Public Comments

Montana Districting and Apportionment Commission
Comments received by 5 p.m. on August 31, 2022.

Distributed electronically August 31, 2022

Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, August 31, 2022 4:43 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Beverly Adams

From: Beverly Adams bevwhit1@msn.com
Residence: Bozeman, MT

Message:
Regarding the redistricting of Montana legislative districts – maps 1 and 2 are obvious attempts to gerrymander in favor of unfairly drawn democrat districts. Map 4 appears to be the most fairly designed plan. Please do not choose map 1 or 2

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on MDAC (https://mtredistricting.gov [mtredistricting.gov])

Sherley, Laura

From: Annie Anderson <pearlsrbest4me@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 31, 2022 1:10 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support for Map #4

Hello!

I'm writing in support of map #4 for the redistricting proposals. It's the one that best represents Montanans and doesn't clearly gerrymander like maps #1 and #2. My second preference is map #3.

Here are some key points:

The maps proposed by Democrats are blatant power grabs that gerrymander Montanans only into the districts that gain Democrats the most power. They do not follow the prescribed parameters of avoiding partisanship, avoiding splitting communities of interest and splitting towns/cities/counties.

The Democrats' map doesn't even meet their own parameters. Whether you use any of the four commissioners maps, your net number of competitive seats only changes by 2 out of 100. The only thing different in the proposals is the number of safe Democrat seats. Yet, Democrat maps exchange continuity, compactness and commonalities of residents to win Democrat seats.

These maps erase the political voices of rural residents, particularly in the areas and counties surrounding Democrat strongholds such as Missoula and Bozeman. While both these areas' current House districts give an approximately split of their observed voter patterns, the new maps proposed by Democrats completely eliminate almost all Republican representation in lieu of gathering more rural residents, some in other counties, to draw safe Democrat seats. This is unacceptable and against the stated purpose of nonpartisanship.

Democrat maps place as many as 8-12 districts together anchored in a single Democrat stronghold. This means city residents who are mostly homogenous are no longer drawn by who their neighbors are, but by how they vote. Rural residents' concerns will be minimized and not represented in the state legislature in favor of cosmopolitans and college students who often move away soon after voting. The rural/urban divide will continue to grow and cause resentment as suburban and rural residents struggle for a voice in the legislature. This gerrymandering technique called "wagon-wheeling" is also prevalent in Helena. I'm an avid canvasser and campaign volunteer and i can tell you, the rural residents are disgusted by the use of this technique to ensure they have no voice in our own government. How are people supposed to have faith and trust in government when maps like #1 and #2 even exist and so clearly show a desire to gain power, not pursue service.

Continuing to give more and more political power to Democrat strongholds at the cost of rural residents further exacerbates our current problems of rising costs-of-living, rising taxes, housing affordability etc. Giving college students and transitory residents a voice and silencing long-time Montanans and rural residents only subjects more people to the mismanagement and unaddressed issues going on in our urban centers. Leaders who prefer power over responsibility and who willingly disenfranchise rural, older and longtime residents shouldn't be given more power in the legislature.

Please follow your own rules and select map 4.

Thank you,

DeAnna Anderson

504 S California St
Helena, MT 59601

Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, August 31, 2022 8:01 AM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: william berthoud

From: william berthoud wberthoud@msn.com
Residence: Roundup

Message:
Correctly. Do it correctly.

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on MDAC (https://mtredistricting.gov [mtredistricting.gov])

Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, August 30, 2022 8:53 AM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: william berthoud

From: william berthoud wberthoud@msn.com
Residence: Roundup

Message:
Dearest commiecrats,
Quit cheating!
Love, Bill

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on MDAC (https://mtredistricting.gov [mtredistricting.gov])

Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, August 31, 2022 12:26 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Amanda Cater

From: Amanda Cater catera1041@gmail.com
Residence: Bozeman, MT 59715

Message:
I believe it is important to have districts which maintain a close balance between the various parties. The balance would represent the 57 % – 43 % Republican/Democrat numbers in the state as a whole. I also think it is important to keep the reservations complete within a district rather than dividing them.

