

We all benefit when people from all walks of life participate in self-governance.

Please support redistricting reform language contained in HF1935. It is common-sense bipartisan voter-focused redistricting reform. Putting MN voters ahead of partisan interests IS not a fringe or radical concept; it is an American value.

For the past several decades, the legislative body has failed to produce bipartisan maps surviving the governor's veto. Legislators have relied on the courts to step in.

Courts do not start from scratch drawing new maps. They've traditionally used public input to adjust the gerrymandered maps received. This practice must end. **MN deserves clean voting maps drawn from the ground up, not maps that are tweaked around the edges.**

Redistricting reform before the Conference Committee establishes a bipartisan advisory commission to draw voting maps. **We are deeply concerned an opportunity for moving real reforms is being missed leaving our 2021 redistricting cycle unprotected – yet again.**

Common Cause MN and our statewide multipartisan Democracy Partners Convening Table members and allies believe that true redistricting reform must be voter-focused. It must include ALL of the following:

1. Direct and equal participation of public members as commissioners with disqualifiers minimizing partisan agendas AND
2. Establishment of an advisory commission directly (or as a backup) in the case that a constitutional amendment fails to pass - IF a constitutional amendment is going to be considered AND
3. An open and honest process AND
4. Redistricting principles that are voter-focused putting MN voters first.

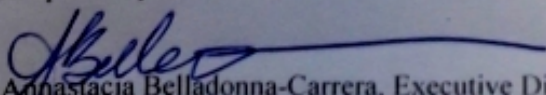
Language establishing a bipartisan advisory commission contained in HF1935 currently meets all four of these critical criteria. It fully protects the 2021 redistricting cycle against partisan gerrymandering and contains rules that are voter-focused not incumbent focused.

Good principles are key to fair redistricting. To date, HF 1855/Schultz, SF 582/Rest and SF 2255/Kiffmeyer proposing a ballot question to amend the MN Constitution do not meet all four criteria and are not voter-focused. Each contain principles that in effect work to protect incumbents; ex., preserving district core, placing preserving political subdivisions, listing compactness very high in the list of priorities. Though seemingly benign, depending on how they are drafted and placed in relationship to others, these principles directly impact who is heard and who is not.

HF1935 contains bipartisan and bicameral compromise. We've spent 2+yrs meeting with both sides and both chambers. We've toured greater MN listening to local government, chambers and groups concerned about the legislative body's inability to draft maps that are voter-focused. **Minnesotans do NOT feel heard by their elected.**

On behalf of almost 18,000 statewide multipartisan Common Cause MN members, our Democracy Partners Convening Table and allies, I respectfully ask the Committee to include the redistricting reform language contained in HF1935 and put MN voters first.

Respectfully submitted,


Anastacia Belladonna-Carrera, Executive Director
Cc: Democracy Partners Convening Table