



November 19, 2021

# *Your State House* Concord, New Hampshire



To my constituents in [Allenstown](#), [Epsom](#), & [Pittsfield](#):

This week, the redistricting committee met to vote on all the maps. First, we voted unanimously to interim study HB 51 (state senate districts) and HB 53 (executive council districts), since the Senate will deal with them. HB 55, on electing delegates to the state convention, is a purely Republican issue as the Democrats have opted out of electing their convention delegates. We amended the bill to require electing delegates in state representative districts, since the current plan for delegates is highly non-proportional to population, and this will keep us from needing to deal with it in the future. That, too, was a unanimous vote.

For HB 54, county commissioners, both parties had agreed on Hillsborough and Strafford counties, and the majority acceded to the minority plan for Belknap, Coos, Grafton, and Sullivan counties; the other four were different, with the minority plans mostly being the current map. On party line 7-8 votes, we rejected the minority plans for Carroll, Cheshire, Merrimack, and Rockingham counties, then passed the bill, 10-5, with two Democrats joining all the Republicans.

HB 52, congressional districts, had the majority plan presented, briefly debated, then adopted, 8-7; the minority map was presented and killed, 7-8. The minority map is essentially the current plan with one town (Kingston) moved from CD1 to CD2 to allow for population changes; the majority plan runs CD1 up the middle of the state, from Hudson to Seabrook along the Massachusetts border, from Rye to Epping then north to Moultonborough, west to Danbury, then southeast to Pembroke, west to Weare, then southeast again to Hudson. Much of Merrimack county has been

moved from CD2 to CD1 (but not Concord or Bow), and the seacoast from Portsmouth through Rochester added to CD2. This will, of course, make CD1 more Republican – and therefore CD2 more Democratic. Both are still “competitive,” how much so depending on who you ask and whose numbers you believe! The debate was whether this was desirable or appropriate – everyone agreed the plan was perfectly legal, being contiguous districts with equal population.

HB 50, House seats, was also amended by the majority map, 12-3. (four of the Democrats voted with us because we had essentially adopted their maps for Belknap, Grafton, and Sullivan counties.) This plan generally provides for smaller districts than currently, more single town districts, and tries to keep cities separate from the surrounding towns. Of course, having to do all this while not crossing town or county lines and maintaining no more than 10% deviation from the ideal districts was quite the challenge! All the votes on the subsequent amendments were partisan rejections, 7-8.

On Carroll county, the debate was whether to give Conway or Moultonborough its own district; the majority chose Conway, which didn't need a floterlial. On Cheshire county, the maps were very similar, but the minority plan kept more of the current districts intact. In Coos county, the minority proposed to give Berlin its own district, at the cost of a floterlial over a third of the county. In Hillsborough county, the main issue was that Manchester got 32 representatives, with each ward (of 12) getting two in its own district, then every three wards sharing two more in a floterlial. If we had worked with the city as a whole, it would get 33 – but we're required to deal with the wards. The Democrat plan had the same two per ward, but three rep floterlials over four wards! That gives 33 representatives for the city, but the bigger floterlials



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are more difficult to campaign or provide constituent services.

I did most of the work on Merrimack County, with a number of suggestions and ideas from others. So, Franklin gets two seats and shares a floteria with Northfield, which has one seat of its own. Boscawen gets one, Loudon plus Canterbury have two, Chichester plus Pittsfield get two, Pembroke gets two. Epsom and Allenstown each get one seat, then have a two seat float with Hooksett - Dunbarton, which has four seats. Bow shares four seats with Hopkinton – the numbers just don't work for a district each and a floteria! Henniker, Bradford, and Warner have three seats, New London shares two seats with Newbury, and Wilmot plus Sutton have a seat. Andover, Danbury, Hill, Salisbury and Webster have two seats, and share a floteria with Boscawen and Loudon - Canterbury. That's larger than I really like, but it was the best plan I could find for the entire county. Concord gets thirteen representatives, one from each ward and three in floterias (two three ward, one four ward.) This keeps Concord from sharing a district from any town.

The minority amendment had slightly different districts in the northwest, and Dunbarton with Bow, but they argued on keeping Concord separate, apparently not realizing I'd changed my map since the hearing.

In Rockingham county, they argued against having New Castle and Newington share districts with different wards of Portsmouth, and had Deerfield with Northwood and Nottingham rather than with Candia and Auburn. In Strafford county, they wanted to keep Rochester and Dover separate from the surrounding towns (we had shared one ward of each), and to have a Lee - Barrington floteria when we'd much rather keep them separate. The

final vote, of course, recommended the plan 8-7.

All these bills will be voted on by the House in January, then off to the Senate – but changes, especially for the House map, are not likely. So, Pittsfield will elect two representatives with Chichester - and there's only one incumbent (Rep. Allard.) No floteria - my district is being changed to eliminate Pittsfield, but add Hooksett and Dunbarton. And it has more than twice the number of constituents as the current plan!

I expected this committee to be more partisan than others, but we did work together on some issues and agree on quite a number of maps. The Democrats were more interested than we were in keeping the current maps intact as much as possible, and apparently wanted to protect the incumbents. For example, in the Merrimack county commissioner map, they moved one small town (Wilmot) to a different district. I looked at it, saw two towns plus Concord in one district and tried to make it only one. Bow worked perfectly, then I split the other towns into two districts with the same population (well, one has 7 more inhabitants than the other...)

For state representatives, they were also more focused on getting single town districts, and in many cases that meant extremely large floteria districts. Of course, our plans had some big floterias as well, but over the state we had fewer floterias, slightly more base districts and about the same number of single town districts. And, of course, somewhat more Republican-friendly districts! Pure gerrymandering is almost impossible considering the constraints on House districts, but I can't deny that partisan advantage was a consideration in some cases.



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The redistricting committee now has a break until the Senate bills arrive, probably sometime in March. Other committees are starting to see 2022 bills, and in January we'll deal with the vetoes, vote on the retained bills, and start hearings on all 700+ new bills.



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