



The Senate of the State of New Hampshire

107 North Main Street, Concord, N.H. 03301-4951

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 17, 2021

TO: Senate President Chuck Morse

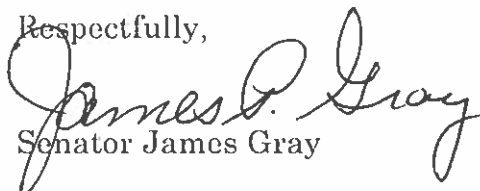
FROM: Senator James Gray, Chairman
Senator Regina Birdsell
Senator Donna Soucy

SUBJECT: Final Report of the *Senate Special Committee on Redistricting*

On behalf of the Senate Special Committee on Redistricting please accept this summary report on our findings from the County Community Input Sessions.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this report, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Respectfully,


Senator James Gray

Enclosures:
Report
Meeting Minutes

cc: Members of the Committee

Findings

In each New Hampshire County, Merrimack, Strafford, Grafton, Hillsborough, Rockingham, Coos, Cheshire, Sullivan, Carroll and Belknap, members of the committee heard public testimony regarding how redistricting has and will affect the impacted communities. Those who testified provided comments regarding Representative Districts, Senate Districts and Executive Council Districts. The majority of concerns were for equal representation within communities that share common interests. Minutes for each of the sessions are included with this report. Additionally, the link below can be used to access the committee website, public testimony, submissions as well as video of each meeting.

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/Senate/committees/Redistricting/>

The paragraphs below contain a summary of the comments by districts.

Although many towns have the population needed to have their own representative, they are affected by other communities that they abut. Floterials should be minimized when possible but if needed, the method of calculating Floterials as allowed by the NH Supreme Court must be used. In all ten counties the testimony given asked the committee to consider Representative Districts that keep SAU's together, have common interests and shared public services as well as geographical similarities.

Very few comments directly relating to Senate Districts were provided. Of note was testimony requesting the committee to consider more compact districts in order to increase commonality within the districts. More specific changes requested were:

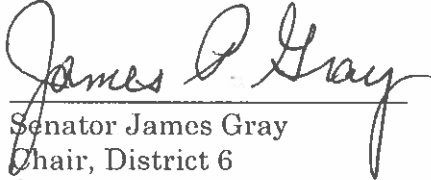
- Senate District 2 should only have two counties within it instead of three.
- In Senate District 23, the towns have divergent orientations and an alternative district could include major economic centers and school districts that are now spread over three Senate Districts.
- Rindge would like to be in a different Senate District than Nashua as they do not share anything in common.
- Cheshire County be divided into two Senate Districts. Currently eight of the twenty-three towns in Cheshire are split into three different Senate Districts.
- Put Sullivan County all together in one Senate district.
- Splitting Belknap County into two Senate Districts instead of three.

For the Executive Council Districts, the maps will be done to meet the requirements as imposed by the one man one vote standard. The majority of public input asked that Executive Council District #2 be redrawn to provide more geographic commonality and to represent communities of similar interests.

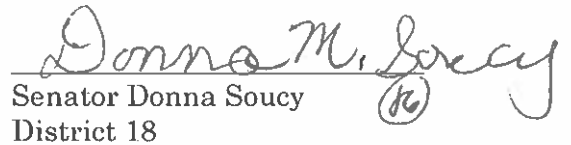
Committee Redistricting Plan

Senate Maps for Senate Districts and Executive Council Districts will be available for review during the Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee meetings beginning in January. Time will be given before public hearings are held for the public to provide comments. Consideration of maps developed in the House of Representatives will follow the normal course of action for legislation. This completes the actions of the Senate Special Committee on Redistricting. As noted above further redistricting actions will be addressed in the Senate Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee.

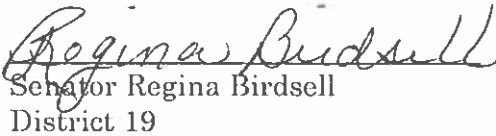
Respectfully submitted,



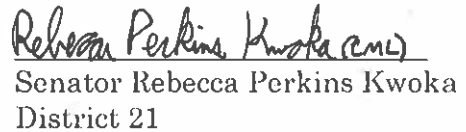
Senator James Gray
Chair, District 6



Senator Donna Soucy
District 18



Senator Regina Birdsell
District 19



Senator Rebecca Perkins Kwoka
District 21



Senator Sharon Carson
District 14

SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON REDISTRICTING

Merrimack County Community Input Session

September 14, 2021

Meeting Minutes

Members of the Senate Committee Present: Senator James Gray, Senator Sharon Carson, Senator Donna Soucy, Senator Rebecca Perkins Kwoka

Members of the Senate Committee Absent: Senator Regina Birdsell

Opening Summary:

Senator Gray opened the meeting for the Senate. Representative Barbara Griffin opened it for the House and had all Legislators introduce themselves. Present for the House Committee: Rep. Matt Wilhelm, Rep. Ross Berry, Rep. Bob Lynn, Rep. Len Turcotte, Rep. Carol McGuire, Rep. Paul Bergeron, Rep. Marjorie Smith. Representative Griffin explained that the meeting would be live streamed and gave the instructions on how to locate information on the redistricting process on the General Court Website. There will be a website for the Special Committee on Redistricting which will have the links to all recordings and contacts as well as district maps and an option for public input.

Representative Griffin described the process of redistricting every ten years after the Federal Census population data has been reported. That data is taken and used to create districts for all levels of government in regards to representation. In NH, the Constitution states that the responsibility of creating those districts is that of the Legislature.

The districts that will be drawn are:

- Districts for US House of Representatives,
- Executive Council,
- State Senate, and
- State House of Representatives.
- Districts for County offices that are elected by district and
- Delegates to the State Party Convention

Handouts were provided showing the 2020 Census populations of the towns in Merrimack County .

Testimony:

Alan McDonald - New London He zoomed into the last House Redistricting Committee Meeting and was disappointed. He felt there was no statement of shared purpose, no sense of bipartisanship, and no detailed outline of process. Leadership seemed dismissive of having public meetings after the proposed maps have been drawn. He believes that is the most critical part of the process and it should be done with Zoom capability. He witnessed a demonstration of the mapping software and does not see a reason why multiple maps could not be made available for the public to view well in advance of November. The citizens of NH deserve nothing less than total transparency.

Janet Ward – She believes that gerrymandering is a tool that has been used by political parties to ensure their success in elections. It allows those drawing voting district lines to make them favor their parties candidates rather than drawing reasonable, logical lines that recognize communities of interest. She believes that they convince themselves that gerrymandering is bringing about a greater good. She read a quote by journalist Sidney Harris “once we assuage our consciences by calling something a necessary evil, it begins to look more necessary and less evil.” She continued by stating that gerrymandering is wrong and it is the duty of the special committee to draw fair lines and that citizens across the state are closely watching the critical work of this committee.

Representative Smith commented that she hopes to hear suggestions from the citizens of Merrimack County as to how the maps should be drawn.

Nancy Maracio - New London –Ms. Maracio stated that in 2010, of 152 communities eligible for their own representative, 62 were not assigned theirs. Although New London had 4,397 residents in 2010 when the required number was 3,291, it was not assigned its own district or its own representative. Now in 2021 every community with a population of 3,444 or higher is constitutionally guaranteed its own district and representative. New London’s population has risen to 4,400. Model Fair Maps have been drawn to show that all but 10 qualified towns can, by the numbers, be assigned their district and exclusive State representative. She urged the Committee to redistrict New London and other eligible towns so that they are assigned the representation they are legally due. Additionally, she asked the Committee to pay quality attention to floterials, assuring more closeness and shared interests of their towns and urged non-partisan decision making, assuring that each voter that their vote counts equally.

Former Senator Jeanne Dietsch – Senator Dietsch testified that Article 11 of the New Hampshire Constitution states, “every inhabitant of the state of 18 years of age and upwards shall have an equal right to vote in any election.” She noted that some people interpret that sentence to only mean that every inhabitant of age may place their vote in a ballot box, but in actuality the weight of that vote can be

enhanced or diminished by the actions of this committee. Senator Dietsch continued by stating, an equal right to vote depends upon this committee's diligence in dividing districts as fairly as possible. An equal right to vote means that a party with fewer than 3 in 10 voters as members does not dominate every legislative body, passing the most extreme budget in 50 years, containing policies that most of the people of New Hampshire strongly disagree with. An equal right to vote means that the desire by most of the people of New Hampshire to conserve energy, minimize fossil fuels and set clean-air standards cannot be upheld in vetoes. An equal right to vote means that the support of most of the people of New Hampshire for educating children and young adults rather than giving a fourth tax cut to businesses and cutting the interest and dividend tax for the wealthy will result in the politicians who support such actions being turned out on their noses. She ended her comments by stating that this committee has the responsibility to create districts that result in the will of the people being reflected in the actions of the legislature, executive council and Congressional districts

Liz Tentarelli – Newbury NH She has heard from people she speaks with of two main concerns: that the process of drawing the maps be done with transparency and public input, and that the criteria the committees will use be clearly stated. Those that tried to follow the process in 2011 realize how important both of these are. There are some questions she hopes the committees will address publicly in the coming weeks: Obviously they will adhere to the federal and state constitutions about equal representation, but have they decided what will be an acceptable deviation from the ideal numbers for each of the four plans and when will they make that public? Since 2006, the NH Constitution requires that towns that are large enough to have their own representative seat be allotted its own district seat. (This year that is 3,444 residents.) Will their committee work to make that happen, and where does adhering to that constitutional requirement fall in the list of priorities? "Communities of interest" is a broad term, but many are wondering which communities of interest the committee believes are important considerations when determining which towns should be grouped together. Have they set any priorities, such as keeping regional school districts in the same senate district, or grouping neighboring towns that share common problems such as water quality issues or natural resources conservation or public health issues? If not, when do they expect to set those priorities and will they make them public on the committee's website? Merrimack county is currently divided among six senate districts. The towns in our county range from small ones (like her little town of Newbury) in the west to the cities of Concord and Franklin. Forming state senate districts is about the numbers, of course, but what other demographic aspects will they be considering? Finally, she suggested that until draft maps are drawn and made available to the public, it is an exercise in abstraction to discuss what makes sense for any particular town or city. She believes there should be another round of

these county input sessions where the maps will be shown so that specific comments from the municipal officials and the public can be heard for their consideration.

John Rabbe - New London His basic comment is that everybody deserves an even chance to vote and have their voice heard. We live in an age with fierce partisan contention. His suggestion for the committee is to create an independent commission to handle redistricting. He believes this will ensure an impartial transparent process which will increase public trust in NH elections. The alternative in his view is more gerrymandering and more accusations of fraud.

David Andrews - Chichester – He works for the redistrictingdatahub.org which is a non-partisan group that hosts redistricting data nationally. He also volunteers with Open Democracy. Mr. Andrews believes that redistricting is the foundation of a democracy and if we break that foundation with gerrymandering it can cripple that democracy. Congressionally, he suggests that they try to keep the districts as they are. In general, they are considered to be fair and well put together. The Executive Council maps should be drastically shifted and #3 in particular. He believes that there should be a regional approach to the Executive Council in that New Hampshire has distinct regions, the North Country, the Lakes Region, Western NH, the Sea Coast, Central and Southern NH. This would give a better representation of all specific areas. He commented that communities of interest are very important and should be preserved as much as possible. For example, SAU's, public health regions, etc. The Senate map is not a very good map in that there are a lot of different sprawling districts. He suggested that they consider compactness as criteria when drawing those districts. For the House maps, he explained the methodology of calculating the floterial districts. In 2000, they were drawn using the aggregate method which is the leftover population of two districts. In 2002, the Supreme Court ruled that aggregate was not a valid method to use in creating floterial districts and that it did not stand up to the one person one vote rule. A floterial district should consist of around the same number of people from each district. The court put together the component method which assigns the ideal population to the non-floterial districts and then makes sure the leftover population align within a certain deviation. He believes the component method limits the amount of districts that can use a floterial and gave Hudson and Pelham as an example. In 2006, the NH Constitution changed to give each town with sufficient population their own district, he thinks it is worth it to look into different methodologies in calculating floterial districts. His alternative component method takes into account the deviations of the non-floterial Reps. He explained that if the ideal population is 3,000 people and there was a district with 4,000 people and one with 5,000 people, the component method would take the overflow of 1,000 and the overflow of 2,000 to make a floterial which would not be equal. His alternative component method allows flexibility in splitting up the numbers using a certain

deviation to make the floterial district uniform. He gave the example of Rep. McGuire's floterial district, the alternative component method would allow all three towns to have their own Representatives and the same floterial. The best possible House map they could come up with had six constitutional violations for the current 2020 mapping, which is, towns that had sufficient population but did not get their own Rep. Using the alternative component method, the violations are reduced to two. He has sent a memo to the House Committee which explains this in more detail and he would be happy to come before the Committee again and go through those details.

Olivia Zink – Executive Director, Open Democracy – She believes that individuals deserve the chance for public comment after the maps are drawn. Additionally, the committee should publish the criteria they are using to draw the maps. She questioned whether the 2006 amendment will be followed, what communities of interest will be looked at. DOE and Open Democracy has created a tool that can overlay the school districts so that it is easy to see which maps cross school districts. A lot of communities share police and fire services and those should not be separated. Northfield and Tilton share a police department and that needs to be considered. Another issue that needs to be considered is time. The City of Franklin has to change their charter in order to change their ward lines and this cannot happen until 2022 which is after this committee has done their work. In instances like the city of Franklin it would be great if they could keep the city or all three wards together as much as possible. The City of Franklin's charter has not been amended since 1995, but now it is necessary due to population changes. She suggests getting input from leaders in those communities that need to change wards. As they look at the Executive Council maps it would be good to keep a criteria of compactness into account. Currently, in some towns, you have to drive several miles outside of the community to get to the next town. Ms. Zink added that the Congressional districts have pretty equal population and she would suggest keeping the existing maps. With the other maps they should consider what was done the last time when the districts were gerrymandered and start from scratch.