To that end, I prefer maps 2 and 3 as they are more representative of your task.
Thanks for your work on this difficult process!
Amanda Cater

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on MDAC (https://mtredistricting.gov [mtredistricting.gov])

Sherley, Laura

From: Darin Gaub <daringaub@protonmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 31, 2022 8:23 AM
To: Districting
Cc: daringaub@tutanota.com
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Legislative Districts

Greetings,

I'm writing in support of map #4 for the redistricting proposals. It's the one that best represents Montanans and doesn't clearly gerrymander like maps 1 and 2. My second preference is map #3. Here are some key points:

1. The maps proposed by Democrats are blatant power grabs that gerrymander Montanans only into the districts that gain Democrats the most power, they don't seek to be servants, but masters. They do not follow the prescribed parameters of avoiding partisanship, avoiding splitting communities of interest and splitting towns/cities/counties.

2. The Democrats' map doesn't meet their own parameters. Whether you use any of the four commissioners maps, your net number of competitive seats only changes by 2 out of 100. The only thing different in the proposals is the number of safe Democratic seats. Yet, Democratic maps exchange continuity, compactness and commonalities of residents to win Democrat seats.

3. These maps erase the political voices of rural residents, particularly in the areas and counties surrounding Democratic strongholds such as Missoula and Bozeman. While both these areas' current House districts give an approximately split of their observed voter patterns, the new maps proposed by Democrats completely eliminate almost all Republican representation in lieu of gathering more rural residents, some in other counties, to draw safe Democrat seats. This is unacceptable and against the stated purpose of nonpartisanship.

4. Democrat maps place as many as 8-12 districts together anchored in a single Democrat stronghold. This means city residents who are mostly homogenous are no longer drawn by who their neighbors are, but by how they vote. Rural residents' concerns will be minimized and not represented in the state legislature in favor of cosmopolitans and college students who often move away soon after voting. The rural/urban divide will continue to grow and cause resentment as suburban and rural

residents struggle for a voice in the legislature. This gerrymandering technique called "wagon-wheeling" is also prevalent in Helena. I ran for state legislature here in the Helena Valley and the rural residents are disgusted by the use of this technique to ensure they have no voice in our own government. How are people supposed to have faith and trust in government when maps like 1 and 2 even exist and so clearly show a desire to gain power, not pursue service.

5. Continuing to give more and more political power to Democrat strongholds at the cost of rural residents further exacerbates our current problems of rising costs-of-living, rising taxes, housing affordability etc. Giving college students and transitory residents a voice and silencing long-time Montanans and rural residents only subjects more people to the mismanagement and unaddressed issues going on in our urban centers. Leaders who prefer power over responsibility and who willingly disenfranchise rural, older and longtime residents shouldn't be given more power in the legislature.

Please follow your own rules and select map 4.

Adopted by the Montana Districting and Apportionment Commission, July 2021

Goals for State Legislative Districts

- No plan may be drawn to unduly favor a political party.
- The commission shall attempt to minimize dividing cities, towns, and federal reservations when possible.
- Keeping communities of interest intact. The Commission may co keeping communities of interest intact. Communities of interest based on Indian reservations; urban interests, suburban interest interests, including elementary and high school districts; tribal ir neighborhoods; trade areas; geographic location; demographics communication and transportation networks; social, cultural, his economic interests and connections; or occupations and lifestyle
- The commission may consider competitiveness of districts when plans.
- The commission shall consider assigning holdover senators to th District which contains the greatest number of residents of the c which they were previously elected when possible.

In Liberty,
Darin Gaub

Sherley, Laura

From: Mari Laxmi von Hoffmann <marilaxmi1@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 30, 2022 2:47 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comments

I think maps 2 or 3 are the best for Montana. They are the most equitable for all concerned in our state.

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android [go.onelink.me]

Sherley, Laura

From: Don Hook <don.hook@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 30, 2022 8:15 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Redistricting maps

The MT Constitution requires that districts are “compact” and “contiguous”. (Article 5, Section 14) Maps #2 & #3 violate the MT Constitution. Instead of keeping the downtown core and University area together, Maps #2 & #3 cannibalize these areas and redistribute them across 9 districts, which include a number of rural voters. This results in trust-fund transplants and transitory University students being mixed in with farmers, ranchers, and families who have lived in Gallatin Valley for 5 generations. These maps effectively disenfranchise and obliterate the voice of the rural voter.

The ONLY map which meets the legal requirements is Map 4.

Thank you for your time.

