

Public Comments

Montana Districting and Apportionment Commission
Comments received between 5 pm on July 16 and midnight on June 19

Sherley, Laura

From: Steve Barkley <sbarkley18@msn.com>
Sent: Sunday, July 18, 2021 7:29 AM
To: Districting; Maylinn.Smith@mtleg.gov; Jeff.Essmann@mtleg.gov; Joe.Lamson@mtleg.gov; Kendra.Miller@mtleg.gov; Dan.Stusek@mtleg.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Redistricting

Thank you for engaging the citizens of Montana in this process! Please draft a districting map that is fair and equitable, not politically motivated. The people of Montana deserve and expect to have their voices heard.

Sherley, Laura

From: leg-noreply@mt.gov
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2021 1:19 PM
To: Districting
Subject: Submission from Redistricting Input Form

Submit Your Input Regarding Redistricting in Montana

Date: 19th July 2021 13:18

Your Full Name:

W. Dan Cramer

Email Address:

dan@fstwest.com

City and State of Residence:

Bozeman MT

Your Comment/Input:

To whom it may concern: 1. Do not restrict public comments. The agenda for July 20th doesn't allow for public comments until AFTER your decisions are made. If this Commission values transparency and public input in the decision making process, you must allow for public comment at the beginning of your July 20th meeting. 2. Keep districts as equal as possible in population. Using 1% with rare exceptions of up to 3% will best fulfill constitutional requirements while reducing the ability to gerrymander or pack districts to favor different parties. 3. Do not use "Fair and Competitive Districts" as mandatory or discretionary criteria, or even as an aspirational goal. This goes against the Commission's other criteria that states no plan will favor or disfavor a political party. Please do not pick winners and losers based on an area's partisan makeup. Allow the VOTERS to decide who will represent them, not this Commission.

Sent via leg.mt.gov/districting/2020_commission/redistricting_input/

Sherley, Laura

From: leg-noreply@mt.gov
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2021 4:13 PM
To: Districting
Subject: Submission from Redistricting Input Form

Submit Your Input Regarding Redistricting in Montana

Date: 19th July 2021 16:13

Your Full Name:
Brandon DeShaw

Email Address:
brandon@deshaw.bz

City and State of Residence:
Butte Montana

Your Comment/Input:

Hello Commission members, please follow the law regarding the redistricting, and do not allow consideration of "competitiveness" in drawing districts. That is vague and subjective. Please follow the law, just like us average Montana citizens have to. Thank you, Brandon in Butte

Sent via leg.mt.gov/districting/2020_commission/redistricting_input/

Sherley, Laura

From: leg-noreply@mt.gov
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2021 1:59 PM
To: Districting
Subject: Submission from Redistricting Input Form

Submit Your Input Regarding Redistricting in Montana

Date: 19th July 2021 13:59

Your Full Name:

Ty Gardner

Email Address:

tymgardner@gmail.com

City and State of Residence:

Bozeman

Your Comment/Input:

I am requesting that the upcoming redistricting be done according to Voting Rights act and with the intention to fairly represent all Montanans. Gerrymandering unfairly affects all voters and only serves to distort actual democracy. Montana communities should be represented in an accurate and transparent manner to ensure that the elected officials are representative of the community in which they were elected.

Sent via leg.mt.gov/districting/2020_commission/redistricting_input/

Sherley, Laura

From: Sharon <srg@midrivers.com>
Sent: Saturday, July 17, 2021 6:38 AM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Redistricting

Public comment before your July 20th meeting is a must. Let's show the rest of the states that Montana can be honest and open about things. Also it is very necessary that lines are not drawn to favor one party over the other. Eastern Montana does not have the population that Western Montana does and we already feel that Missoula, Helena, Billings and Great Falls pretty much rule the state. Please make things equal for ALL of Montana's population if you feel you need to redo the districts. Thank you.

Sharon Gookin

Baker, MT

Sherley, Laura

From: leg-noreply@mt.gov
Sent: Saturday, July 17, 2021 10:25 AM
To: Districting
Subject: Submission from Redistricting Input Form

Submit Your Input Regarding Redistricting in Montana

Date: 17th July 2021 10:25

Your Full Name:
Jacob Hammersmith

Email Address:
jake.hammersmith@gmail.com

City and State of Residence:
Billings, MT

Your Comment/Input:

Commissioners, I am writing to remind you that the law (MCA 5 11 115) and the Constitution REQUIRE you to set district boundaries with the following criteria: Compact & Contiguous Territory Less than 1% difference in population I also demand that you set the congressional districts using the same criteria as for legislative districts. I am not asking for anything special. I am only asking you to follow the Constitution and the law. Sincerely, Jacob Hammersmith

Sent via leg.mt.gov/districting/2020_commission/redistricting_input/

Sherley, Laura

From: ghelt.1@netzero.net
Sent: Saturday, July 17, 2021 12:08 PM
To: Jeff.Essmann@mtleg.gov; Joe.Lamson@mtleg.gov; Kendra.Miller@mtleg.gov;
Maylinn.Smith@mtleg.gov; Districting; Soselection@mt.gov; ghelt.1@netzero.com
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Redistricting

I would like to ask that public comment be at the beginning of the meeting instead of at the end after the vote. What good is it to hear how your constituents feel about everything after you have made your decision?