Rep. Kristina Schultz – Ward 9 – The main point she wants to recognize is that having a Bipartisan Commission is the right thing to do for the citizens of New Hampshire. She herself is a partisan democrat and would like to have all districts shaped to favor her party but she has to ask herself what is best for all Granite Staters. If redistricting is controlled by partisan interests that is not what is best for the state. Anything other than, independent, fair, honest, ethical and moral redistricting is not what is best for the state. She believes that the Executive Council districts are unfair, especially the district that Concord is in which is shaped like a dragon and was gerrymandered to neutralize democratic power. She does not believe they should have floterial districts. State Representative Districts

should only be represented by one person. Her district has about 4400 people and is pretty compact with a lot of renters and senior housing. Salem has 30,000 people and all the Representatives are at large. It is not fair for the people of Salem to not know who represents them. What is in the best interest of the voters is for them to have one representative, and to know that they have an equal voice. She agrees with the John from New London.

Rep. Dianne Schuett – Rep. Schuett requested that if the committee needs to join Pembroke with another town it be Allenstown. Historically that was the district and they share the same downtown, zip code and sewage processing plant. For the Executive Council district, she requests that they consider changing #2 to be joined with others that have things in common with Concord and is a more natural fit. – The Senate district is the same, they have more in common with Concord than they do with Strafford and Raymond. She added if it is not convenient to put them with Concord, perhaps some alignment with Bow and Dunbarten would work.

Victoria Graham – Hopkinton Ms. Graham stated that history has its eyes on what this committee will be doing in the coming weeks. Millennials really care, they are activists and they are paying attention. She urged the committee to take a long view of redistricting not a short view because what they do now will affect these same citizens years from now.

Meeting adjourned at 7:03

SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON REDISTRICTING

Strafford County Community Input Session

September 22, 2021

Meeting Minutes

Members of the Senate Committee Present: Senator James Gray, Senator Regina Birdsell, Senator Donna Soucy, Senator Rebecca Perkins Kwoka

Opening Summary:

Senator Gray called the Senate Special Committee on Redistricting to order. Representative Griffin opened the House Special Committee on Redistricting meeting and explained that neither the Strafford County Court or the County Commissioners had anything to do with planning this Public Input Session or the Redistricting process. Staff of the General Court have arranged locations to have these Sessions in each County throughout the state.

All Senators and Representatives introduced themselves. Representatives present: Rep. Barbara Griffin, Rep. Paul Bergeron, Rep. Connie Lane, Rep. Wayne MacDonald, Rep. Carol McGuire, Rep. Israel Piedra, Rep. Marjorie Smith, Rep. Len Turcotte, Rep. Lucy Weber.

Senator Gray stated the rules of decorum for a Senate meeting do not allow clapping and or booing.

Representative Griffin stated the process and procedures for the public to access the House redistricting website. She also explained how the NH Constitution places the responsibility of drawing district maps on the Legislature and that it is to be done every ten years after the federal census is finalized.

Testimony

Susan Richman – Durham In January of 2021 the town of Durham adopted a Resolution on fair redistricting which she presented to the Committee. In the resolution it requests transparency and she stated that if there is no Zoom access for public input, she does not believe there is true transparency at all stages of this process. Regarding the Senate districts, Senator Perkins Kwoka's district is not compact, and she believes it is an example of partisan packing. There is not fair representation of democrats in the state when they are all put into one fat district. Senate District #21 crosses county lines and school districts. Voting maps should not be gerrymandered to favor one party or candidate and that is what happened when Portsmouth and Durham were put together. Her final comment was to ask

the Committee to hold hearings for the public to view and provide input on, the drafts maps when they have been designed.

Sue Nastasi – Rollinsford In her town they vote for four representatives. Currently, one lives in Rollinsford and three live in Somersworth. She understands the Committee will have to combine her town with a larger city but that drowns out the voices of the citizens of Rollinsford. She would like to have time after the maps are drawn to voice her opinion. Accurate representation is shown with fair maps. The voters should choose their representatives, political candidates should not be choosing their constituents. She continued that the act of packing a district with one political party reduces the electoral voice of the surrounding districts. She believes Executive Council District #2 is an example of that and needs to be looked at. A Warrant Article for Fair Redistricting was passed on June 8th by the voters in Rollinsford.

Madeline DeSantis – Somersworth She would like to encourage the committee to both draw fair maps and when the drafts are ready, come again and give the public a chance for input. The last time maps were drawn the public only had 24 hours to react to them. In Somersworth, the ward lines will be drawn after the district maps are drawn. At the Executive Council level, District #2 is an example of a packed gerrymander. Decisions are made at that level that directly impact her life, but her voice has been diluted because of the packed district. Somersworth has the same Executive Counselor as Westmorland which is over one hundred miles away and borders Vermont while Somersworth borders Maine. Somersworth is experiencing a boom in young families and the next ten years will affect all their lives and she asks the committee to keep that in mind when they are drawing fair maps.

Nate Stewart – Dover He would like to know what is being done to include the youth in this process. A lot of the best and brightest are leaving the state because they do not feel like their government represents them or that they have a voice. He echoes the concerns for fair maps and transparency. Until there is a map that the public can consider, he cannot give specific comments and he encourages them to come back for public input when draft maps are drawn. He asked that they please respect majority rule when considering districts. It is better to have districts that accurately reflect how things really are than to be gerrymandered. There has been a general decay in trust in government and democracy. He believes many people do not trust the government which comes from years of systemic partisan politics. This is why they need transparency and accessibility.

Ira Freeman – Exeter He asked each of them to look in the mirror each morning and ask if they are for democracy or for bias. When they decide that question, for transparency purposes they should make it public. It is important for the people to

know what each member stands for. He encouraged the committee to vote for democracy and not for bias.

Maggie Fogarty – Dover – The message she wants to convey is that the committee must release the draft maps so the public can see them and can give input. This allows everyone to see the logic behind what is drawn. She agreed with others who have brought up the badly drawn Executive Council District #2 where the democrats are packed and gives republicans a better chance to win the other four districts. Dover Wards #5 and #6 both have populations enough to merit their own seats in the House of Representatives. Instead, they share three representatives with Somersworth Ward #2. This is not coherent and unfair to Somersworth because it is hard for a Somersworth citizen to be elected when dominated by Dover voters. She agrees that everything is at stake in this process, the integrity of democracy, and encouraged the committee to be transparent and accountable and to allow the public to see the draft maps.

Representative Smith – She commented that she reviewed the size of all of Somersworth's wards and not one is large enough to warrant its own representative. This requires that they be combined with another town. She sees that as a problem that they have to face. She does not believe that Dover has completed the process of equalizing the population of its wards. She asked what the speaker would like this committee to do given those problems.

Representative Griffin – She replied by explaining that when the committee draws House District lines, they have to stay within county, town, city and ward lines. Many of the cities are not on the same timeline as they are, and the wards need to be combined with something. Wards are a consideration for this committee in regard to district boundaries.

Ms. Fogarty – She commented that she is aware that through the Open Democracy Map-A-Thon project, there are ways to design the maps that take into consideration the issues that the representatives have described.

Representative Turcotte – He encouraged everybody to go to the House website for Redistricting to gain more insight into the process.

Palana Hunt - Hawkins – Rochester She has no complaints about how their wards are drawn for the House of Representatives. Their Senate and Executive Council Districts do not make sense. In the Senate District, they are grouped with towns that do not have anything in common. She hopes that they will be able to give feedback once draft maps have been drawn.

Rep. Gerri Cannon – The big concerns that they have in Somersworth is understanding who is running and who is running in their ward. For example, this year, all the candidates to be voted on will be people who live in Somersworth. Next

year, the people in Ward #2 will not be voting for people just from Somersworth, they will have to consider candidates from Dover. She has had seniors complain to her that they thought they were voting for someone who ended up not being on the ballot. It is difficult for her when a resident from Somersworth in Ward #2 contacts her to represent them with an issue they are having. She asked the committee to hold listening sessions for the public, to better understand any changes to the maps that might affect them, so they will know who is going to represent them.

David Holt – Somersworth He asked that the committee try to ensure that everyone has a say in redistricting. Some people find it difficult to get to these sessions and they would like virtual accessibility so that everyone has a voice. The public needs to have a say after the draft maps are drawn. He believes there has been gerrymandering rampant across the country and the state and that this destroys our democracy. A great example of gerrymandering is Executive Council District #2 which stretches from Vermont to Maine. Every town should have their own representatives. Somersworth needs someone who lives in Somersworth. A single ward may not have enough people to have its own district now, but the wards will be redrawn in the future and disrupt the new maps. One of the ways to minimize the damage of this is to keep the wards in town and give every town or city its own representatives. The constitution requires that the districts be contiguous and preserve political subdivisions.

Matt Towne – He believes a simple test of fairness and democracy is being able to explain how you ended up with the final map and do it with a straight face. He asked that they consider that when they are drawing the maps. He stated that NH has a long history of gerrymandering and gave Executive Council District #2 as an example. Nobody thinks that is an appropriately drawn district. That example in addition to the Governor vetoing an Independent Redistricting Commission twice, does not give the voter confidence. This committee has the power to make sure this process is transparent and well communicated to the public. He believes they should make it a standing policy that the representatives bring the draft maps before the town and explain why they are drawn a particular way.

Jim Verschueren – Dover He believes that most legislators serve because they care about their state and want the best for its people. This committee is a sacred trust to our democracy and to those that believe in the promise of America. He echoes the pleas for them to draw fair maps and to be transparent. To continue belief in our democracy we must have trust that votes will count and voices will be heard. When districts are created to manipulate votes we all lose. He asked the Committee to set aside their party affiliation and make each district as competitive as possible.

Phil Hatcher – Dover – He is a member of the technical mapping team for the Open Democracy Map-A-Thon. He asked that they honor the fair and transparent redistricting resolutions passed by multiple towns across the state. Last evening Open Democracy held a Zoom forum where citizens could comment on the maps drawn. He believes this is an excellent approach for the committee to use once the draft maps are drawn in order for the public to have input. There are severe challenges to complete the House District maps. They hope to have theirs completed by October 5th. The constitutional requirements of one person one vote, one rep for sufficient population, and contiguous districts are challenging. He believes some people like to think there is only one way to overcome these challenges. He wrote software to auto generate potential House Rep maps, taking into consideration the constitutional requirements, and giving consideration to the towns that need their own representatives, there were a lot of options to choose from. There were tens or even hundreds of ways to draw the maps and fulfill the constitutional requirements. Saying it's too hard is not an adequate response. His software shows they can do the maps for 2020 with only 2 violations. If the constitution says every eligible town should be given their own representative his maps will do that with only 3 violations. David Andrews spoke about the Alternative Component Method and using that they can build a map for Strafford County with only 1 violation. He would be happy to share his maps, there are hundreds of ways they can map Strafford County. There are many questions of which priorities should be considered when drawing the maps, floterials, keeping city wards together, communities of interest, etc. There are lots of solutions and this committee is going to have to choose one. The public should know what the criteria are. Joel Anderson presented a tool with a database of solutions, and he believes the public should be able to see those solutions. There are no licensing agreements to his software, and he is happy to share it.

Jack Gale – Barrington – He spoke about Carol Clevin, a Representative from the town of Chelmsford, MA. In the last round of redistricting, in a closed meeting, they broke up Chelmsford into 4 different wards. People from the town could not run for office because they only had ¼ of the town. Towns with less population were representing their town. Ms. Clevin lost her seat. Concerned citizens looked into what happened and found out that there were some bad, illegal things done by people with a lot of power in government. He does not think that will happen here but encourages the committee to consider fair practices for the public.

Rep. Peter Schmidt – He believes that the situation in Dover and Somersworth needs to be changed. What was done in 2010 was not appropriate. The Supreme Court has not stated that every ward has to be equal it just has to be as close as is reasonable. Under the constitution, every one of the wards in Dover deserved to have a representative of their own. He represents Wards 1 and 2 and their numbers

together are about 10,000 and under the constitution they deserve 3 representatives and that is what they got. Wards 3 and 4 got 3 reps. Wards 5 and 6 were entitled to 3 representatives but they did not get that. They got put together with Somersworth 2 and the representatives elected were at large. That is not what the constitution called for. It should have been 1 from Ward 5, 1 from Ward 6, and 1 from 5 and 6 together. In addition to the inequity, you could have all 3 representatives be from Dover or from Somersworth 2. That is unfair and wrong, each deserves their own representation. He believes this committee can do better.

Rep. Timothy Horrigan - Durham, Lee, and Madbury, are in one district. He believes that they need to figure out what is a reasonable deviation, from 3,448. The 2006 constitutional amendment has not really ever been obeyed. It states that in addition to districts being contiguous, each town or ward should have their own representative if it is reasonably practical. The Vermont plan deviation is plus or minus 10% and they were approved by the federal government. We should not draw too many districts across city lines. Contiguity is another consideration and there are many now that are not contiguous and are not legal. The software that will be acquired by the committee is not transparent in how it is going to work. Open Democracy has mapping software that is open sourced and respects the city and ward lines. Drawing the maps is not quite as complicated as it is made out to be. He requested the committee release the drafts maps in time for the public and the courts to review. In addition to providing time for public input, it will allow candidates to know where their district is going to be.

