

House Special Committee on Redistricting

Merrimack County Public Hearing
Merrimack County Administration Building
Basement Conference
Concord, NH
October 27, 2011
7:00 p.m.

Members of the committee present: Chairman Rep. David Bates; Rep. David W. Hess, Rep. Warren J. Groen, Rep. Robert J. Perry

There were approximately 35 people in the audience.

Materials made available to the public:

1. Map of Merrimack County with 2010 populations
2. State and federal constitutional provisions and state laws addressing redistricting
3. The algebraic formulas for calculating deviation with the aggregate method and the component method
4. Instructions for finding the House Special Committee on Redistricting website
5. The schedule for all of the county public hearings

Chairman Bates called the meeting to order at 7:07 P.M., at the administration building's lower floor conference room with approximately 23 members of the public in attendance, which grew to approximately 35 later in the snowy evening. Chairman Bates provided a summary of the conduct of the meeting from a sheet used at all previous meetings at which he was chair. He emphasized that H.B. 592 dealing with redistricting is only a placeholder, it being necessary for a bill to be filed within the deadline, and it now serves as a vehicle for further refinement. The chairman announced that anyone wishing to speak should complete a pink card; those wishing to present written material should do so on a green sheet; that prepared, written material should be submitted to the committee.

Testimony:

Senator David R. Boutin, Hooksett, representing Senate District #16 was the first speaker of the evening. He indicated Hooksett is part of Congressional District 1, and it is rumored same may become part of CD-2, to which he objects, and indicated inhabitants object by a 10 - 1 margin. The executive council representing Hooksett objects to this change, as well.

Sen. Boutin spoke of the commonality and social ties Hooksett has to Manchester, including newspaper and family ties. There are currently four state representatives in Hooksett, who have expressed strong opposition to a separation of Hooksett from Manchester.

The senator indicated Manchester has undergone ward alignments; that the population in District 16 has decreased; that there exists a good mix of population/demographics, and that the district should remain as it currently exists, including its number of state representatives.

Melissa Bernardin announced she works in Concord at an organization entitled America Votes, but wanted to be recognized to speak as a resident of Ward 5, Concord. She suggested notices of the series of meetings held by the redistricting committee should include a street address for clarity. She provided a brief historical background of the last decennial redistricting, during which time a bi-partisan committee of equal numbers of Republicans and Democrats was assembled to coordinate efforts towards mutual solution. She urges the current committee to do the same. She expressed concern about a Union Leader article which seemed to infer that the Constitutional amendment of 2006 will not be taken seriously. She asked how the committee will ensure creation of the smallest districts possible.

***Sally Embley**, resident of Webster, representing the Kearsarge/Sunapee area League of Women Voters. See written material attached.

Jack Nguyen, employed at America Votes, Concord, and resident of Concord, expressed concerns about a weakening of Democratic representation through redistricting; would like a 60-day period for public review of a proposed redistricting plan; more transparency; asked for the date of a proposed deadline; and when more public sessions will be held. He would like current wards kept intact, and suggested that combining Concord wards with outlying towns does not make sense to him.

Rep. Brandon Giuda, representing Merrimack County District 7 asked for clarification on deviation limits and other details.

Chairman Bates explained the one-person/one-vote concept; that plans will be presented to the public when they become available; that the house reporting deadline is December 23; that "acceptable" deviation is 10 percent state-wide.

Gregory Goldberg, resident of Henniker, seeking election as state representative in the 2012 cycle. He recommends that the current pairing of Henniker and Bradford should remain intact, as it is a good pairing. He

recommended that state representatives should live in the towns in which they represent and not out of district. When asked to explain, Mr. Goldberg indicated both Sanborns claim to live in Henniker, but it is rumored that Senator Andrew Sanborn lives in Loudon, which would be within his senate district, but wife Laurie is rumored to live in Loudon, as well, which would be out of her house district. Mr. Goldberg indicated that in a pairing of Henniker and Bradford, Henniker may have its own representative with a flotarial with Bradford.

Hon. Sally H. Kelly, former state representative from Merrimack County, District 7. She indicated Pembroke and Chichester are very different towns; that Pembroke and Allenstown have more in common; that a possible combination could be Chichester, Epsom and Pittsfield, all of which share commonality.

Rep. Brandon Giuda wished to speak again to echo the suggestions of Ms. Kelly, above; further, that Chichester and Pittsfield used to be the same town; that the former is a small town, and he suggests that it not be paired with a larger town, which would dilute its representation.

Rep. Jennifer R. Coffey, representing Merrimack County, District 6. She indicated she represents a large district, which should be made smaller; suggested that a good pairing would be Andover and Salisbury; suggested that there be no change in the Congressional District related to Andover/Salisbury; that the towns of Hill and Andover share some bordering, but she can't speak for either town in terms of making a recommendation for a pairing; that Hill and Franklin share a common school district; that redistricting should not divide common school districts.

Tony Schinella, Concord, has been working on redistricting as a hobby for a long time. He suggested future traveling redistricting committee meetings include a bank of computers and maps, the press, and that there be a collective effort during these meetings to "move numbers around" using a redistricting software available on line, which he indicated is accurate, reliable, and contains all necessary state-by-state criteria. He suggested committee members word search *Dave's Redistricting* for the appropriate website address.

Hon. Richard Kennedy, Hopkinton, former state representative, thanked us for our work, understands the complexity of it. He indicated he did not like the last redistricting done by the court and the South Carolina consultant. He spoke at some length of his experience during that time and his participation as state representative during the process. He asked if a flotarial can have two representatives and Rep. Hess indicated they cannot.

Rep. Tom Keane, representing Merrimack County, District 13 and current selectman in Bow. He suggested a good pairing would be Bow and Dunbarton, since they share a school district, mutual aid, police and other commonalities. He suggested Bow, Dunbarton and Hooksett comprise a good senate district.

Karen Irwin, Hopkinton, agreed with the former speaker (Keane, above), re: computers and maps availability at these meetings, and indicated that the towns of Hopkinton, Webster, and Warner share many services, including ambulance, fire, transfer station, but not a common school district.

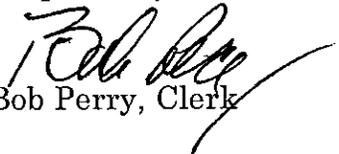
James Bouley, current mayor of Concord. He indicated Concord adjusted its wards this past summer, considering factors such as school districts and other criteria. Under consideration was expansion to 13 wards, which was rejected for lack of available polling places. Mayor Bouley dislikes pairing Concord wards with another community; that the city can easily handle three floterials; that it is the home of the state prison and state hospital; that he formed a city redistricting committee some time ago, which recommended Concord keep its 13 seats. It is unclear whether the recommendations of the city's redistricting committee met the 3291 population criteria.

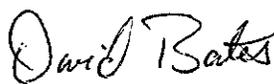
Rep. Stephen J. Shurtleff, Penacook, representing Merrimack County District 10, and member of the Concord City Council. He agreed with the suggestion of Mayor Bouley regarding three floterials, and further indicated it met the 3291 population criteria within the acceptable deviation; that the state prison's inmates are counted in each census, though they do not vote. Not voting is different from having no representation; they must be represented.

Ken Roos, of Concord questioned whether prisoners may vote, indicating they may, that only felons cannot; that students in the dorms in Hooksett are counted for purpose of the census, but there is a movement afoot in the legislature to deny students the right to vote on campus, that they must vote where they reside, which creates conflicts, re: voting, representation and the census.

There being no further speakers, the public hearing was formally closed by the chairman at 8:20 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,


Bob Perry, Clerk



* Written testimony was submitted.