Gayle Helt
Columbus, MT

Sherley, Laura

From: Damon Leishman <damonleishman@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, July 18, 2021 6:38 PM
To: Districting
Cc: Maylinn.Smith@mtleg.gov; Jeff.Essmann@mtleg.gov; Joe.Lamson@mtleg.gov;
Dan.Stusek@mtleg.gov; Kendra.Miller@mtleg.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Unfair vs Fair

Districting Committee,

It's my opinion that true fairness would be achieved by keeping districts equal in population and NOT try to play games with voting districts to give one side a political edge. One's "fair and competitive districts" is another's "unfair advantage".

I understand the commission is getting a lot of pressure to answer to D.C. and partisan political interests. Shake off that pressure and show true fairness by maintaining equal districts in population.

Damon Leishman
Missoula, MT

Sherley, Laura

From: Amanda Lockridge <amandalockridge18@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2021 9:16 AM
To: Maylinn.Smith@mtleg.gov; Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Redistricting Criteria

Dear Chair Smith and Commissioners,

I am writing today to ask for your consideration on a number of redistricting criteria.

First, I want to thank the Commission for its diligence in putting public comment at the forefront of decision making. As we know, not every state provides the opportunity for citizens to engage in the redistricting process in this manner, and it is a comfort to know that these crucial decisions which will impact our state for a decade (and beyond) will be guided by the public.

As to the redistricting criteria, there are a few that I think are worthy of consideration and your support. The 2020 Census was conducted under truly extraordinary circumstances. The delays in official operations had negative impacts across the country, but rural states like Montana suffered disproportionately. We know that some communities, which under normal circumstances face extreme undercounts, will likely experience an even greater level of undercount following the 2020 Census. The Commission needs the flexibility to take these undercounts into consideration, and a 5% deviation will allow for that flexibility where needed.

There has been a lot of excitement generated by Montana gaining a second congressional district, and it has been encouraging to see progress made in adopting fair criteria for the congressional map. I would ask that the Commission adopt similar criteria for the legislative districts to avoid public confusion, and to allow you, as a Commission, to apply equitable standards to both maps.

Finally, it is incredibly important that this Commission adopt criteria that does not unduly advantage or disadvantage one political party, and that allows for competitive districts when possible. While adopting "politically neutral" lines sounds nice, in practice, failing to use fair and competitive districts as a criteria will give an undue advantage to one political party. All Montanans benefit when we have a robust civic process, and competitive districts, when practicable, ensure that all Montanans can engage productively in the democratic process.

Thank you for your consideration, and for all of your hard work on behalf of Montana.

Amanda Lockridge
amandalockridge18@gmail.com
Helena, MT

Sherley, Laura

From: leg-noreply@mt.gov
Sent: Sunday, July 18, 2021 12:16 PM
To: Districting
Subject: Submission from Redistricting Input Form

Submit Your Input Regarding Redistricting in Montana

Date: 18th July 2021 12:15

Your Full Name:

Cathy Miller

Email Address:

cathym_65430@yahoo.com

City and State of Residence:

Missoula, MT 59808

Your Comment/Input:

I am just reading in the editorial in the Missoulian of the efforts underway to count inmates in the MT prison system in the Re districting plan. I am shocked that so much time is being spent on this issue...surely we have more urgent issues for State Government to address? Seems to me that a fair count could be determined by adding up all the inmates in Montana and dividing this number by 2 (number of districts) and allot this number to each district. Please don't waste my tax dollars with more meetings and trying to go door to door to locate individual residences. Please, Keep It Simple!!

Sent via leg.mt.gov/districting/2020_commission/redistricting_input/

Sherley, Laura

From: Tracy Morand <gaelfer@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2021 10:38 AM
To: Districting
Cc: Maylinn.Smith@mtleg.gov; Jeff.Essmann@mtleg.gov; Joe.Lamson@mtleg.gov;
Dan.Stusek@mtleg.gov; Kendra.Miller@mtleg.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Districting and Apportionment Commission Meeting