James Fiescher – Dover Ward 5 – He remembers being shocked to find out that he shares a district with Somersworth who is on the other side of Dover. The districts that were drawn last time did not pass the smell test. He asks that this committee, consider, when they finish, if the maps accurately reflect the politics of the state or reflect a bias to one group or another. This year they have seen an insurrection at the capital, congress unable to come up with decisions to get the country out of debt, and worse, neighbors fighting with each other. This is because our representatives have secure seats. They do not have to answer to all of their constituents. The idea of compromise and working out solutions is no longer something that people are interested in. He respects each of them and knows that they care about this state and their neighbors. The only way we can come together as a state is to have districts where people have to talk to each other and work things out. This committee has a chance to fix the gerrymandered districts. They can say to every member of the state that they care about their voices. To draw lines to separate people is not good for the state and will only make the problem worse. He asked them to give the public time to review the maps before they are finalized.

Rep. Peter Bixby He quoted the requirements from the state constitution and stated that he likes Somersworth but he does not think it is fair that he, a resident

of Dover, represents them. They should have a dedicated representative from their ward as opposed to being tagged on to Dover. Anyone who is running from one ward in Somersworth is going to be at a disadvantage running against someone from two wards in Dover. Hudson and Pelham also have this issue. He urges them to pay close attention to any town or ward that is large enough to have their own representative and that boundaries be respected. He also urges that when there is a draft map there be public hearings with remote access.

Emmett Soldati – Somersworth He gave the history of Somersworth. It is so small it should be a town but was turned into a city in 1890. It was split into 5 wards to be sympathetic to the large corporation in town. He is concerned about the economic representation in the state. He questioned how people who do not have connections with a community or region are supposed to represent them and how are they supposed to run for office unless they have the financial resources to do so. Drawing fair maps tips the balance of favor against financial resources into community resources. Social capital can allow people to run for office and be successful without having to be funded by special interest groups or deep pockets. He also urged that the public be allowed to give input to the draft maps once they are drawn

Jules Good – Read by Emmett – Some of the people who will be most impacted by redistricting do not have the opportunity to share their thoughts tonight. This limits government transparency and stifles important discourse. People that do not have transportation access, work outside the area, or have physical limitations are disenfranchised when there is not a remote option for testimony.

Parker Cook – Dover In a city of 33,000 people, this room only has roughly 45 people. He does not think it is because people do not care. Voters have jobs, families and responsibilities and they put their faith in the legislators, that they have the voters' best interests in mind, that they are loyal to a just democracy. When looking at the Executive Council district map, his faith is a bit shaken. At the end of this process, he would like the committee to be able to say, above our party or any other interest we have contributed to this democracy.

Rep. Kurt Wuelper – Strafford His district is connected by a point. Strafford has a population of 3,991 which is enough for their own representative, and they want one. Currently, they share two with New Durham. New Durham does not have enough population for their own representative, so they have to be combined with another town. Strafford and New Durham have similar geography, and common interests but operate differently.

Nancy Pierpont – Madbury They want everyone to have a voice. Madbury has a population of 1,918. They share a school district with Durham and Lee, and they are so small that they share representatives with Durham. Madbury is small but

important. They are the keepers of the water supply for Portsmouth and Dover. She would like the committee to make sure their voices count equally. She works with the Madbury United Church of Christ and chairs the immigrant and refugee support group. She has seen many immigrants go through the asylum process and gain citizenship and asked the committee to consider the spectrum of the populace to make sure we are hearing from the new Americans. Make sure they count and include everyone's voice.

David Bickford – District 3 does not work out well and is only connected by a point. He had to drive through 3 other towns to get to a town in that district. He asked that they consider the transportation corridors that have to be taken within the districts. It is hard to represent people that they cannot get to nor have any connections with.

Heath Howard – **Strafford** Strafford and New Durham are not connected in the most contiguous way. It takes him 40 minutes to drive to new Durham and he has to go through Belknap County. That same time could take him to Concord. Strafford has enough population to have its own representative, yet it does not. It is linked with New Durham because it is culturally similar but comparatively New Durham is far more similar to Farmington, Middleton, and Milton than it is to Strafford. They do not share a public school, public safety resources, or community services and it makes no sense why they should be in a district together.

David Andrews – **Open Democracy** – He presented a display map that they came up with as well as the current map. He explained that the red arrows display the SAUs that are broken up and the green arrows show county lines that are broken up. He believes they should work hard to keep SAUs together. They went through a mapping process for all the districts. Using the most important community interests to people and the constitutional criteria they came up with a number of possible maps which make regional sense. Comparing both maps it is clear that the current map of districts is clearly gerrymandered. When he was creating the maps, he made sure to not look at partisan areas.

Brian Beal – They will have charts and graphs at the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:03

SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON REDISTRICTING

Grafton County Community Input Session

September 28, 2021

Meeting Minutes

Members of the Senate Committee Present: Senator James Gray

Opening Summary

Senator Gray opened the Senate Special Committee on Redistricting. Representative Griffin opened the meeting of the House Special Committee on Redistricting. This session is being video and audio recorded.

The County Sheriff gave instructions on the building exits in case of an emergency.

Representative Griffin explained that neither the Grafton County Court or the County Commissioners have any involvement with this Public Input Session nor the Redistricting process. Staff of the General Court have arranged locations for these Sessions in each County throughout the state. She continued with the process and procedures for the public to access the House redistricting website and explained that the NH Constitution places the responsibility of drawing district maps on the Legislature every ten years after the federal census is finalized. More information on the redistricting process can be found on the General Court Website.

Senator Gray introduced himself. The House members introduced themselves. Present were Rep. Webber, Rep. Lane, Rep. Rep. Marjorie Smith, Rep. Turcotte, Rep. MacDonald, Rep. Wilhelm, and Rep. McGuire

Testimony

Paul Phillips – Plymouth He asked that this not be the last time that the committee hear from the voters of Grafton County. They would like to have input on the draft maps when they are completed. He urged them to open the meetings to a remote session. Due to health concerns many are reluctant to attend an in person session. An increase in transparency can only help with voter confidence. The districts they will be drawing are for the citizens of New Hampshire not for elected officials. Fair redistricting is what is best for the people. The 2011 redistricting map made a Congressional District change for Grafton County and it is split into 3 different Senate districts. The floterial districts make sense in areas of high population but in Grafton county they have the opposite effect. They are large and spread out. In Grafton 17, it takes an hour to get from one side to the other. He urged that they keep the floterial districts as small as possible. The 2020 census

shows that people of color make up 13 % of the population. He asked that they do their best not to ignore the demographic shifts.

Susan Duncan – Bristol – She shared that after 22 years as a non-partisan employee for the State Senate, she observed that a majority of the Legislators never go further north than exit twenty. Their worlds revolve around the south of the state where it is more populated. They can see more constituents in one mall than Legislators in the north can see driving to fifteen places. She asked that, when redistricting, the committee please consider how large an area the districts north of exit 20 are. She continued that it takes a long time to get from point A to point B and do the job that Legislators in the south can do in one trip to the mall. It is not equal and those in the North Country would like it to be equal. There is a huge disadvantage to running a campaign in district 1. They would love to be part of the committee that makes these decisions.

Gail Kinney – Canaan – She is a longtime resident of a town that has been denied its representative. She implored the committee to be transparent with what they do and give voters fair notice for the meetings. To make this process as fair and transparent as possible the public should be able to review the draft maps once they have been drawn. Remote access is very important for these sessions and she would like them to do what they can to provide that. The Canaan Select Board has written to the committee in an appeal to give Canaan what it is legally entitled to, its own representative district. They have been robbed of this for the last ten years. The last redistricting was done behind closed doors , and the legislators did not care. In Part 2, Article 11 of the constitution it states that towns with sufficient population should have their own representative as long as it is within a reasonable deviation. At least 60 towns were robbed of having their own representative district. This constitutional requirement should be the basis of the redistricting process.

Cybele Merrick - Lyme – She believes that redistricting should be completed in as nonpartisan a manner as possible. There should be an even handed attempt at fairness so that all voices are heard. This will promote free and fair access to the polls. She asked that the committee schedule hearings after the draft maps are drawn.

Rep. Ned Gordon – Bristol – Bristol would very much like to have its own representative. The current population is around 3400 people which is within a reasonable deviation to have one. Currently, they have two representatives in a very large district and a flatorial representative. When he looks at the districts it looks like they were created by a machine. They are lumped together just to have an ideal number. His district is five towns at the bottom of the county that do not have much of a common interest. Three of them share a school district but Ashland and Grafton both have their own schools. Additionally, there is only one road to get to

Ashland. He has to drive almost 40 miles to go from one high school to another in his district. Almost every district in the county is like that. If he were putting the districts together he would start by looking at the towns that share school districts. Ashland being on one side of the Merrimack River and Grafton on the other have nothing to do with each other and should not be in the same district. His suggestion is to look at the school districts. On the Senate side it would be best if there were only two counties in Senate District 2 instead of three.

Mike Sampson – Canaan He remembers when people gathered in communities for problem solving that was not partisan. His selectboard is mixed with democrats and republicans. But they all live in Canaan. They have a little under 3900 citizens and should have had their own representative in the last redistricting. They would like one seat that is in Canaan. They have two representatives and both of them are from Wentworth. In his own town he solves many problems every year, water, sewage, education funding, zoning, etc. Many issues are specific to Canaan not Wentworth. They just spent over one million dollars to fix water and sewage problems and received zero dollars from the state to cover the project. In terms of having a day to day voice in the legislature, they do not have one. Honor the constitutional requirement and give them a voice. Please consider this and make it happen. They would like a voice from their town to represent and problem solve for them in Concord.

Linda Massimilla – Littleton There is a nice balance of representation the way the North Country is laid out right now. They know how to network and work together to address North Country issues, which is one of their greatest strengths.

Darla Bruno – Lebanon The voters are tired of the partisanship and the gerrymandering. They want fairly drawn districts that are neutral and logically drawn. If the committee is using software to help draw the maps, the public wants to know what the algorithms are that are deciding what the districts should be. She asked for access to these meetings for the sick and the elderly that cannot come out physically to the meetings.

Charlie Townsend – Canaan He served in the NH House for four terms and he was there during the 2011 redistricting. He is well acquainted with the constitution. He has heard committee members state that 90% of the redistricting decisions are based on population and only 10 % on other things and he believes that should be changed. Equal population does not mean equality of towns. For example, the same regional planning area, the same school districts, the same medical and recreational resources or the same geographical area. Canaan is in SAU 62 but all of the towns people in the district are not in the same school district. Canaan and Wentworth use different services and does not share a geographical area. He believes this district violates article 9 of the constitution. The representative from Grafton

District 9 has to win votes from just over 4,000 people, but the representative from Grafton District 16, Canaan's floterial district, has to campaign and win votes within an area with over 10,000 people. This is not fair to the people or the representatives. A way to solve the problem is to give Canaan its own district and let Enfield can keep its own and the other 3 towns can combine to have a district with common interests.

Katherine Mulholland – She was a rep for a floterial district and it was a nightmare. She believes they should eliminate all of them. She found it very hard to represent her district especially within the school districts. The school districts are what brings the people together.

Jean Townsend – In 2001 the republican controlled redistricting process gave them a very nice district with 5 contiguous towns. If they did what Mr. Townsend said, one representative for Canaan, one for Enfield and one for the 3 other towns, it would be recreating this same district. They have so much in common and share things together. The representatives knew people and had connections. The way it was done in 2011 changed all of that. Enfield with a population of 4,400 has two representatives, and Grafton with a population of 1,300, has three representatives because of the way the districts were divided up. Also, someone who represents Enfield has 4,400 constituents but the floterial district rep has 10,000 people to represent.

David Andrews – Open Democracy He believes that Hampton is the only town in Congressional District 1 and it should be in Congressional District 2 with the rest of Grafton County. The most difficult part of redistricting is calculating the floterials. The best he could do with the current methodology in Grafton county, left three towns without their own representative. With the Alternative Component Method that he developed it would allow all the towns that were eligible to have their own districts to have them. He asked again that the committee would consider the Alternative Component Method for calculating floterials.

Senator Prentiss – Lebanon – They are here for the granite staters so that maps are drawn fair. Public hearings should have access for those that cannot travel or are sick. The websites that you can get redistricting information should be publicized more so that it is easier for people to find. The rational used for the drawing the maps should be made clear to the public and an opportunity given to them for input. Common interests, population numbers and diversity should be considered as well as social compacts. The Canaan farmers market is one of the most popular places that neighbors get together. She wants to join the voices that advocate for a representative for the town of Canaan.

Rep. Mary Phillips –The Hanover warrant article resolved that this process should be fair and not favor political parties or candidates. Proper notice should be

given at least ten days before the next meeting. Access to public hearings should be made available to those that cannot be here can contribute testimony. She implored them to incorporate the findings from the public into their maps. She would like them to give the public more than 24 hours' notice when the draft maps are drawn and to issue a report explaining the methodology they used. They should avoid packing districts and cracking towns apart as this robs constituents of their true representatives. These districts should reflect common communities of interest. The Congressional Districts should remain competitive districts and any shifts should remain largely the same as not much has changed. The committee should let the US Supreme Court be their guiding light, one person one vote. The equal protection clause can be used for potential litigation which is a great cost to the taxpayers. In 2010 NH scored very low in the redistricting process because it was hidden from public view and expensive litigation followed. When there is an increase in transparency there is a drop in litigation. Her last concern is gerrymandering. It only causes division divides and the majority of Americans agree that gerrymandering is wrong. It divides communities from their natural commonalities. At a time when voter confidence is at an all-time low, she encouraged the committee to avoid gerrymandering and draw fair districts.

Ingrid Curtis – This committee has a tremendous opportunity to improve the partisan politics that they have gotten into. All voters are unhappy with the increased partisan politics in the country. Common sense would say that they could help with that. Making decisions based on anything but fairness and transparency would harm the state of NH

Meeting Adjourned – 7:27 p.m.

SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON REDISTRICTING

Rockingham County Community Input Session

October 5, 2021

Meeting Minutes

Members of the Senate Committee Present: Senator James Gray, Senator Donna Soucy and Senator Regina Birdsell

Opening Summary

Senator Gray opened the Senate Special Committee on Redistricting. Representative Griffin opened the meeting of the House Special Committee on Redistricting. This session is being video and audio recorded.

Representative Griffin explained that neither the Rockingham County Court or the County Commissioners have any involvement with this Public Input Session nor the Redistricting process.

Senator Gray introduced himself, Senator Soucy, Senator Birdsell and Senator Perkins Kwoka and reviewed Senate rules for proper decorum at a Senate meeting. The House members introduced themselves. Present were Rep. Barbara Griffin, Rep. Lucy Webber, Rep. Bob Lynn, Rep. Marjorie Smith, Rep. Len Turcotte, Rep. Wayne MacDonald, Rep. Matthew Wilhelm, Rep. Carol McGuire, Rep. Paul Bergeron, Rep. Connie Lane.

Testimony

Jane Armstrong – Exeter She is concerned about a fair, non-partisan, redistricting process. The most important criterion, in her view, is that every eligible town have it's own representative. NH is proud to have 400 representatives because it allows the voters to interact with them where they shop and do business. That is why the amendment passed in 2006 to allow every town that is within a reasonable deviation, which this year is 3,444, its own district. In Rockingham County, 14 towns were eligible to have their own House District in 2010 but were denied. They include Atkinson, Auburn, Candia, Chester, Deerfield, Greenland, Kingston, Hampstead, Newmarket, Nottingham, Plaistow, Rye, Sandown and Seabrook. She is asking this committee to give these towns and others like them, what the constitution allows them, a representative who lives in town and knows the people and its issues. The Legislature has had ten years to fix this.

Steven Borne – Rye He asked that the committee fix the Gerrymandering that was occurred ten years ago. The people appreciate the work the Legislators do for \$100 a year. These sessions are a great first step but the most important step is the second one. He believes that comes when the draft maps are drawn and the people are given enough time to look at them and provide input. This will avoid the suspicion of Gerrymandering and confirm a transparent process, which is what the citizens of NH want. He continued that the maps should not benefit any one specific political party. The committee should know how much the state, cities or towns pay for each primary because if that money is going to benefit one party or another it is against the constitution. Rye has enough population to have it's own representative but they are in a multiple town district.

Bernie Cameron – Deerfield She explained what can happen when a town is not allowed to have its own representative. Up until 2002, Deerfield had its own House District. That representative lived in Deerfield, knew it well, and interacted with the people in the community. Since 2002, their representative has been elected by the majority in their multi-town district. They have had people run repeatedly for town offices such as school board or select board and each time they have lost because they are well known in the community. She continued these same individuals are successful running for state representative because they are not know by the other towns in the district. They are elected solely based on their party rather than their accomplishments or their integrity which is not right. She believes it is time to return to Deerfield their right to have their own representative elected by the people of Deerfield.

Fred McGarry – Deerfield At their annual town meeting they voted 477 to 233 urging the Legislature to have fair and transparent redistricting on behalf of NH voters and to minimize multi-seat districts. He quoted the constitutional amendment regarding a reasonable deviation of population. The population of Deerfield is 4,855, well in excess of the required 3,444 for each representative in NH. His select board received petitions from over 80 voters calling for the boards to urge this committee to create a representative district exclusively for Deerfield.

Virginia Clifford – Candia She shares the concerns of the previous speakers. In her town they vote for 3 representatives in one district and 1 representative from another district. None of them live in Candia. She believes it would be very beneficial for Candia to have its own representative in Concord. They have almost 4,000 people now.

June Fabre – Exeter Her town is part of Senate District 23. She believes that Senate District 23 fails to represent her due to a partisan advantage for republicans in her district. The gerrymandering is subtle but significant and she would like to see the district lines drawn in a non-partisan way instead of continuing to favor

republicans. The process has been to design her district so that the number of democrats are just enough to almost but not quite win elections. The result is that the large number of democrat votes have been wasted. This is called an efficiency gap. Diluting the democratic votes this way makes her district and others less competitive. Her voice has not been represented by the republicans elected in the past. Now is the time to right this wrong and redistrict in a non-partisan way.

Rep. Joe Guthrie – The town of Hampstead is in a district with Kingston and has four representatives. They work hard to make sure they have two from Hampstead and two from Kingston. Both towns are approaching 9,000 each in population and he asked the committee to consider that when they are drawing the new maps. He appreciates the openness with which this committee is conducting these sessions across the state. The most important thing that they should be concerned with throughout this process is transparency. He believes that the guidelines set them up to fail. They cannot do their job without failing one community or another. Gerrymandering assumes that they are making decisions strictly based on politics and he submits that this is not the case. He is confident that the people on these committees will work hard to be fair but because of the guidelines it will look like gerrymandering. In order to make the process more transparent he suggested changing the makeup of their committees or change the rules.

Chris Muns – Hampton There is nothing more essential for voters to believe in their democracy, than to have this process be transparent and fair. He hopes the input that the committee has received from the public will be reflected in the work that they do. He stated that it is unfortunate they did not give the public a chance to testify remotely. He urged them to reconsider that decision for the remaining sessions. He believes that it is essential that the public have a chance to provide input after the draft maps are drawn. This will demonstrate the process used to draw the maps was fair. The public needs at least ten days-notice for this. He added that the two best litmus tests to determine whether the process was fair, will be what they do with the two Congressional Districts and the Executive Council Districts. The population has not changed enough for any big changes to the Congressional Districts. He believes it will be telling if they adopt maps that bisect Manchester or propose to move it from Congressional District 1 to Congressional District 2. Executive Council District 2 is one of the best examples of gerrymandering in the country. All of the Executive Council Districts need to be drawn so they represent communities of similar interests and a partisan balance that exists within the state. The same should be done with the Senate Districts. Wherever possible any town that has enough population to have its own representative should have it and they should minimize Floterial Districts. When Floterial Districts are necessary he suggests they use the criteria of shared

SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON REDISTRICTING

Coos County Community Input Session

October 7, 2021

Meeting Minutes

Members of the Senate Committee Present: Senator James Gray, Senator Rebecca Perkins Kwoka

Opening Summary

Senator Gray opened the Senate Special Committee on Redistricting. Representative Steven Smith opened the meeting of the House Special Committee on Redistricting. This session is being video and audio recorded.

Representative Smith explained that while they are in this facility neither the Courts of NH or the County Commissioners of Coos County have anything to do with this Public Input Session or the redistricting process as it is underway in the General Court.

Senator Gray introduced himself, and reviewed Senate rules for proper decorum at a Senate meeting. Senator Rebecca Perkins Kwoka introduced herself. The House members introduced themselves. Present were Rep. Steven Smith, Rep. Carol McGuire, Rep. Marjorie Smith, Rep. Connie Lane, Rep. Lucy Webber, Rep. Matt Wilhelm, Rep. Glenn MacDonald, Rep. Bob Lynn.

Representative Smith explained that information on the redistricting process for the House of Representatives can be found on the general court website. One of the standing committees is the Special Committee on Redistricting. On that page they will find a link that will enable them to email all committee members. It also has a link for the Committee Website which has additional information for the special committee on redistricting. One of the things they can find on that page, among other things, is a link for meeting minutes and recordings. That is where the video that is being taken here tonight will be found. He mentioned that they are doing these sessions because they want to hear local knowledge. Insights about which towns share common interests, or which towns in a district are too far away, are very useful to the committees.

Testimony

Ellen Farnum - Tamworth – This past year citizens in 74 towns and municipalities across the state voted for resolutions that support a nonpartisan, fair, redistricting process. She believes there are four additional steps the

committees need to take after the conclusion of these public sessions. They should make public the criteria they will use for drawing the new maps. Next, they should have a second session in each County so that the public can provide input on the draft maps. Third, she would like remote access for the second round of meetings for people that cannot make it out physically to give comments. Last, community interests should be part of the criteria they consider when redistricting. She participated in the map-a-thon project and feels that the maps drawn were fair.

Representative Hatch – Coos District 6 For years he has heard statements from people in the southern part of the state about Coos County that are not accurate. It is not true that all of the communities in Coos County are the same. They have changed from an area that had been dependent on the forest and paper industry, to one that is dependent on tourism. When he came to the County, there were about 35,000 people working in the paper and logging industry, now they are lucky if there are 200. These changes happened quickly and they are adjusting by trying to protect the resources that tourists are attracted to. In his District, Gorham and Shelburne are very similar and share many public resources. Though it is a numbers focused methodology that they use when they redistrict he asked that they please consider common community interests when they redraw the maps.

Representative Edith Tucker – Coos District 5 They are a long time tourist area. In her district are two major hotels, the Omni Mount Washington, and the Mountain View Grand. Both attract huge crowds of people. Her district has may have two school districts, but all of the communities have commonality in building the economy back on tourism. They all deal with a declining population and maintaining enough education funding. There is a tremendous worry about the future in Coos County. She asked that they think of the common views and worries that Coos County has when they redistrict.

Senator Erin Hennessey – Coos County is different from the rest of the state, in that, it is much more rural and much more spread out than the southern part of the state. People do not understand the differences in the communities, in the geographic area or what the economic and school needs are. She believes it is best for Coos County to continue to have the representation it currently has in the House.

Meeting Adjourned – 6:45 p.m.

SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON REDISTRICTING

Cheshire County Community Input Session

October 12, 2021

Meeting Minutes

Members of the Senate Committee Present: Senator James Gray, Senator Donna Soucy

Opening Summary

Senator Gray opened the Senate Special Committee on Redistricting. Representative Steven Smith opened the meeting of the House Special Committee on Redistricting. This session is being video and audio recorded.

Representative Smith explained that while they are in this facility neither the Courts of NH or the County Commissioners of Cheshire County have anything to do with this Public Input Session or the redistricting process as it is underway in the General Court. The purpose of these meetings is to receive local knowledge and input about redistricting in Cheshire County.

Senator Gray introduced himself, and recognized Senator Kahn who is the Senator for Cheshire County. Senator Soucy introduced herself. The House members introduced themselves. Present were Rep. Steven Smith, Rep. Paul Bergeron, Rep. Marjorie Smith, Rep. Connie Lane, Rep. Lucy Webber, Rep. Matt Wilhelm, Rep. Bob Lynn. Senator Gray added that Senate hearings do not allow clapping or booing as it is inappropriate. He stated that testimony given should be listened to with respect.

Testimony

Spec Bowers – Grantham - He would like to correct statements that have been repeated in previous meetings and among the general public. He believes that the following statements are not true: “the NH Constitution requires that towns that are large enough to have their own representative seat be allotted its own district seat.”; “New London is constitutionally guaranteed its own district and representative.”; “Canaan is legally entitled to its own representative district.”; “In 2011, 152 towns were eligible, but 62 of those towns did not receive their own House District, violating the Constitution as amended.” Mr. Bowers stated that the key phrase in the NH Constitution is “reasonable deviation” and that a town is not entitled to its own district just by being large; it’s population must be within a reasonable deviation. New London and Canaan’s population deviation are beyond what is considered reasonable. He estimated that in 2011, only 30 towns were

within reasonable deviations. The Keene wards deviate 34% from ideal population and are not entitled to their own districts. He urged the committee to not attempt to give every large town its own district and then fix unreasonable deviations by producing ugly floterial districts which defeat the intent to have locally elected representatives. He asked the committees to eliminate those huge floterial districts from the current map and create small districts that meet the intent of the Constitution.

Jeff Dioklar - Rindge – This past year in Rindge they passed a warrant article that asked for free and fair elections and no gerrymandering. They are of a size that he believes they deserve their own representative district. They have a school district with Jaffrey that is not in their town, and they do not have commonality with them. Where they do have commonality, they should share representatives. For the Senate and Executive Council Districts, they are grouped in with Nashua, with whom they have nothing in common. They are rural and Nashua is urban. They do not have any medical services in Rindge. Residents have to drive about 30 minutes to get healthcare. They need a representative that understands their rural needs and not just the needs of an urban area.

Senator Jay Kahn – He noted that it is a pleasure to welcome the Committee to Cheshire county. He is in his third term in the State Senate and has been in the region for 33 years. They are a County of 76,000 people according to the latest census and each Senate District will have between 55,000 to 65,000 people. It would make sense that Cheshire County would be in two separate Senate Districts but that is not the case. Currently, he represents fifteen of the twenty-three towns and the remaining eight are peeled off into three other Senate Districts. The consequence of that is very little influence coming from the eight towns. He would recommend that they divide Cheshire County into two separate Senate Districts. He mentioned that the school districts that are represented in Cheshire County are the Keene School District, the Monadnock School District, Hinsdale, Winchester, Fall Mountain Regional School District, Conval School District, and Jaffrey Rindge School District. He suggested that those seven school districts are a body of interest that could be worked with when trying to define two Senate Districts. Sullivan and Cheshire County together have a large population that represents western NH and have a lot in common. He would ask that the committee find more geographic commonality than Executive Council District 2 currently has. There are a lot of complications in splitting up 400 representative seats across the state. There will be very diverse districts but there is a need for some public feedback after the House District draft maps have been drawn and he hopes that they will be able to incorporate more informed commentary at that time.

Ian Burke – Keene He is working with the Open Democracy tech team on the map-a-thon project. He believes representation works best when the representatives

can easily connect with their constituents and when they can share common interests. Redistricting for party and electoral advantage marginalizes actual communities and favors national party affiliation and creates a less effective legislature. He hopes that in future redistricting cycles NH can move towards an independent redistricting process and for this process the committees can put communities together with shared interests' above political advantage.

