to have cost the Republican party around \$30 million."

REDMAP's own website proudly sums it up best: "The party controlling that effort, controls the drawing of the maps - shaping the political landscape for the next 10 years". Even Karl Rove took to The Wall Street Journal saying "He who controls redistricting, controls Congress".

This was not the outcome that the framers of the NH Constitution intended when they spoke of redistricting after each Census.

Whether Republican, Independent or Democrat, the majority of NH voters understand that it is advantageous to us all, to have fair, transparent and NON PARTISAN redistricting procedures no matter which party holds the majority In Concord.

Unfortunately in 2011 these procedures were not only absent in NH, but deliberately obfuscated and hidden from the public by party politicians who formed the Committee, and the result was a very partisan rearrangement of voting districts which, quite frankly to a great many NH voters, was appalling, shameful, and very UN- democratic.

In 2011:

1. Decisions were made by three politicians, and held in secret behind doors.
2. Public meetings were held after very short notice, with no maps for them to see.
3. Our state legislators were only allowed to view the maps a few days voting on the districts.
4. Any opposition or improvements were silenced!

And so we NH voters are here today in solidarity to tell you that we expect you, the newest appointed members of this special committee to act independently and without party bias when drawing up the redistricting maps for 2021 and the next 10 years. We are asking YOU to fix these maps, and use fair methods. You can request that the Organization FAIR MAPS assist you if you need help doing so.

Over the last 10 years, NH voters have been denied our rights to choose our elected leaders fairly; due to gerrymandering, which must end now.

We would like to see you restore a fair and transparent voting system to our State in 2021.

And last but by far not least... I am from Meredith. I have lived here most of my life, and voted since 1970. Prior to 2010, Meredith was its' own singular voting district with two town representatives. This has not been the case since 2011, when we were coupled together through redistricting with Gilford. Numerous other NH towns have also been denied their historically independent districts. Meredith needs to have our district and representatives reinstated as it was prior to 2011 making it once again, comply correctly with the NH Constitution.

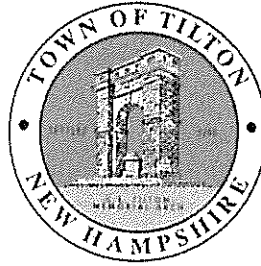
Thank you again for this opportunity and I truly hope the voters of Belknap County and NH can rely on you, our newest committee members to fulfill their duties with honesty and integrity and carry out Fair Nonpartisan and Transparent Redistricting according to the law.

Lynn Montana, Meredith voter.

October 19,2021

Town of Tilton

257 Main Street
Tilton, NH 03276
603.286.4521 Town Hall
603.286.3519 Fax
www.tiltonnh.org



Board of Selectmen

Eric Pyra, Chair
Patricia Consentino, Vice Chair
Joseph Jesseman
Scott Ruggles
Jonathan Scanlon

April 8, 2021

The Honorable Robert Giuda
The Honorable Juliet Harvey-Bolia
The Honorable Timothy Lang

Dear Elected Officials:

At the Town Meeting on March 13, 2021, the Town of Tilton voters approved Warrant Article 16. Article 16, captioned "New Hampshire Resolution for Fair Nonpartisan Redistricting," had been duly submitted by petition signed by 30 residents.

The Article, as written, states:

Article 16. NEW HAMPSHIRE RESOLUTION FOR FAIR NONPARTISAN REDISTRICTING
By petition of 25 or more eligible voters of the town of Tilton to see if the town will vote to urge that the New Hampshire General Court, which is obligated to redraw the maps of political districts within the state following the federal census, will ensure fair and effective representation of New Hampshire voters without gerrymandering.

Additionally, these voters ask the town of Tilton to urge the NH General Court to carry out the redistricting in a fair and transparent way through public meetings, not to favor a particular political party, to include communities of interest, and to minimize multi-seat districts.

