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Redistricting Committee  
Rep. Mary Murphy

RE: Redistricting

I have been listening to some of the comments about redistricting and thought I should expand on the issues in Beltrami County. Beltrami is one of the most complicated counties in the state and should have lines consistent with the representation.

At present time about 65-70% of the city of Bemidji is in CD 7. The balance of the city along with areas north and south of Bemidji are in CD 8. However, the city of Bemidji is in Senate District 5 which lies to the east including Grand Rapids. Representative district 5A includes Bemidji and goes east to Deer River. I had an issue last year with my businesses which are in CD 7, but they refused to help as I live in CD 8. So, CD 8 helps my business in CD 7.

In years past, Beltrami was in CD 7. It would be beneficial to be in the same area both with the state and federal legislatures. It would help with campaigns and having more consistent representation with state and federal legislators.

One suggestion from Duluth was to put Beltrami, Clearwater, Lake of the Woods and maybe Mahnomen counties in CD 8. These counties are not in sync with CD 8 as the suggestion implies. Chippewa Forest is kind of a divide between NE Minn and our area. IRRRB has nothing to do with the above counties and they kind of set boundaries. The area from Motley, east to North part of Brainerd area, to the Canadian border seems to be an icon of its own. This is not a mining area, not farming area like the Valley of SW Minnesota, yet logging, some farming, tourist, retirement, and education dominate the region. This should have its own senate district.

I would suggest all of Beltrami be in CD 7, reshape Senate District 2 to be more compatible with our geography and culture and reshape Representative 2A district so both include Bemidji and Beltrami County.

Ideally, the Minnesota Senate should not be based on population but represent all geography in the State. The Representatives should be based on population. They would generate a far fairer legislature. The rural areas need more and better representation. The farmland, forests, lakes, mining that make up much of Minnesota has little representation. These areas are crucial to the Minnesota economy. Making these areas less important than population is wrong. The food, education, recreation, and resources that the population of Minnesota takes advantage of from the more rural areas is quite significant. The Minnesota Senate needs to be changed to represent the whole state and not emphasize just population centers.

The ideal probably will not happen, so I hope the decisions you make are beneficial to Beltrami and our culture.

Sincerely

Rich Siegert