Representative Smith opened the meeting back up at 6:40 p.m. He explained that information on the redistricting process for the House of Representatives can be found on the general court website. On the page for the Special Committee on Redistricting they will find a link that will enable them to email all committee members as well as a link for meeting minutes and recordings. He commented that these sessions are being held in all ten Counties. Local insight will be taken and applied to maps and in November the committees will vote on the draft maps but the process will continue through the new year.

Senator Gray mentioned that the Senate has a web site as well with links to email the committee, upload testimony or access the recordings and minutes. He reminded the public that the drawn maps will be Bills going through the normal hearing process which will give them time to comment again.

Rep. Cathy Harvey – Chesterfield She represents the towns of Chesterfield, Walpole, Hinsdale and Westmoreland. Her district is rural and they share the Connecticut River. It is important to keep them together in one district. In her 6 years as a representative, she has not had any constituents complain about how Cheshire District 1 is put together. It works for them because a lot of their projects affect all of the towns. The Hinsdale bridge, the nursing home, and broadband expansion are just a few examples. Her constituents can travel from one end of the district to the other very easily. She has heard people say that some districts have problems and need to be fixed; Cheshire District 1 is not one of them.

Rep. Paul Birch – Westmoreland – He agrees with the first speaker of the evening regarding the reasonable deviation. The Supreme Court ruled after the last redistricting that there is a hierarchy of values to apply. The top value is the federal, one person, one vote. The NH values include that towns should get, within a reasonable deviation, representation by size, not dividing towns into multiple districts, and paying attention to common geography. He agrees that things work well in Cheshire 1. He believes this is due to commonality of interests which is not in the constitution but is important to all citizens of New Hampshire. Putting the four river towns together made the most sense in the last redistricting due to the ecology and economics of the Connecticut river. Whether it is commerce and the

river, waste and the river, or transportation and the river, it is a big deal to those that live on the river.

Meeting Adjourned 6:51

SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON REDISTRICTING

Sullivan County Community Input Session

October 13, 2021

Meeting Minutes

Members of the Senate Committee Present: Senator James Gray, Senator Donna Soucy

Opening Summary

Senator Gray opened the Senate Special Committee on Redistricting. Representative Steven Smith opened the meeting of the House Special Committee on Redistricting. This session is being video and audio recorded.

Representative Smith explained that while they are in this facility neither the Courts of NH or the County Commissioners of Sullivan County have anything to do with this Public Input Session or the redistricting process as it is underway in the General Court. Staff has worked to secure locations to have these sessions.

Senator Gray introduced himself and reminded the public that the Senate does not allow cheering, clapping or booing. Input should be provided at the microphone. Senator Soucy introduced herself. The House members introduced themselves. Present were Rep. Steven Smith, Rep. Marjorie Smith, Rep. Lucy Webber, Rep. Wayne MacDonald, Rep. Bob Lynn, Rep. Connie Lane and Rep. Wilhelm

Representative Smith explained that information on the redistricting process for the House of Representatives and the Senate can be found on the General Court website. On the page for the Special Committee on Redistricting they will find a link that will enable them to email all committee members as well as a link for meeting minutes, recordings, and upcoming meeting information. He commented that these sessions are important because they want to hear local knowledge. Insights about which towns share common interests, or which towns in a district do not share common interests, are very useful to the committees.

Testimony

Rep. Linda Tanner – Sunapee – She represents a floterial district with a total population of 20,761 according to the 2020 census. She believes that NH, as well as Sullivan County, have some grossly gerrymandered districts. She is concerned about fair maps in the Congressional Districts, the Executive Council Districts and Senate Districts. Senate District 9 and Executive Council District 2 result in unequal representation and represent a partisan priority and they need to be

addressed. She supports a fair, open, transparent process and an independent redistricting committee. The current population and number of representatives in eight towns of her floterial district are as follows:

Cornish	1616	3 reps
Croydon	801	2 reps
Grantham	3404	3 reps
Newport	6299	3 reps
Plainfield	2459	3 reps
Springfield	1259	3 reps
Sunapee	3342	2 reps
Unity	1581	3 reps

She believes the goal of fair redistricting should be equal population among the various districts so that the vote of each citizen for representation in NH's House is approximately equal in weight to that of any other citizen. A 5% deviation is allowed. Floterial districts are complicated and confusing and pose several disadvantages for the voters. The average citizen doesn't know what a floterial district is, what it accomplishes, or why it exists. She stated that they do not interact with the floterial representative in everyday life. She added that when voting on an issue in the House, with eight towns it is difficult to represent all their local government, schools, and economies fairly. She urged the committee to create as many single districts as possible. She suggested creating a single representative district for Grantham and Sunapee and a two-representative district for Newport. She also asked that the committee set multi-town districts with a priority on their economic and governmental connections and eliminate floterial districts.

Rep. Sue Gottling – Sunapee She suggested that the committee restore Sunapee's status as a single district. Based on the 2000 census, Sunapee was a single district, a status that many of the town's citizens worked hard to achieve and valued highly. In 2010, Sunapee lost its standing and found itself allied with a town with which it shared no common interests as part of a huge floterial district. To many in Sunapee it felt like a gerrymandered decision. She asked the committee to partner Sunapee with towns that they share common interests with if their map keeps them connected with the other towns. She suggested Springfield, who Sunapee has a contract with for use of the transfer station and a shared watershed.

Rep. Brian Sullivan - He agreed with everything that Rep Tanner said about the confusion and disadvantages of floterial districts. Getting out to meet the voters is easier for a person with 1 or 2 towns than for a person with 8 towns. In his district he has towns that can only be accessed by a dirt road that require four-wheel drive. He suggested that it makes sense to create two districts. Cornish, Plainfield, and Grantham are very separated from his other towns. It would make sense to have

two districts with Plainfield and Cornish as one, and Grantham and Springfield as the other. Grantham and Plainfield are only joined by a game preserve and do not have any other common ground.

Ben Mortell – Unity He hopes that the committee will take action on the public's concerns as they travel around the state. Redistricting has become a very partisan issue. It is very important that they ensure that this redistricting process is transparent, inclusive and fair so that NH residents do not get even more cynical about politicians. His concerns surround communities of interest, and he believes that when putting the representative districts together, the focus should be on where the residents work, shop, go to church, receive medical care and share common recreation areas. Sullivan County would be better served if all of the County was within one Senate District. Having a Senator trying to balance the communities of Unity and Weare can be very difficult. Unity has a small population with a large geographic area. One side is close to Claremont and the other side is close to Newport. He asked the committee, when creating new representative districts, to carefully figure out how to join up the small communities so that the residents can share common interests. Executive Council District 2 is a clear example of excessive gerrymandering. Sullivan County does not have anything to do with the towns on the seacoast that are in the same Executive Council District. True transparency requires that the public have a chance to comment on the proposed maps before anything is final.

Rep. John Cloutier – He urged the committee to do a fair and impartial redistricting job for the Senate Districts, the Executive Council Districts, Congressional Districts and County Commissioner Districts. He has been involved in two redistricting efforts. In 2000, the maps ended up being drawn by a judicial master from South Carolina. He went from representing one district in Claremont to representing Claremont and two towns in Sullivan County, which had five seats in the House. The problem with that was the City of Claremont dominated the district with only one occasion in ten years that a candidate was elected outside of Claremont. He urged the committee to create as small of districts as possible so that the smaller communities will have a voice in the House. If they have to join some communities they should look at areas of common interest. Cornish and Plainfield share a school district and have a history together.

Ellis Robinson – Grantham She would like to make four points for the committee to consider. Sullivan County's communities of interest follow major transportation routes. Some towns follow the Connecticut river on I-91 and Rt. 12A. There is only one continuous east-west route in the County which is State Route 11. Grantham only has easy access to 89. She added that there are real challenges for the towns that are not on one of those routes. Her second point is that Sullivan County is purple in that there is a near tie between democrats and republicans. She asked the

committee to please make sure voting districts reflect this balance. Her third point is that NH is also a purple state. The committee should pay special attention to this balance and make districts as competitive as possible. Her last point for the committee is that she would like more meetings like this once the draft maps are drawn for the public to provide comment. She mentioned that Governor Sununu told NHPR's Laura Knoy that if any of the redistricted maps were gerrymandered, he would veto them."

Kya Messinger – She agrees with the last speaker that they are a purple county. She hopes that the committee will join communities that are like-minded and that once the maps are drawn the committee will come back and give the public a chance to comment.

SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON REDISTRICTING

Carroll County Community Input Session

October 14, 2021

Meeting Minutes

Members of the Senate Committee Present: Senator James Gray, Senator Regina Birdsell, Senator Rebecca Perkins Kwoka

Opening Summary

Senator Gray opened the Senate Special Committee on Redistricting. Representative Barbara Griffin opened the meeting of the House Special Committee on Redistricting. This session is being video and audio recorded.

Representative Griffin explained that while they are in this facility neither the Courts of NH or the County Commissioners of Carroll County have anything to do with this Public Input Session or the redistricting process as it is underway in the General Court. The General Court Staff worked to book this location.

Senator Gray introduced himself and reminded the audience that Senate rules do not allow any cheering, booing, clapping. If they would like to express an opinion, they should come up to the microphone and speak. Senators Birdsell and Perkins Kwoka introduced themselves. The House members introduced themselves. Present were, Rep. Marjorie Smith, Rep. Lucy Webber, Rep. Barbara Griffin, Rep. Bob Lynn, Rep. Paul Bergeron

Representative Griffin explained that information on the redistricting process for the House of Representatives and the Senate can be found on the General Court website. On the page for the Special Committee on Redistricting they will find a link that will enable them to email all committee members as well as a link for meeting minutes, recordings, and upcoming meeting information. Additionally, there is a link for the public to upload testimony or maps for the Committee to review. Redistricting is a process that happens every ten years with the federal census. It is important for the Committees to hear what works and what does not in your county and district.

Testimony

Rep. Jerry Knirk – The goal of redistricting is to achieve equal representation when the population shifts. He believes gerrymandering has been used by both Democrats and Republicans to strengthen the political grip of the party in power. The evils of gerrymandering are a decrease in competitive districts, an increase in political extremism and a widening of the political divide. The process the

committees are conducting can be done in a way to limit politics. There have been programs developed to help with redistricting and tools to help be sure that the process is fair. He urges the use of maps and metric algorithms as well as using the principles of communities of interest. Bottom line is that it is critical for the redistricting maps to be done transparently and fair for the people.

Ellen Farnum - Tamworth She believes there are four actions that the committees must take after they complete these community input sessions. 1. They should immediately disclose the criteria they are using to create the new voting districts. 2. Once the maps are drawn they need to immediately be made available to the public and the public given an opportunity to comment on them. 3. The next hearings need to have an option for citizens to participate remotely. 4. She urged them to incorporate the population data with the community of interest data. The map-a-thon project has incorporated these data points and she believes they created good maps.

Gabrielle Watson – Tamworth They are a rural community and they are connected to a number of the communities around them through common interests. She is worried that the Country and NH communities are being divided and torn apart. That is why this process is so important, the public needs to have confidence in their democracy again. The public needs to understand the criteria the Committee is using to make this a fair and transparent process. She believes communities of common interest should stay together because they collaborate together. Communities on the far ends of a district do not have anything to do with each other. In Tamworth they share a lot in common with Barnstead and she would like to see them stay together. It is very important to her that the public be able to provide input once the draft maps are drawn. This listening session is great but she would like to see their criteria and the draft maps once they are complete. She believes the public will need at least two weeks' notice of any hearing on the draft maps. She urged them to have at least one stand-alone Zoom meeting for the people who cannot come out.

Leonard Witt – Sandwich In his opinion the balanced approach to this process, will best serve Republicans, Democrats, Undeclared Voters, our state and democracy as a whole. He provided three stories that happened during the last week or so. The first was an example of extremists among the Republican Party. Story One: Nine GOP members of the New Hampshire House of Representatives recently co-sponsored a bill which states “the state peaceably declares independence from the United States and proceeds as a sovereign nation.” This is what extremist leaning redistricting brings forth.. Story two: The NH Executive Council, with its GOP Majority, followed the lead of the anti-maskers, antivaccine extremists and rejected \$27 million in federal funding to help the state fight Covid-19. They did so even though Governor Chris Sununu later said, “Our state (COVID-19) response

really depends on this money” it’s “ a disservice to all who we are elected to serve.” He believes that to anyone watching, it seemed the Executive Council caved into the screaming mob. New Hampshire is the only state to have declined the funding and in essence gave our hard earned tax dollars away to support other states like Massachusetts, Vermont, New York and New Jersey to fight covid. Story Three - In Moultonborough, similar anti-vaccine, anti-mask groups demanded via petition that a vote be held by the school board. The petition demanded that masks be optional for extra curricula activities. It would reverse the school board’s mandate. The good people of conservative leaning Moultonborough voted to support the school board's mask mandate. More than 350 voted and 57% voted for the mandate. He stated that this committee has a choice as they make redistricting plans, will they listen to the good people of Moultonborough or the extremists, some of whom would divide our nation and separate New Hampshire from it. It could backfire and permanently hurt the GOP, especially, if Moultonborough is a sign of where rational voters are heading, which is away from extremist politics

William Farnum – He would like to know what the criteria is that they will be using. He has looked at the maps that were drawn by Open Democracy. They look like they were created with fairness in mind. Fairness is important because in NH there are almost equal democrats and republicans. When the maps are published the public should have a chance to comment and have some input. He believes it would be good if the committee adopts the maps that are on display.

Hon. Ed Butler – Harts Location He appreciates that the committees have websites but probably many have not looked at it. He encourages everyone to look at the House website and review the information. Transparency is critical. If it is possible to provide a process where the public can see the work that the committee does and have an opportunity to comment, it will go a long way to build the public’s trust. He asked the committees to have a least one virtual meeting. He lives in the little finger at the top of Carrol County almost into Coos County. Some of the maps he has seen suggest that his towns affinity is North instead of South to the Conways. Most of the residents in his town are going south, not north and he hopes they will not change what they have now. The Senate District that is proposed has them going to the North and that is not where the common interests are.

