

House Special Committee on Redistricting

Hillsborough County Public Hearing
Nashua Public Library
October 13, 2011
7:00 p.m.

Committee Members Present: Rep. David Bates, Chairman; Rep. Robert Rowe, Rep. Peter Silva and Rep. Lucy Weber

There were 70-80 people in the audience.

Materials made available to the public:

1. Map of Hillsborough 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.

Rep. Bates called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Testimony

Paul Bergeron, Nashua City Clerk - representing Mayor Lozeau

- 9,610 people in each ward - deviation at 4%.
- Nashua expects 26 reps, 3 in each ward and one at large or floterial with town.
- Possibility of sharing one rep with Hollis, Merrimack or Hudson. Ward 3 and Litchfield. Hollis has more commonality with Hudson. Not true with Litchfield. No access between Ward 3 and Litchfield. Thinks Ward 3 and Litchfield are not contiguous; in order to travel from one to the other, you must go through other towns.

Rep. Lucy Weber

- Does Nashua have a preferred plan? Ans: No.

Rep. Robert Rowe

- Would Nashua prefer an at-large district? Ans: No.

Hon. Debora B. Pignatelli

- Keep reps and senators within Nashua – at least one Senator totally within Nashua.
- Executive Council – if the current districts are revised and, if possible, don't include Dunbarton in Nashua district.

Rep. Richard Drisko - Hollis (Hills. 05)

- Do not join Hollis with Nashua.

Rep. Jim Belanger

- Hollis has 7400 citizens.
- Prefer Hollis have 2 reps and no floterial
- People live in town and they like their town. Many feel other abutting towns may not be compatible.

Rep. Mary Gorman - Nashua (Hills. 23)

- Concerned that Ward 3 would be with Litchfield.
- Would prefer to run at large.

Rep. Joseph Thomas - Merrimack (Hills. 19)

- Does not like to be tied with other towns or Nashua.
- Has petition signed by Merrimack Reps.

Rep. Marjorie Porter - Hillsborough (Hills. 01)

- Get information out to towns as early as possible.

Rep. James Coffey - New Ipswich (Hills. 03)

- Towns are different. The district is too large and a member can't represent other towns with divergent views.
- Don't join us with large town.

Rep. Jonathan Maltz – Hudson (Hills. 27)

- Hudson and Litchfield would make excellent floterial.
- No bridge between Nashua Ward 3 and Litchfield.

New Hampshire Citizens

John Hostage, Nashua

- Congressional districts should be redrawn – Nashua should be with Nashua, Manchester and Portsmouth in one district.

Melanie Levesque, Brookline

- Hopes that redistricting is not partisan.

Josiette White, Manchester

- Don't put city wards with towns.

- Make plans as public as possible.

Michael Malzone, Merrimack

- Don't redistrict for political purposes.

Alexandra Stewart, Nashua

- When will plan be done?
- Try not to district out of Nashua.

Nathan Cooper, Nashua

- Wants public hearing after plan.
- Don't join town with city.

Graham Smith, Amherst

- Floterials are bad.
- Don't join big town with small town.

Bill Van Angler, Bedford

- U.S. reps district – keep town in District 1.

Sylvia Gale, Nashua

- Don't join Nashua with Litchfield.

Rep. Lisa Scontas - Nashua Ward 3 (Hills. 22)

- Don't combine Ward 3 with Litchfield – no access.

Rep. John. A. Burt – Goffstown (Hills. 07)

- Don't want to be in Congressional District 2.
- We are a suburb of Manchester.
- Follow the NH Constitution, not the Feds.

Zandra Rice Hawkins, Goffstown

- Offended by process -- is not being brought to public first.

Rep. Dee Hogan – Nashua (Hills. 25)

- All information is available.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rep. Robert Rowe, Clerk
Attachments



Attachment A: Constitution of NH, Part Second -- Form of Government, [Art. 11].

Attachment B: Statement from House Members of Merrimack, NH

Handwritten Comments Submitted

Gary G. Krupp, Merrimack, NH

Based on the census data that I have reviewed, I do not find a compelling reason to alter any district that would affect the Merrimack representation. I would be strongly opposed to any redistricting plan that swaps Merrimack to the 2nd Congressional District. There is virtually no difference in population between the districts. There must be an important reason to alter the current representation for Merrimack.