The record of the vote approving this article shall be transmitted by written notice from town officials to Tilton's state legislators, informing them of the demands from their constituents within 30 days of the vote. (submitted by petition)

The results of Article 16 at the Tilton Town Meeting on March 13, 2021 are as follows:

The moderator asks if anyone wants to move this article. Lauren Noether moved Article 16 to the floor; seconded by Jane Alden. The moderator recognizes Peter Fogg who asks if the signer is here to speak to it, and the moderator states it was submitted by Lucinda Pope. The moderator asks for

any other questions or comments seeing none, all those in favor say aye, opposed, nay. I'm gonna ask you to hold your card up. All those in favor 20, opposed 13. Article 16 passed as presented. The Town of Tilton will be responsible with making some correspondence to the General Court."

TILTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

.....
Eric Pyra, Chair

.....
Patricia Consentino, Vice Chair

.....
Joseph Jesseman

.....
Scott Ruggles

.....
Jonathan G. Scanlon

Date: _____

Testimony to the NH House Redistricting Committee

October 19, 2021

Good evening, Madam Chair Griffin, and members of the Redistricting Committee,

My name is Claudia Ferber, and I am a NH registered voter and reside in Gilmanton, NH.

Tonight, I bring questions to this Committee about how redistricting impacts my Town of Gilmanton and what the Committee can do to ensure our voters get fair representation.

Why **DOESN'T** the Town of Gilmanton have an exclusive seat in the NH State House of Representatives?

The NH State Constitution Pt 2 Art 11 says a town/city must have a population of more than 3,444 to have an exclusive seat. Gilmanton meets this threshold according to the 2020 US CENSUS. Gilmanton met this threshold in 2010. Because of the 2010 redistricting Gilmanton and Alton share 2 seats in the State House of Representatives and one floterial seat with Alton and Barnstead.

Is the Committee aware that Gilmanton passed a warrant article (435 yes – 125 no) in March 2021 asking for an exclusive seat and a fair, transparent, and nonpartisan redistricting process?

Hopefully, you have read the March 15 letter sent to Speaker Packard and Senate President Morse from the Town of Gilmanton Selectmen: Mark Warren, who also serves as the NH State Senate chaplain, Vincent Baiocchetti, and Evan Collin.

The Selectmen asked on behalf of the Gilmanton voters for an exclusive seat and a fair, transparent, and nonpartisan redistricting process AND they emphasized without gerrymandering.

Why does Gilmanton share 2 house seats with Alton and one house seat with Barnstead?

Other than sharing land boundaries, Gilmanton does not share any municipal services. Our tax base is quite different. One might ask “was there gerrymandering in 2010?”

Is this Committee aware Gilmanton has been its own district in the past?

Gilmanton was its own district until the end of the 1960's and then again for a period beginning in the 1970's. At that time, George B Roberts, Jr (R) who still resides in Gilmanton represented Gilmanton and served fourteen years in the House and as Speaker of the House from 1975-1980.

In 2010, redistricting changed things and Gilmanton and Alton became a district sharing 2 house seats and one floterial seat with Alton and Barnstead .

Why does Belknap County have 3 NH State Senate Districts?

One can travel north to south, east to west of Belknap County in less than one hour. Currently, Belknap County's has towns/cities divided up into 3 districts with towns/cities from Grafton, Strafford, and Merrimack Counties.

Gilmanton is currently in District 6 and shares a NH State Senator with New Durham, Farmington, Rochester, Alton, and Barnstead. The only commonality is that Alton and New Durham have a common land boundary.

I ask the Committee members to consider my following request:

1. **Redistrict** so **Gilmanton and Alton each has an exclusive seat** in the NH House of Representatives.
- 2 . **Redistrict** the NH State Senate seats so that Gilmanton's representation is in **a District with only towns within Belknap County**.
3. Schedule **PUBLIC HEARINGS** before the legislature votes on the redistricting maps.

Thank you for your attention and time this evening.

Claudia J. Ferber

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