Rep. Marjorie Smith asked if there is a historic reason for why Harts Location is in Carrol County.

Hon. Ed Butler replied he is sure there is a reason and he will look for it and send it to the committee.

Rep. Mark McLaukey – Carrol District 3 He has been through this process on two occasions and he cautions the committee that some have drawn the lines and then never hold office again. They do not hold office again because they have taken

their job seriously and when the lines are drawn it does not always benefit the people on the committee. His position is that he will stand proud and serve whomever they give him.

Hon. Bill Morrow – As a young democrat growing up around here he was appalled at the number of republicans around him and wished that it could change. As an older man he would like them to make the process fair.

Peggy Merrill – Madison She worked on the census with her husband and enjoyed the process. She asked where the information is that they gathered and how is it impacting what they are doing. **Rep. Griffin** replied that she will do an overview at the end to answer that.

Bob Cosleau – West Ossipee Party affiliation should not have anything to do with the redistricting process. He and others are dismayed by what each party has done. This committee should not care what their parties have done. Their focus should be simple, fair, balanced maps. He understands that they cannot make everyone happy but his hope is that the committee comes up with something most everyone is happy with.

Rep. Jerry Knirk – It is difficult to overtly gerrymander the House Districts given the large number of representatives. He believes that the multimember districts are where they tend to see efficiency gaps in terms of the representatives. He asked that as much as possible they would try to avoid multimember districts as this ends up packing the population. He asked about the population numbers on the map and if they have to do with the deviation from the ideal population for a representative.

Rep. Griffin replied that she believes it is the over under from the current maps but there is probably nobody at the meeting that can give him a definitive answer on that.

Rep. Lucy Webber replied that it is the deviation of the magic number which last time was 3,291 and is now 3,444. She added that because they have to keep towns together, not cross county or state lines, trying to make the numbers come out right can be difficult.

Rep. Griffin explained that the population in the state has gone up so the number per representative will be slightly higher. She continued by reminding everyone that the public can view these meetings as they are happening on YouTube. There will be a YouTube video of this meeting posted tomorrow on the General Court/ Special Committee on Redistricting Website. Also on the website are the laws that govern redistricting, the meeting minutes, submissions to the committee, and the criteria that they have to follow. They have to make certain assumptions in regards to cities and populations. When you try to take four hundred representatives and allocate them throughout the population of NH, it can be difficult. She explained

that on the website they can view maps and review testimony that has been submitted. There are bills for each of the districts that will be drawn and they can be accessed and testimony submitted. If they can participate in Zoom meetings then there should be no problem getting on the website to review the information and email testimony to all members.

Senator Gray commented that the House and Senate have separate sites. The easiest way to access them is on the General Court Website home page. If anyone wants to send testimony to both committees they will need email the committee or upload testimony on both websites.

Senator Perkins Kwoka asked if Rep. Griffin could explain what happens next, after all of the community input sessions are completed.

Senator Gray replied that the Senate will have a meeting on the 25th for the committee members to discuss the next steps.

Rep. Griffin stated that the House Committee will be meeting on the 20th. The rest of the meetings have not been scheduled yet but they will be on the website as soon as possible. November 18th is the deadline to vote on the maps.

SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON REDISTRICTING

Hillsborough County Community Input Session

October 18, 2021

Meeting Minutes

Members of the Senate Committee Present: Senator James Gray, Senator Regina Birdsell, Senator Rebecca Perkins Kwoka

Opening Summary

Senator Gray opened the Senate Special Committee on Redistricting.

Representative Barbara Griffin opened the meeting of the House Special Committee on Redistricting. This session is being video and audio recorded and will be placed on the House and Senate Websites.

Representative Griffin explained that while they are in this facility neither the Courts of NH or the County Commissioners of Hillsborough County have anything to do with this Public Input Session or the redistricting process as it is underway in the General Court. The General Court Staff worked to book this location.

The House members introduced themselves. Present were, Rep. Wayne MacDonald, Rep. Marjorie Smith, Rep. Lucy Webber, Rep. Barbara Griffin, Rep. Bob Lynn, Rep. Paul Bergeron, Rep. Len Turcotte, Rep. Israel Piedra, Rep. Matt Wilhelm, and Rep. Ross Barry.

Senator Gray recognized former Senator Melanie Levesque, introduced himself and reminded the audience that Senate rules do not allow any cheering, booing, clapping. If they would like to express an opinion, they should come up to the microphone and speak. Senator Birdsell, Senator Soucy and Senator Perkins Kwoka introduced themselves.

Representative Griffin recognized the death of General Colin Powell and asked for a moment of silence. She explained that information on the redistricting process for the House of Representatives and the Senate can be found on the General Court website. On the page for the Special Committee on Redistricting there is a link that will enable them to email all committee members as well as a link to access meeting minutes, recordings, and upcoming meeting information. Additionally, there is a link for the public to upload testimony or maps for the Committee to review. Redistricting is a process that occurs every ten years with the federal census. The districts that will be redrawn in New Hampshire will be, State Senate, State Representatives, Executive Council, County Commissioner

Testimony

David Hennessey – Pelham He lives in House District 37 which consists of two towns Pelham and Hudson with a total number of voters, according to the last census, of 40,000. They choose eleven State Representatives. From his town of Pelham only two of those representatives live in Pelham and it has been that way for twenty years. They are not asking for anything drastic only that they would separate these two towns that are very different. This is not a partisan appeal as both towns are heavily crimson and this separation will not change the power in the Concord. They would just like to have their State Representatives living among them. People that they see in the grocery stores, going to the churches and getting involved in the community. They have a Senate District that represents three Rockingham County towns and one Hillsborough County town, theirs. Their Executive Councilor lives in Rye which is far from Pelham and the district looks like a salamander. It is the perfect example of gerrymandering. They would like their Senator and Councilor to be from Hillsborough County.

Jessica Grill – Bedford She believes a free democracy is essential to securing all other freedoms that we enjoy as Americans. Every vote must count and all voters must be represented fairly. It is critical that New Hampshire's district maps accurately reflect the population. Strong, fair maps will ensure it is the people that control elections, not Super PACs or big corporations. She would like NH residents to be able to comment on the draft maps but feels that with only thirty days left and no idea when the maps will be available to the public, there is not enough time. This lack of transparency is disappointing to her and she feels only increases the division and lack of trust between citizens and elected officials. She asked that the committee members commit to release the maps to the public at least two weeks before the final vote. She also asked that they schedule at least four additional meetings for the public to ask questions and give feedback. She also believes the meetings should be made accessible to all NH residents via remote access.

William Maddocks – Amherst – He believes people who are at home should have remote access as well. Amherst was among 74 towns, who voted in favor of having a fair redistricting process. People are sick and tired of unfair maps and gerrymandering. He emphasized that voters stood out in the cold to collect signatures and worked hard all over the state because they want fair and non-partisan voting districts. They understand that these warrant articles are non-binding but they express the will of the people whom they represent. The House Redistricting Committee should set a schedule for when the maps will be released with at least two weeks for the public to review and give input. They should commit to scheduling four meetings for the public to ask questions.

Former Senator Melanie Levesque – Brookline The act of redistricting every ten years is meant to account for fluctuations in populations for the purpose of accurate representation. She is here to ask that they draw the maps fairly and to show her fellow citizens that this is not supposed to be a political process. She believes a very real side effect of drawing the districts to favor one party over another is in the education system. Between the three towns of Nashua, Hollis and Brookline there are over 13,000 public school students. Almost 11,000 of these students rely on the Nashua public school system. Hollis and Brookline have some of the top public schools in the state and they value them. There are only over 2,000 students in the remaining four towns of Senate District 12. She wonders why four towns with only 2,000 students override three towns with 13,000 students. When lines are drawn to give an unfair advantage to one party over another it only widens the divide between them and results in more extreme primaries and more extreme policies. She believes the people of NH should be concerned after hearing Steven Stepanek state that he could guarantee a Congressional Seat for the republicans because they controlled redistricting. She asked that this committee clearly demonstrate that maps are being drawn for a specific purpose of serving the people and not the politicians. She added that with only thirty days until the maps must be voted on, the public has no idea when they will be able to review them or if they will be able to comment on them. She asked that committee leadership recommend to leadership that there should be remote access for public participation in future hearings.

Kate Marquis – Manchester She lives in Ward 9 in Manchester and their floterial district is Wards 8 & 9 and Litchfield. She has lived in Manchester for many years and has never been to Litchfield. She commented on the population, financial and educational differences between Manchester and Litchfield. She does not understand how the needs of either are being met with their representation. She asked that the committee please consider that in this process.

Bev Cotton – Weare She encouraged the committee to ask the House Speaker and the Senate President to build a more inclusive environment for people that cannot come out. Her voice is heard because she is here. She would like them to think about doing things a better way than the way things have been done in the past. Please consider commonalities in communities. Weare and Deering share a district and they have nothing in common. She also asked if they would publicize the criteria that they are using to create the maps. She does not see a clear outline of the criteria that they are using to draw the maps. She understands they are using a software program that was developed but that does not explain the process. There is a lack of transparency in that. She wants them to favor fairness, common sense and the true spirit of the task at hand. Democracy is a precious and fragile thing and she would like to think that this committee can restore it a little bit. She would like

the opportunity to offer an opinion, concern, or congratulations once the maps are drawn.

Linda Bundy – Antrim This is the first time that she has followed the process of redistricting closely. So far, the current process is more open than the description she has heard of from previous years. She participated in the Map-a-Thon Citizen-Drawn Mapping Project by submitting data for her town of Antrim and doing a telephone survey of 10 towns in Hillsborough County to determine their shared services. She learned how essential it is to consider communities of interest such as school districts, shared services, and common issues in addition to population. She encouraged the members of both committees and the public to look at these maps. Specifically speaking about Antrim, its close ties with Bennington are significant. Many residents from both towns are employed by Monadnock Paper Mills. They have a shared water and sewer department. Their children attend the same middle school. Bennington children participate in Antrim Recreation teams and activities. Even the food pantry is a combined effort. Antrim and Bennington should also share districts. In the New Hampshire House, Antrim is in District 1 with Hillsborough and Windsor, while Bennington is in District 3 with Hancock and Greenfield. It would make sense to have Antrim and Bennington together with other nearby towns in the ConVal School District. Deering is in District 2 with Weare and District 39 with Goffstown and Weare but has much more in common with Hillsborough. Floterial District 38 includes Antrim and Bennington along with 8 other towns, extending south through Lyndeborough, Wilton, and Greenville. This district should be more compact. Their Senate District 8 is also spread out and would benefit from greater compactness. When these first listening sessions are complete, she asked that the committee continue to have an open process which will explain what criteria they will consider in addition to the mathematics of population. She asked that when the maps are drawn they would be released to the public for review before they are finalized, that they hold a second round of listening sessions in each county to hear feedback from the public, and lastly, have the option of remote participation for those that cannot attend in person.

Joseph Rogers – Lyndeborough He would like them to consider where we are as a democracy. His opinion is that our democracy is failing and people are losing faith that their voices will be heard. He believes his District 38 is a mess. This work is very important and is not a partisan process. The goal should be to support democracy and not tear it down.

Susan Shamel – Hillsborough Her town was one of the towns that passed a warrant article in March of 2020 asking for fair redistricting. Gerrymandering happens in every state. Her town administrator sent letters to all of their representatives letting them know about the passage of the warrant article. It was a lot of work to get this done for the 6,000 people of Hillsborough. She feels like it is

going to be a waste of time and she asked the committee to not let that happen. She is angry that there was a need to get those signatures, and to put out all of that work. She does not think they should have had to drive from Hillsborough to ask them to conduct fair redistricting as it should be a no brainer. She asked that the criteria they plug in to the computer be fairness not partisanship.

In response to continued clapping **Rep. Griffin** stated that they have staff with them from the state house and there is no applause allowed in the Senate Chamber. In the House it is a little harder to control with 400 members instead of 24 but she asked that they respect the Senate rules.

Dion Lewis – Amherst He is concerned when he hears that our republican Governor has to threaten a veto of maps that do not pass the smell test. When people lose faith and feel that the system is rigged our democracy suffers. He asked that they put aside any personal preferences and Steven Stepanek's thirst for power through redistricting. He believes we should all hold our leadership accountable. He asked that they draw the lines in ways that serve our communities.

Goley Santana - Nashua These maps will directly impact our communities and our generations future but they still know very little about how they will be drawn or if they will be able to see them. The U.S. census shows that the Hispanic communities are growing and she believes they should be represented. She asked that as leaders they should set an example for future generations and do things that are considered fair instead of favoring one party or another.

Emily Olson – Goffstown The effects of this redistricting will last for ten years affecting young New Hampshire citizens ready to start the next chapter of their lives. She will not raise a family or have a life in a place where her voice is not heard. She believes the public should have a voice throughout the process so she is asking this committee to commit to holding at least one, highly advertised, hearing for public comment after the maps are drawn. This hearing should be posted at least a week in advance and have virtual access. A platform that allows virtual testimony such as Zoom would be preferable. She asked that the criteria be made public and transparent. She demanded that the committee follows the constitution criteria and draw fair maps with out gerrymandering. She is angry that she has to fight for fair redistricting.

In response to more clapping **Representative Griffin** stated that if it continues they will ask staff to remove those clapping from the room. **Senator Gray** commented that if those in the audience would like to express an opinion they should come up to the microphone and asked them to please be respectful. **Representative Griffin** added that they are conducting business under the rules of the House and the Senate. The General Court meets for hearings on bills routinely in Concord and they thank Goffstown for allowing them to use this

facility. They have been to every County and have conducted all of the meetings according to the rules of the House and the Senate and she appreciates everyone in attendance following them.

