

January 9, 2022

Senate Election Law & Municipal Affairs Committee
107 North Main Street, Concord, NH 03301

Dear Chairman Gray and Members of the Senate Election Law & Municipal Affairs Committee,

As a resident of Epping, I urge you to OPPOSE SB240 “Apportioning State Senate Districts”, and, instead, create a majority-minority map that is more competitive and more aligned with our state’s communities of interest (COIs), while also meeting the population deviation, contiguity and compactness standards.

As friends of the free market, we support competition in the provision of goods and services. And as patriotic supporters of democracy, we should promote competition in our elections. Competitive electoral districts create a vibrant market for public policy ideas and encourage civic engagement by our Granite State citizens.

Conversely, uncompetitive districts discourage voters in each district’s disadvantaged party from even bothering to vote. Such districts also add weight to the party primaries and reduce the importance of the general election – a bit like making the NFL playoffs more determinative than the Super Bowl.

SB240 contains only four competitive districts, based on the 2020 NH Senate vote shares, while the remaining 20 districts are predictably either Republican or Democrat majority. SB40’s districts also lack compactness, especially the snake-like district from Bedford to Hinsdale. The corresponding minority proposal contains seven competitive districts, while a map created by the Open Democracy Map-a-Thon team contains six competitive districts. So your committee can do better than SB240.

Meanwhile, thank you for the work being done by all members of the Committee.

Respectfully,
C. Jeffrey Smith (Epping)