Chris Buda, Merrimack, NH

If the goal of redistricting is for equal representation, I cannot understand the purpose of changing the current make up of the 1st and 2nd Congressional Districts. First of all, there is a difference of 250 people between the two districts. Second, any change would be seen as a political one. Therefore, as the Chairman of the Merrimack GOP, I would see any move to the 2nd Congressional District would have a negative benefit to not only a congressional representative, but on State Senate and House of Representatives as well.

LeRoy Marcroft, Weare, NH

I agree with Graham Smith who did not agree with the floterial district concept. I would prefer to have 2 representatives for Weare and not have an additional representative attached to the Goffstown district.

Litchfield Resident

As a resident of Litchfield, I ask that we not be put into a district with either Nashua or Manchester as we are a very rural town and lose our identity and representation when we are combined with a city. We had no identity when we were put in with Merrimack. What will work best is if we are kept with Hudson and hopefully Pelham but not with a town as far away as Auburn. We also have little in common with Londonderry as Litchfield has always been a strong conservative town with an active voting population and Londonderry does not share our values.

A.H. H

File

[Art.] 11th. [Small Towns; Representation by Districts.] When the population of any town or ward, according to the last federal census, is within a reasonable deviation from the ideal population for one or more representative seats the town or ward shall have its own district of one or more representative seats. The apportionment shall not deny any other town or ward membership in one non-floterial representative district. When any town, ward, or unincorporated place has fewer than the number of inhabitants necessary to entitle it to one representative, the legislature shall form those towns, wards, or unincorporated places into representative districts which contain a sufficient number of inhabitants to entitle each district so formed to one or more representatives for the entire district. In forming the districts, the boundaries of towns, wards, and unincorporated places shall be preserved and contiguous. The excess number of inhabitants of a district may be added to the excess number of inhabitants of other districts to form at-large or floterial districts conforming to acceptable deviations. The legislature shall form the representative districts at the regular session following every decennial federal census.

2006 AMENDMENT

HISTORY

Amendments—2006. Amended article generally.

[Art.] 11th. [Small Towns; Representation by Districts.] When any town, ward, or unincorporated place, according to the last federal decennial census, has less than the number of inhabitants necessary to entitle it to one representative, the legislature shall form those towns, wards, or unincorporated places into representative districts which contain a sufficient number of inhabitants to entitle each district so formed to one or more representatives for the entire district. In forming the districts, the boundaries of towns, wards and unincorporated places shall be preserved and the towns, wards and unincorporated places forming one district shall be reasonably proximate to one another. The legislature shall form the representative districts at its next session after approval of this article by the voters of the state, and thereafter at the regular session following every decennial federal census.

PRIOR TO 2006 AMENDMENT

HISTORY

Amendments—1964. Amended article generally. —1877. Amended article generally. —1942. Amended article generally. —1793. Substituted "general court" for "general assembly". —1889. Amended article generally.

Record

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Dear Speaker O'Brien and House Redistricting Committee:

We, the undersigned Members of the New Hampshire House of Representatives serving the town of Merrimack, are writing to express our shared desire to maintain the current lines defining our state's two Congressional Districts.

After an exhaustive review of residential and demographic statistics taken from the 2011 Federal Census, it was revealed that there is only a difference of about 250 people between the First and Second Congressional Districts. In our opinion, that does not merit the cost, time or effort involved in changing the existing lines, and then notifying the general public, state and local officials, political parties, news media and others of the change. It would be especially unfair to the residents who would be negatively impacted by switching districts, and has the potential to cause unnecessary nuisance and confusion for them.

An old adage says "If it isn't broke, don't fix it." Clearly, there is no compelling reason to justify changing the district lines at this time. The New Hampshire General Court has more pressing issues that require our attention than this non-issue.

New Hampshire is known across the country as a leader in the political process. Now we have an opportunity to lead by example in the legislative field as well by showing that we are focused on the things that Granite Staters want: limiting government, bringing spending under control and adopting a pro-growth, job-creating-agenda.

As State Representatives representing the town of Merrimack, we respectfully ask that you actively join with us to make sure that our citizens remain part of the First Congressional District, and that the line separating New Hampshire's two Congressional Districts remains exactly where it is right now.

Sincerely,

Richard W. Hinch
Greg Pelletier
Capt D. [unclear]
Kathleen Stroud
Richard W. Barry
Lenette Peterson
Jeanine Motter