Christine Fajardo - Manchester She is in support of a transparent redistricting process that is equally accessed by all constituents. During her last campaign she met a man who purposely disengages from the electoral process because in the last few years, he had become disillusioned with the state of our government and politics at all levels. She explained that this man did not feel like his vote counted any longer. She encouraged the committee to think of people like this man when they are redistricting and remember that gerrymandering only produces disengaged citizens who do not trust their elected officials. They have the power by choosing a process that is fair, transparent and accessible by all to restore the faith of so many.

In response to more clapping **Representative Griffin** commented that she is from Goffstown and is very disappointed that more than any other county hearing this one has had the most deliberate reactionary outbursts.

A man in the crowd yelled "this could get a lot worse, there could be an uprising now." As he continued yelling, **Senator Gray** called for security to remove the man from the room. The man got up and left the room on his own.

Representative Griffin stated that we show respect for all speakers to not have more of a reaction for some than for others. It is hard to get up and speak your opinion at a microphone in a crowded room and she asked again for all present to show respect by not clapping.

Marie Morgan – Goffstown She agrees with all of the speakers before her. She went over the populations of the towns in the County and the number of representatives allotted to them. She believes there is something wrong when the little town of Windsor has four representatives but the larger town of Peterborough has only two representatives. Milford has five representatives and the smaller town of Pelham has eleven. She commented that the maps are a mess.

Former Senator Shannon Chandley – Amherst During her time in the legislature the drawing of fair voting maps was always a priority. Both the House and the Senate passed, with a bipartisan majority, independent redistricting bills. HB 706 of 2019 was an excellent bill and she called their attention to the section in that bill called redistricting criteria. She believes that if they use that criteria as their guiding principle, they will have fair maps. It follows the basic criteria from the constitution but also adds that districts shall follow a single boundary and not be bisected. Districts shall be drawn in compact shapes and the committee shall take into consideration communities of interest as much as possible. She added that

the next section of the bill states that no redistricting process should favor or disfavor a specific political party, language group or racial group.

Louise Spencer – Merrimack County There is value in speaking in person. People want a fair and nonpartisan process. They would like to see the maps before the November 18th deadline and have an opportunity to comment on them. Public access should include a remote option.

Rep. Kat McGee – She believes concern from the public comes from the fact that the criteria for drawing the maps has not been published. She was disappointed when the fair redistricting bills that passed were vetoed. An independent committee has less chance of putting politics before the people. She has some experience in a floterial district and in her opinion it is better to have representatives that live in the towns they represent and have things in common with.

Bonnie Bruno – Hollis She agrees with all the speakers before her. She wants her vote and all other granite stater's votes to count. She does not want their votes packed, cracked or gerrymandered. They are responsible for meeting the will of the New Hampshire voters that overwhelmingly voted for a fair, non-partisan, redistricting process.

Fred Mayer – Hudson He is concerned because there were no maps to review before this hearing. This does not give him an opportunity to either agree or disagree. His request is, if in the interest of having a fair process, they could have hearings after the maps are drawn and that there is remote participation.

Lucas Meyer – Manchester There is a need for a timetable of when the maps will be released. With only 30 days left before the deadline, there will not be a lot of time for the public to review the maps and make plans to attend a hearing.

David Erikson – Weare – He asked that they listen to the input of the public and incorporate it into their decisions. He believes with the population of Weare they should have their own representative. If possible he would like to see the draft maps once they are drawn. If the districts are drawn unfairly there will be lawsuits. It would save a lot of time if the districts were drawn fair and reasonable from the start.

Rolf Vanbibber – Amherst His town of Amherst is districted with Bedford to the north despite most of the population being centered in the southern part of the town. They are also in a district with Mount Vernon which makes sense because they share a school. He believes they should have public meetings after the maps are drawn so they can comment on something that exists.

Barbara Schult - Goffstown She has four requests for the committees.

- 1). Make their criteria for drawing the maps available to the public. Transparency is key for the electorate to be assured the maps are fairly drawn.
- 2). Once the maps are ready, a second round of public hearings are necessary so that the citizens can provide input, once they have seen the maps actually drawn. This is a significant and vital step to the process. In addition, provide ample time for the public to digest and understand the maps before notice of the public hearing to receive input on these drawn maps.
- 3). Special attention to the Executive Council districts is needed before they are redrawn, especially concerning District 2, and careful study must be made to the new maps so that the districts are balanced and fair.
- 4). Goffstown currently has a NH House floterial district representing Goffstown, Weare, and Deering. They (Goffstown) have no connection or affiliation (i.e.. shared schools, sports etc.) with Weare or Deering. She asked that they look at this floterial district and reconsider the inclusion of these unrelated towns, especially Deering, which might more appropriately be linked to the town of Hillsboro. It is quite a stretch for a representative to live in Deering and be able to talk with constituents in Goffstown (or vice versa).

Jon Cross – Brookline He hopes they will receive their own House District. He got involved with the map-a-thon effort last year put on by Open Democracy. As part of that effort, they came up with a list of common communities of interest. Some of those on the list are high schools, SAUs, shared water and sewer and shared fire and police. They also created an analysis tool to tell if Counties have been split with the intent of analyzing the maps of 2010 and the 2020 maps. All of this work has been done to make transparency a priority. He asked the committee to have remote access in future meetings.

Betty Vaughan – Litchfield She is concerned about the Executive Council Districts and would like non-partisan maps.

Rep. Maria Perez – The most important thing is to represent the people that put them in office. She does not see party she just sees her constituents. The maps should be drawn with fairness in mind so that every voter has a voice. She believes it is important to have representatives with common interests in the community, living among the people. The Hispanic community should have representatives in the community. The disabled community reach out to her with their concerns. It is important to have remote access so everyone can participate.

SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON REDISTRICTING

Belknap County Community Input Session

October 19, 2021

Meeting Minutes

Members of the Senate Committee Present: Senator James Gray, Senator Regina Birdsell

Opening Summary

Senator Gray opened the Senate Special Committee on Redistricting. Representative Steven Smith opened the meeting of the House Special Committee on Redistricting. This session is being video and audio recorded and will be placed on the House and Senate Websites.

Representative Smith explained that while they are in this facility neither the Courts of NH or the County Commissioners of Carroll County have anything to do with this Public Input Session or the redistricting process as it is underway in the General Court. The General Court Staff worked to book this location.

The House members introduced themselves. Present were, Rep. Marjorie Smith, Rep. Lucy Webber, Rep. Steven Smith, Rep. Bob Lynn, Rep. Paul Bergeron, Rep. Len Turcotte, Rep. Wayne MacDonald, Rep. Travis O'Hara

Senator Gray introduced himself and reminded the audience that Senate rules do not allow any cheering, booing, clapping. If they would like to express an opinion, they should come up to the microphone and give input. Senator Birdsell introduced herself. Senator Soucy introduced herself.

Representative Smith explained that information on the redistricting process for the House of Representatives and the Senate can be found on the General Court website. On the page for the Special Committee on Redistricting there is a link that will enable them to email all committee members as well as a link for meeting minutes, recordings, and upcoming meeting information. Additionally, there is a link for the public to upload testimony or maps for the Committee to review. Redistricting is a process that occurs every ten years with the federal census. It would be helpful if those that provide testimony would give input on what would benefit this County.

Testimony

Don House – Belmont Belknap County passed a warrant article for fair and nonpartisan redistricting along with over seventy other communities. He believes transparency and fairness are crucial to the redistricting process. Committee hearings should be open for testimony on Zoom. Draft maps should be available for public comment before they vote on them. Five towns within Belknap County qualify for their own representative according to the NH Constitution. Districts should be competitive and reflect the people that live there. As a Belknap county resident, he would like to see it less carved out. They have three Senate Districts for a county with 70 thousand people.

Claudia Ferber – Gilmanton She questioned why Gilmanton does not have an exclusive seat in the NH State House of Representatives? The NH State Constitution Part 2, Article 11, states 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 two seats in the State House of Representatives and one floterial seat with Alton and Barnstead. 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. She questioned why Gilmanton shares two house seats with Alton and one house seat with Barnstead. Other than sharing land boundaries, Gilmanton does not share any municipal services and their tax base is quite different. 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 two house seats and one floterial seat with Alton and Barnstead. She questioned why Belknap County has three 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. She asked the Committee members to consider her three requests: 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.

Lew Henry – Gilmanton 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. In 2011 his home town of Gilmanton was Constitutionally entitled to a single, non-shared seat in the NH House but they did not get it. Not only is this seat specified in the NH Constitution, but it is also the fairest way to reach the ideal of "one person, one vote". Instead, they were given two seats shared with Alton, and one seat shared with Barnstead and Alton. Gilmanton is a very different place than Alton, they share very little except a border. They do not share a school nor an Executive Councilor. Their geography is different, as Gilmanton is mostly fields, forests, and farms, with very few businesses. They do not share a shoreline of Lake Winnepesaukee with Alton and their tax structure is very different from Alton's. Because of the total lack of transparency and fairness in the 2011 Redistricting process they had no input into correcting it. This is a violation of the NH Constitution which they hope this committee will rectify before more violations are forced on us. The next thing that could happen is placing them in a district with a non-contiguous town, which would also violate the Constitution. He is 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", their Board of Selectmen urge that the Redistricting Committee ensure a fair and transparent Redistricting plan, without gerrymandering, by holding public meetings such as they are here, and that Gilmanton be given its single, non-shared Representative in the NH House.

Nathaniel and Elizabeth Abbott – Read by Mr. Henry

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.

Rep. Norm Silber – Every town and every city in NH wants to have their own exclusive representative. That cannot happen when you only have 400 representatives. When he first ran in 2016 there was no party primary and they ended up with two reps from Meredith and two from Gilford. In 2018, again, there was two from Meredith and two from Gilford. In 2020 there was a party primary and they ended up with three from Gilford and one from Meredith. Over each biennium there have been a back and forth between Meredith and Gilford. Redistricting is a political matter and has been given to the legislature to decide. He has been in touch with the town of Meredith and they feel they should have their own representative.

Hunter Taylor – Alton He is a County Commissioner but is here as a citizen of Alton. The committees need to adhere to the one person one vote rule. Four hundred representatives is unusual but it does represent commitment to localized representation wherever it can be accomplished. Belknap County has the fewest municipalities of any County in the state. One city and ten towns and eighteen representatives. He believes combination districts can be dangerous. In 2000 the legislature saw fit to create district five in Belknap County. Four towns, seven representatives with forty percent of the population of the county. In 2008, of the seven representatives, four were from the same town. Gilmanton has gone at least two biennium without a person from Gilmanton representing them. He believes they should give serious consideration to giving one seat to Alton, one to Barnstead and one to Gilmanton and a shared one between Alton and Barnstead who share a hospital and a superintendent. That would be fair to all involved. Gilford and Meredith both deserve their own representation because it is unfortunate when three of the four representatives are from one town. He encouraged the Committees to give Laconia five representatives as they make up 26% of Belknap County and need a strong delegation in Concord. He suggested that they give Tilton and Sanbornton their own representatives.

Rep. Timothy Horrigan He would like to have time to comment on the draft maps and plans once they are done. During the last redistricting there was no time for the public to comment after the maps were decided upon. Executive Council District 2 is very gerrymandered and needs to be changed. He suggested splitting Belknap into two Senate Districts instead of three. The current plan includes a district that is not contiguous in Belknap County. Gilford and Meredith share a boundary in the middle of Lake Winnepesaukee but they are in one representative district. He quoted from Article 11 of the State Constitution. He believes they can use a number

higher than 10% when looking at population numbers. He submitted written testimony that lays out a plan for districts.

Sandy Muce – Meredith Her local knowledge is pertinent because decisions are being made that affect the rights of citizens. The lines which are drawn connecting communities need to be executed with a clear understanding of local conditions. 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. She knows 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. They 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. She is sure that's true for Gilford too. Although she does not know because even though she has friends in Gilford and have done business in Gilford, she is not part of their community. 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. She encouraged the committee to repair this mistake and return Meredith to its own district.

Lynn Montana – Meredith – 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 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". 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. 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. NH voters are here today in solidarity to let the committee know that they expect, 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. They would like to see the committee restore a fair and transparent voting system to NH in 2021. She is from Meredith, has lived here most of her 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 they were coupled together through redistricting with Gilford. Numerous other NH towns have also been denied their historically independent districts..

Steve Merrill – Meredith Over the past few decades he has 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. He believes one significant influence on this 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, he has 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 Republican (or rather because of this fact), they were combined with Gilford to form a single district with 4 representatives. Never mind that the only border they share is on the lake or that they 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% - 45.9%) 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. 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.

Cyndi Paulin – Gilmanton She commented that they should brag about our citizen government. The representatives were people that they knew. When she was growing up her town of Farmington had two Representatives and one Senator. These were people she saw at ballgames, at the grocery store, at the bank and at community events. It was easy to give input to them. She is shocked that there is not a representative from Gilmanton. She requested that they restore the spirit and functionality of New Hampshire's citizen legislature.

Rep. Sally Fellows – She has a suggestion that they 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 she was able to successfully map 27 seats (the current allocation) with just a few adjustments to the current configuration, she 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 she 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, she wondered why it was 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%. Her 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%, she suggests the map should be deemed acceptable. Her second request is that after preparing draft maps they would 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. Her 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. She can provide them with a spreadsheet that can be sorted by town or high school.

Eliza Leadbeater – Gilford In 1992 there was unemployment of over 11% in this region. Belknap County had challenges and all eleven towns were very different. The delegation worked together for the benefit of all. The representatives knew their communities needs. She doubts the representatives from Gilford know what Meredith needs and vice versa. She spends a lot of time in Meredith and there are a lot of differences. The reason why they were successful in the nineties was because the representatives knew their constituents and could come together to solve problems. She would like to get back to that, with each community having their own representative.

