

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON REDISTRICTING
APRIL 14, 2022

Chairman Barbara Griffin called the meeting to order at 10:05 AM in Rooms 201 and 203 of the Legislative Office Building. She asked everyone to join her in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Other than the regular members of the committee, Rep. Claire Rouillard sat in for Rep. Travis O’Hara, Rep. Pat Long sat in for Rep. David Cote and Rep. Kat McGhee sat in for Rep. Marjorie Smith.

Chairman Griffin recognized Senator James Gray to introduce SB 240, which redistricts the state senate. After his presentation, Rep. Lucy Weber expressed concern that her home county, Cheshire, would be divided into four senate districts. Sen Gray responded that was the result of balancing the shifts in population and the deviations. Rep. Matt Wilhelm asked why Ward 1 in Manchester was separated from the rest of the city. Sen Gray responded that it was done to avoid having incumbent senators run against each other. Rep. Connie Lane pointed out that incumbents had been taken into consideration for the state senate, but not for congress. Sen. Gray reminded Rep. Lane that a person doesn’t have to live in a congressional district to represent it, but they do have to live in a state senate district to do so.

The following individuals testified against SB 240:

Olivia Zink – Executive Director for Open Democracy
Linda Bundy – for herself
Corinne Dodge – for herself
Liz Tentarelli – President of the New Hampshire League of Women Voters
Sara Lobdell – for herself
Frank Knaack – Policy Director of ACLU – NH
David Erickson – for himself
David Andrews – Lead Mapper on the Map – A – Thon Project

Chairman Griffin then recognized Sen. Gray for the purposes of introducing SB 241, which redistricts the executive council. Sen Gray explained that the population deviation, before the new maps were drawn, was 2.7 %. The new maps have a deviation of half that. He specifically stated that the boundaries of the new districts might appear to be gerrymandered, but that drawing maps can be messy and the senate had strived to keep the population in each district as equal as possible. Gerrymandering had been avoided. Rep. Weber said Vermont border towns that were considered weren’t relevant to the overall effort. Sen Gray said that the consideration of those towns had been a request at public hearings. Rep. Weber further stated that the north country might not be very well represented in the new district one. Sen. Gray responded that it would be up to the voters there, as to whom they elected and as to where the person they elected lived. Rep. Weber asked if the maps could have been drawn differently. Sen. Gray explained that there were many ways to draw maps. Sen. Gray further said that all factors were taken into consideration in the drawing of the maps. Rep. Wilhelm asked why a floor amendment had been adopted over the original committee report on the maps. Sen. Gray responded that it was the wish a majority of the senate to do so. Rep. McGhee asked how the maps presented in the bill compared to other, fairer maps. Sen. Gray asked Rep. McGhee in response what did “fairer” mean? Many of those maps, which purported to be “fairer”, had too large of a deviation. Rep. Weber noted that keeping counties together appeared unimportant, the way the districts were drawn. Sen. Gray pointed out representing multiple counties, as he does in his senate district, can be beneficial. Rep. Lane said that

fairer districts could mean they were more competitive. Sen. Gray explained fairer could also mean they were gerrymandered. Rep. Paul Bergeron asked if the council had to be redistricted, given that it already had an acceptable population deviation. Sen. Gray said that the numerous concerns that had been expressed about the layout of district two had been a big factor in doing so.

Testimony in opposition to SB 241:

Olivia Zink – Executive Director for Open Democracy
Linda Bundy – for herself
Corinne Dodge – for herself
Liz Tentarelli – President of the New Hampshire League of Women Voters
Sara Lobdell – for herself
Frank Knaack – Policy Director of ACLU – NH
David Erickson – for himself
David Andrews – Lead Mapper for the Map – A – Thon Project

This concluded all of the testimony. Chairman Griffin announced that the committee would be in recess until 1:00 PM, at which time it would go into executive session and vote on SB 240 and SB 241.

The meeting then recessed at 11:55 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rep. Wayne MacDonald, Clerk