My name is Tracy Morand and I live in Helena, Montana. I am writing to respectfully request that you do not restrict public comments. In case you haven't noticed, there is an extreme level of distrust and suspicion of government at this time in our country. In order to lessen this condition and rebuild trust it is imperative that every level of government take extra steps to be open and transparent in all of its dealings with the public and to really listen to public comments. "Fair and Competitive Districts" sounds like a good idea but we are no longer going to unconditionally accept nice sounding language in this age of doublespeak and misdirection. The devil is in the details. I ask that redistricting keep districts as equal as possible in population using the 1% up to 3% in rare exceptions so that voters retain the full effect of their vote in choosing who will represent them. I am against gerrymandering or packing districts to favor one party over another. These political tactics must end and I call on this commission to lead the way in ensuring truly fair and open election in all of the processes and procedures under your purview. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Tracy Morand
4 Oak Circle
Helena, MT 59601

Sherley, Laura

From: Courtney Nuno <canuno2@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2021 12:56 PM
To: Districting
Cc: dan.stusek@mtleg.gov; jeff.essmann@mtleg.gov; joe.lamson@mtleg.gov; kendra.miller@mtleg.gov; maylinn.smith@mtleg.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Districting & Apportionment

1. Do not restrict public comments. The agenda for July 20th doesn't allow for public comments until AFTER your decisions are made. If this Commission values transparency and public input in the decision-making process, you must allow for public comment at the beginning of your July 20th meeting.
2. Keep districts as equal as possible in population. Using 1% with rare exceptions of up to 3% will best fulfill constitutional requirements while reducing ability to gerrymander or pack districts to favor different parties.
3. Do not use "Fair and Competitive Districts" as mandatory or discretionary criteria, or even as an aspirational goal. This goes against the Commission's other criteria that states no plan will favor or disfavor a political party. Please do not pick winners and losers based on an area's partisan makeup. Allow the VOTERS to decide who will represent them, not this Commission.

Sherley, Laura

From: Norma Peabody <theartnrch@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, July 18, 2021 2:54 PM
To: Districting
Cc: Maylinn.Smith@mtleg.gov; Jeff.Essmann@mtleg.gov; Joe.Lamson@mtleg.gov;
Dan.Stusek@mtleg.gov; Kendra.Miller@mtleg.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comments on Redistricting

1. Do not restrict public comments. The agenda for July 20th doesn't allow for public comments until AFTER your decisions are made. If this Commission values transparency and public input in the decision making process, you must allow for public comment at the beginning of your July 20th meeting.
2. Keep districts as equal as possible in population. Using 1% with rare exceptions of up to 3% will best fulfill constitutional requirements while reducing the ability to gerrymander or pack districts to favor different parties.
3. Do not use "Fair and Competitive Districts" as mandatory or discretionary criteria, or even as an aspirational goal. This goes against the Commission's other criteria that states no plan will favor or disfavor a political party. Please do not pick winners and losers based on an area's partisan makeup. Allow the VOTERS to decide who will represent them, not this Commission.

Respectfully,

Norma Peabody
Prairie County

Sherley, Laura

From: leg-noreply@mt.gov
Sent: Saturday, July 17, 2021 2:02 PM
To: Districting
Subject: Submission from Redistricting Input Form

Submit Your Input Regarding Redistricting in Montana

Date: 17th July 2021 14:02

Your Full Name:

Scott Wolf

Email Address:

scottallenwolf@gmail.com

City and State of Residence:

Livingston, MT

Your Comment/Input:

The redistricting must be fair and not a liberal grab.

Sent via leg.mt.gov/districting/2020_commission/redistricting_input/

Sherley, Laura

From: leg-noreply@mt.gov
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2021 12:48 PM
To: Districting
Subject: Submission from Redistricting Input Form

Submit Your Input Regarding Redistricting in Montana

Date: 19th July 2021 12:48

Your Full Name:
Courtney Wright

Email Address:
canuno2@gmail.com

City and State of Residence:
Kalispell, MT

Your Comment/Input:

Do not restrict public comments. Keep districts as equal as possible in population. Do not use "Fair and Competitive Districts" as mandatory or discretionary criteria, or even as an aspirational goal. This goes against the Commission's other criteria that states no plan will favor or disfavor a political party. Please do not pick winners and losers based on an area's partisan makeup. Allow the VOTERS to decide who will represent them, not this Commission.

Sent via leg.mt.gov/districting/2020_commission/redistricting_input/

Sherley, Laura

From: Lori Zahler <lorizahler@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, July 17, 2021 12:06 PM
To: Districting; Maylinn.Smith@mtleg.gov; Jeff.Essmann@mtleg.gov; Joe.Lamson@mtleg.gov; Dan.Stusek@mtleg.gov; Kendra.Miller@mtleg.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Redistricting Montana

Good Afternoon Members:

Thank you for your work on redistricting Montana. I wanted to just "put it out there" that Montana definitely needs to be equally redistricted.

Please make sure to allow Public Comment at the beginning of your July 15th meeting.

Please use the statutory 1% 3% rule as it will reduce gerrymander and packing of districts. (i.e. do not use Fair and Competitive Districts as this will not allow the Voters to be represented.)

Sincerely,

Lori Zahler,

Bozeman, MT

580 4638