

Dear Members of the Committee,

As a concerned citizen with an eye on redistricting I write in support of HF2594. This bill has several key provisions.

Communities of Interest - Sec 2, Subd. 8. We must not divide communities of interest (COI). COIs should be considered first when drawing district lines, not political parties, or incumbents. COIs are what give Minnesota strength and keep us engaged.

Partisan effect - Sec 2, Subd. 11. Lines must not be drawn for partisan benefit. The people of Minnesota insist we remain a gerrymander-free state.

As you know the impacts of the lines we draw now will be felt for the next 10 years. Communities of interest should be widely defined. I ask that you draw a map prioritizing communities of interests above political interests because geography and subdivisions of government don't vote, Minnesotans living within those districts do. Districting is about ensuring 1 person, 1 vote above preserving the status quo for partisan convenience.

Right now, MN counts incarcerated individuals as part of the population in the county where they are incarcerated. This is a gross violation of their ability to have their interests heard in the civic process. I urge this committee to change that. These are members of our communities and Minnesotans. They should be counted in their city and county of last residence for the purpose of redistricting.

Redistricting is a cornerstone of our democracy. We urge the legislature to make the process transparent, accessible, and accountable to the public.

I do not support protecting incumbent politicians and political party interests by prioritizing preservation of core districts and political subdivisions over communities of interests. District lines should work for and equitably represent the people living within them and NOT protect incumbents and partisan interests.

Thank you for your time.

Melanie Hazelip
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