

Testimony for the Special Committee on Redistricting

Oct 19th at the Belknap Mill, Laconia

Belknap County- Town of Belmont

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

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

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

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

My view of transparency and fairness is the following:

- 1) Committee hearings should be open for remote testimony via Zoom or other technology. One way streaming is not sufficient. Forcing voters to come to an in-door meeting restricts participation and forces voters to choose between their health and the democratic process. I ask you to offer this option in future hearings that are scheduled.
- 2) Draft maps should be available with sufficient time for public review and commentary. I want to see the maps before your committee votes on them. When will the draft maps be available?
- 3) An independent, non-partisan group of NH voters should endorse any final maps that are recommended
- 4) Five towns within Belknap County (Meredith, Gilford, Acton, Tilton, and Gilmanton) qualify for their own separate representative according to the NH Constitution. I would expect the outcome of this process to provide these towns with their own representation and not shared with another town.

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

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

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