

October 5, 2021

Madam Chairwoman and Members of the Committee,

My name is Chris Muns. I served as a State Representative representing Hampton between 2012 and 2014. I also was a candidate for the State Senate in District 24. I know what a commitment of time and energy this is for you, and I would like to thank each of you for your service.

There is nothing more central to our representative democracy than voters believing the process they must follow to elect their representatives is transparent and fair. To that end, I thank you for the opportunity you are giving individuals throughout New Hampshire to share their input with you. I hope the decisions you make will reflect the input you have received.

It is unfortunate, however, that given the recent increases in Covid cases across the State you chose not to provide an option for the public to testify remotely. I urge you reconsider that decision and to add that flexibility to the remaining listening sessions you have scheduled.

In light of comments made by the Chairman of the NH Republican Party that maps will be manipulated so as to favor his party, it is essential that you not only publicly renounce those statements but that you commit to holding another round of hearings AFTER the maps are drawn so that the public has a chance to provide you with their input and so that you can demonstrate that the process used to draw those maps was indeed fair. To give the public enough time to provide you with meaningful input, the public needs at least 10 days' notice of all future public hearings.

The two best litmus tests of whether the process is fair will be what you decide to do with our two congressional districts and 5 executive council districts.

Since there have been minimal changes in population between the existing congressional districts the changes to the maps of those districts should also be minimal. It will be telling, however, if you adopt a map that either bisects Manchester or proposes to move it from Congressional District 1 to 2.

Executive Council District 2 is currently one of the best examples of gerrymandering anywhere in the country. It and the other executive council districts need to be redrawn so that they better represent communities of

shared interest and the partisan balance that exists within the state. Failure to do so will cast doubt on the whole redistricting process.

That same principle – grouping communities together who have shared interests – should guide how state senate districts are drawn. In District 24 for example, Newton has more in common with Plaistow (currently in District 22) than it does with New Castle which has more in common with Portsmouth (currently in District 21). You need to end the practice of creating safe Republican and safe Democratic districts.

Wherever possible every town with more than about 3,500 residents should have at least one State Representative representing just that town and we should minimize the number of floterial districts.

Where a floterial district is necessary the principle of grouping communities with shared interests should be followed. Hampton Falls – which currently shares three seats with Seabrook - has less in common with Seabrook then, for example Kensington. And North Hampton, which currently shares a seat with Newington and Portsmouth, has less in common with those two towns then it does Greenland or Stratham.

Finally, as a former State Rep from Hampton, I would be remiss if I did not say that as a town with almost 16,000 people we should have AT LEAST 4 state representatives representing just Hampton.

Thank you for your time this evening and thank you again for your service.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Muns
5 Nersesian Way
Hampton, NH 03842
chrismuns@chrismuns.net