Mo Baxley – She was hoping that the legislation for the new maps would have been written so she could offer testimony. She asked that once the maps are done the committees would hold a hearing in Concord or online so that people can offer testimony on the legislation and the redistricting.

Ruth Larson – Alton The voters of NH and Belknap County have spoken in regards to fair and transparent redistricting. It is up to them as committee members to be as non-partisan as the voters have been. She has confidence that they will do the right thing.

Jay Newton – Gilford Redistricting will have a great impact on the strength and resiliency of the towns and counties of the state. Diversity is a characteristic that is really important to this process. Gerrymandered districts disenfranchise people who could provide new ideas and better participation in our towns. They have a big responsibility in deciding how strong NH will be over the next ten years. Being inclusive will make our state stronger and more resilient. He requests that the public would have a chance for input after the maps are drawn.

Hon. David Huot – Laconia Laconia has four representatives for about seventeen thousand people but in Belmont they a big population for one representative. He suggested that the committee take a good look at forming districts where so many people do not have to share the same representative.

Tony Carita – Meredith The town of Meredith had its own representative for over 200 years until they were joined in the same district with Gilford. They do not share a land border only a point in the middle of Lake Winnepesaukee. Additionally, they do not share any municipal services or any common commercial or healthcare interests. Gilford and Gilmanton share more common interests. He suggested that there is an easy solution for this problem. He asked the committee to consider splitting the four representatives into two for each town. The way it is now if three out of the four delegation reside in one town, they will put the best interest of that town ahead. The created districts should not be setting up a situation where one town will be disadvantaged over the other if they do not have to.

Rep. Tim Lang - Sanbornton They had a vote in his town for fair and non-partisan redistricting and he is here to bring that message to the committee. The town of Tilton is above the deviation for their own representative. He asked the committee to consider giving them one and use their overage in population for Sanbornton to create a floterial district between the two towns. The two towns share many common interests.

Bill Donahue – New England is the place where American Democracy is held most dear. He held Norman Rockwell's "Freedom of Speech" print and spoke of the man in the print being a dissenter of government. He commented that if there is gerrymandering this man would not have a voice to dissent. The New England town meeting is a model for democracy. He encouraged the committee to respect democracy and give Gilmanton it's own representative.

Brian Beihl – Open Democracy Action – Alton Throughout this year and part of last year, he has 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. They have run workshops about the best practices for fair redistricting featuring national experts that some of you have attended. They have educated towns about the Constitutional provisions for

redistricting, and with their partners assembled the Map-a-Thon coalition, in which over 250 people have now volunteered. They 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. The voters who braved the pandemic to come out and vote on it, made it clear they want fair maps. In May, the Map-a-Thon coalition began its work, surveying NH cities and towns for communities of interest data. What they didn't get through surveys, they 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 the criteria, this 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 them to create the overlays on their 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 their maps, and the maps of others, to see where there are weaknesses, mistakes, or intentional manipulation. Like Mr. Joel Anderson's software, one of their 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 they hadn't thought of. While their maps are not perfect, they have 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, people have asked for in these hearings. This community of interest data, along with their maps, and supporting documentation is readily accessible to the committee. Tonight, he would like to take one more step and make a proposition. In consultation with the members of Map-a-Thon Mapping and Technical Team, they are offering their services to the two committees. The House Special Committee is up against a tight deadline. Their House maps are nearing completion, as close as they can get without redistricted city wards. They can work with the committee, joining policy & constitutional expertise and technical expertise. 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, they have proposals ready to analyze which improve competitiveness and compactness while being sensitive to communities of interest. New Hampshire has a long tradition of volunteer contributions to developing legislation.

Jim McFarland – Meredith As in 74 other NH towns, the fair and transparent Redistricting Resolution was passed overwhelmingly by Meredith's voters. This is a powerful and clear message to the committee that voters across the political spectrum care deeply that this once every decade redistricting be done fairly and impartially with no more gerrymandering. Their District 2 representative, Jonathan Mackie, testified at Town Meeting, on the record, to support restoring Meredith to their own district with their 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. 2) 2020 census data for redistricting must be shared fully and openly with the public. 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) Their meetings and County "listening sessions" like this one should be on ZOOM to allow those unable to physically attend to safely participate. 7) This committee must release their "draft" maps with sufficient time for public review/response. 8) Proposed drafts of maps must be shown at two 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) Their 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 them, our leaders and democracy will further deteriorate. Specific to Meredith, per the November 7th 2006 Constitutional amendment on NH House redistricting, their committee must honor this amendment and restore Meredith to their own district with their own exclusive NH House representative(s). To do otherwise is to perpetuate the injustice inflicted on Meredith's voters in 2011 depriving them of their rightful representation.

SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON REDISTRICTING

Regular Meeting

October 25, 2021

Meeting Minutes

Members of the Senate Committee Present: Senator James Gray, Senator Regina Birdsell, Senator Rebecca Perkins Kwoka

Opening Summary

Senator Gray opened the meeting. The LSRs for the Senate and Executive Council districts have been submitted and they contain the districts as they are now. The County meetings have all been completed. They are having problems with communities like Manchester and Nashua. The way the Map-A-Thon project broke up Nashua will not work. They combined wards together in a way that does not give the ten percent criteria needed. He has asked the Senate Attorney to help him draft a letter to all of the municipalities that will have redistricting in their own community. Currently, the House has asked for a November 20th deadline for the return of all redistricting information. In Rochester they will be submitting their information just as soon after the 3rd as they can. Other communities are not as far along. He spoke with Rep. Bergeron and Nashua will not have their information ready by then. Based on those facts, the Senate Redistricting Committee will write a report based on the input that they received from the ten County meetings and issue that. That will be their last action as a committee. All other steps taken will happen in the Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee. The conversation has been how to get their work done quickly and still give approximately two weeks for the maps to be reviewed. They will work out the timelines in the Election Law Committee.

Senator Soucy clarified that the legislation will be introduced and be treated as other legislation except for the fact that they may have the opportunity to do more than one public hearing for greater input.

Senator Gray replied that ELMA will meet and whoever wants to bring in a map, from the committee, they will introduce it and make sure that it is published for the public to review. Whether they have a public hearing before that or after will be determined but his preference is to have the hearing after the maps are introduced. He continued by saying that the committee just had ten meetings with input on how to draw the maps so the next meetings with the public should be input on how they did when they drew the maps.

Senator Perkins Kwoka wanted to clarify if the process will be to introduce the bills at the committee level and then amendments can be introduced with two weeks-notice for the public to review.

Senator Gray replied that is how he understands it will work. The intention was to get the maps out before Christmas but with the work they need to do in Nashua that might be close.

Liz Tentarelli commented that she understands the dilemma they are having with the city wards and asked what the delay is with the Executive Council District maps.

Senator Gray replied that he would like see how the Representative Districts are drawn before they complete the Senate and Executive Council Districts to know where common interests might be. If they do not know where to start from it will be hard to have cohesion within communities.

Senator Perkins Kwoka asked if one of the public hearings will have Zoom capability for public testimony.

Senator Gray replied that right now the Senate is back in normal session and they do not usually do Zoom. Anyone can submit video testimony and staff will post it to the website. If an organization wants to get together and do a Zoom video it can be uploaded like any other testimony for the committee to review. He added that he looks at everything that has been sent in so far.

interests. Hampton, with a population of almost 16,000 people, should have at least four state representatives.

Ken Hajore – This process would not be his first choice for redistricting. He would have an independent body made up of an equal number of democrats and republicans and citizens. He knows some representatives that are anything but fair-minded and that is what he is afraid of. There are a lot of criteria that they could follow to draw the maps but the worst criteria is party affiliation. He added that just because one party is in the majority does not mean they cannot be fair.

Harriet Cady – The last redistricting was done by the courts and they joined the districts how they saw fit. She would like every town to have its own representative but she realizes they have 400 Representatives and 24 Senators for the whole state. She would like to have a Legislator in her town that she can talk to and ask questions of. When she was a representative, she made an effort every month to go to each town and talk to the people. It is a hard job because there is always someone unhappy. She believes the people need education in how New Hampshire's Legislature works.

Laurie Warnock – Hampstead She agrees with Mr. Guthrie that Hampstead deserves their constitutional right to representation. They have a population of over 8,000 and do not share schools or public safety resources with any other community. She believes that the public should have at least ten days' notice to give input on the draft maps and that they should have remote access to do it.

Skip Berrien – Exeter They have the opportunity to address the fractured status of New Hampshire society by conducting an open and fair redistricting process. Rockingham County has experienced significant growth and changes in the last decade. He lives in Senate District 23 and from there, served three terms in the NH House of Representatives. The towns in this district have divergent orientations. They are either towards I93 in Salem or towards the seacoast. He proposes a plan to redistrict Senate District 23. This alternative district will include major economic centers and school districts that are now spread over three Senate Districts. It would take into account the natural affinities of the population in everyday life. Additionally, it would continue with republican domination, however, there would be a slight increase in democrat voters which would contribute to a more equitable political division. He offered this plan for their consideration which will maintain a stable population size within the district.

Rep. Jaci Grote - She asked that the draft maps be drawn and shared with the public so they have a chance to give input.

Matthew Stover – Chester On May 15, 2021, the town of Chester, passed unanimously, an article urging the NH General Court to carry out redistricting in a fair, transparent way, through public meetings, not favoring any political party but including communities of interest and minimizing multi-seat districts. The town also urged the committees to allow Chester and other towns with adequate population, their right to representation. Chester is currently in Rockingham District 4 which has five representatives serving three towns. Chester is a unique community and would like to have their own representative. State Representatives have a tremendous impact on their way of life and how much property tax will increase or decrease. The fact that property tax is controlled by the state and not the towns is what they call the New Hampshire disadvantage. A dedicated representative from the Chester community will be able to focus on what will affect the citizens of Chester.

Dana Theokas – Chester She asked the committee to consider a more inclusive opportunity for a more diverse group to speak to them. In Chester they have a small, active community and meet their representatives at the town fair, at the transfer station and on election day. She believes if they do not have someone in their community to represent them, that they do not have direct representation as the constitution calls for. She looks forward to the opportunity, after the maps are drawn, to discuss how the committee chose to put the communities together.

Kristi St. Laurent – Windham The town of Windham passed a Warrant Article that requested this committee to conduct a fair and transparent redistricting process that is respectful of the interest groups that make NH a great place to live. She asked that they allow communities that are eligible for their own representative to have one. This makes getting to know your representative possible and provides a two way street of information. She requests that the public be given enough time to look at the draft maps and provide input.

Alice Passer – Greenland She hopes that they take their jobs seriously as far as fair and transparent redistricting. She agreed that the public should be able to see and comment on the draft maps.

Trish Jidd – Kingston - Kingston and Hampstead share a district and Hampstead is much larger than Kingston. Currently, the representatives have agreed that of the four, two should be from each community. This does a disservice to Hampstead, because, if they just went on votes, Hampstead would have more of a say than Kingston does. She added that there is no way to guarantee equal representation as it is just an agreement between the current representatives. Each of the towns have enough population to qualify for their own representatives. They do not share a school district or any public services.

Phyllis Mackey – Exeter She supports a non-partisan independent commission to conduct redistricting to ensure a fair and transparent process. She would like future meetings to have remote access and a chance to give input on the draft maps.

Victor Helenic – Salem He strongly believes in voting and that we need to make sure that voting is desirable. Redistricting can make voters excited about voting again and make a difference.

Kevin Fleming – Exeter There is a cynicism in the younger generation that money and partisan politics have ruined democracy. He asked that the committee be attentive to be strong and fair and avoid accusations of gerrymandering.

Rep. Debra Altschiller – Stratham These public hearings should be accessible via zoom to those that cannot be here to testify. Her town passed a warrant article that demanded a fair and transparent redistricting process and commission. She believes this is a partisan process but they must try hard to avoid gerrymandering and draw fair maps. They should consider shared school districts and common interests. She asked that they do not break up school districts over multiple voting districts and that they be grouped together to mirror the communities. Stratham would like their Floterial Representative be within their school district. In Rockingham County there have been changes in populations and many towns are entitled to their own representative. She stated that Executive Council District 2 is a poor reflection of New Hampshire and she believes they can do better. She asked that the Congressional Map be reflective of the competitiveness that the maps have now. The public needs to have more notice of these sessions for transparency and to give input. The public also needs digital accessibility to the draft maps and she asked that they come back once the maps are done for input.

Mark Malone – Epping Having a representative in your town if you have the population should be a key mission of this committee. He requests that the public be able to see the first draft to give input.

Katherine Rocky – Hampton She commented that the front porch is no longer the place where they communicate with their constituents and neither is a closed room like the one they are in. She asked that they keep in mind how they will communicate to the people and what their goal is.

Mark McLaughlin – North Hampton He worked with Open Democracy and learned a lot about map drawing and redistricting. It is really important when the maps are drawn that they be explained to the public. He would like to see the districts be competitive across the board.

Kay Galloway – Atkinson She stated that each of their towns are deserving of independent districts with a representative.

Eric Turner – Brentwood He agrees with the idea of keeping school districts and common interests together. He believes that it would be great if they could let the public know all of the underlying elements that went into drawing the maps. This would give the public a chance to see the methodology that went into the final results.

Virginia Clifford – Candia She commented on the alignment of the districts.

Rep. Norman Major – He agrees that they need to make as many single districts as they can so that these communities are not robbed of their representatives.

Representative Griffin confirmed that the meeting was live streamed from the start with no disruptions. She added that the public does have remote access to both the Senate and the House Special Committee on Redistricting on the General Court Homepage. There are links on the site to look up the committee members, watch the meetings, email testimony, and look at maps that have been submitted.

Meeting Adjourned