

Dear Members of the Minnesota House Redistricting Committee:

I am a devout (progressive) Christian, and my strong interest in voting rights is connected to following the commandment to love my neighbor as myself. As a white middle-class woman living in St. Paul's Highland neighborhood, I know that I and people like me are already well represented. We need to have a level playing field, so historically marginalized communities of interest can get the representation they deserve.

My personal community of interest is those who want representation in government to be truly representative – in this case, that redistricting be implemented as fairly as possible.

Because redistricting is a cornerstone of our democracy, the process needs to be transparent, accessible, and accountable to the public. After all, the lines we draw now will impact everything about politics for the next 10 years.

I urge you to support HF2594, which has several key provisions around communities of interest and not having a partisan effect.

We must not divide communities of interest. Communities of interest should be considered first when drawing district lines. They are OUR communities. They help make Minnesota strong and vital. (Sec 2, Subd. 8)

These communities must be central to drawing district lines – put the focus not politicians or outside entities but people in their communities. Communities of interest should be widely defined. Prioritizing them in drawing a map is about ensuring the principle of “one person, one vote.” It's about representation in government being truly representative. From my point of view, that is what every right-thinking person in our democracy should want.

Lines must not be drawn for partisan benefit. No gerrymandering! (Sec 2, Subd. 11)

District lines should be drawn to equitably represent the people living in the districts, not protect incumbents and partisan interests.

On a related issue, currently Minnesota counts incarcerated people according to where they are incarcerated. I urge this committee to change that. For the sake of fairness in redistricting, they should instead be counted in their city and county of last residence. The current system undermines their communities of interest – and with them Minnesota as a whole.

Sincerely,

Carol Duling