Don Hook
Sand Coulee Mt

Sherley, Laura

From: Daniel Horman <danielhormanrealestate@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 30, 2022 7:14 AM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Redistricting Map

Dear Montana Redistricting Committee Member,
Please choose map #1. It provides compactness of districts and keeps communities together.
Reject Maps #2 and #3. Living in Red Lodge, it is obviously ridiculous to include Red Lodge, Gardiner and Big Sky in the same district. This is Definitely NOT a compact district. It also does NOT keep communities intact, putting our County Seat in a different district than the rest of Carbon County. Also, the long and narrow district running east to west in the Fort Peck area is an obvious gerrymander, not having any semblance of compactness.
Map #4 is my second choice; it also provides compactness and keeps communities together.
Thankyou

Please do not hesitate to contact me for questions or further assistance at any time.
Thank you!

Dan Horman
219 Haggin Ave
Red Lodge MT
59068

Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, August 30, 2022 10:52 AM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Patricia Johnson

From: Patricia Johnson patriciaroot17@gmail.com
Residence: Great Falls, Montana

Message:
I support the districts drawn by
Representatives Dan Stusek and Jeff
Essmann and would like those to be put in
place officially.

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on MDAC (https://mtredistricting.gov [mtredistricting.gov])

Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, August 31, 2022 4:14 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Katie Leary

From: Katie Leary kateml41@gmail.com
Residence: Missoula, Montana

Message:
Please consider maps 2 & 3 for redistributing. Here is why:

Maps HDP 1 and HDP 4 are heavily gerrymandered, creating over 70 majority districts for Republicans and less than 30 majority Democrat districts. Maps 1 and 4 also eliminate several majority Native American districts, undermining their ability to elect candidates of their choice in about the same proportion as their share of the state's population. Maps 1 and 4 create a 40% advantage for Republicans, when the actual advantage should be about 14%.

Maps 2 and 3 have 57 majority Republican and 43 majority Democrat districts, retain the same number of Native American majority districts, and meet all of the mandatory criteria.

If the Commission chooses a map that contains more than about 57 districts with majority party partisan lean, our electoral structure will not be able to reflect the partisan diversity of Montana voters. The deck will be stacked against representative democracy.

Please consider the urgency of this issue,
Kathryn Leary
406-431-9843

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on MDAC (https://mtredistricting.gov [mtredistricting.gov])

Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, August 30, 2022 12:57 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Anne Lee

From: Anne Lee annelee61343@gmail.com
Residence: Missoula

Message:
Clearly Maps #1 and #4 best reflect a fair configuration. I prefer true facts and honesty. Please choose map #4 as my first choice and Map #1 as my second choice. thank you

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on MDAC (https://mtredistricting.gov [mtredistricting.gov])

Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, August 31, 2022 12:47 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Marcia Leritz

From: Marcia Leritz marcialeritz@gmail.com
Residence: Bozeman MT

Message:
Republican maps are so outrageously gerrymandered, that even if concessions are made, the GOP would still end up on top.
Democratic maps followed the rules set out by the Commission, and took into consideration the interconnectedness of our communities. Their maps create 43 Democrat and 57 Republican seats, fairly balancing power in the legislature.

Republican maps are gerrymandered, that even with concessions, they'd still come out on top.

I used to be an Independent, but it has become the norm of the Republican Party to lie and cheat at all costs to stay in power to benefit their narrow agendas.

I'm 78 and want better for our state and the average little persons. Thanks

--
This e-mail was sent from a contact form on MDAC (https://mtredistricting.gov [mtredistricting.gov])

Sherley, Laura

From: Megan Lubitz <meganicole9@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 30, 2022 2:55 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Montana Legislature Map Proposals

To the Montana Districting and Apportionment Commission,

I am writing today regarding the map proposals for the Montana State Legislature redistricting. I agree with the commission that these new districts should be as equal in population as is practicable, be compact and contiguous, protect the minority vote, keep communities of interest intact, not favor either party, and reflect the voters by remaining competitive.

After reviewing the proposed maps it is fairly evident that they are each proportional in population and contiguous. I do however see differences between the maps. One is compactness, and the other is protecting the minority vote, keeping communities of interest intact, and remaining competitive.
The best maps for compactness are HDP 3 and HDP 4. If there are any concerns about driving along these districts, these two maps would be the easiest to drive. I would then look at each of their ability to keep communities of interest intact, protect the minority vote, and remain competitive. Of the two, I would consider HDP 3 to have the best fair representation of the minority vote and keep multiple communities of interest intact. Most importantly, it keeps the Flathead and Blackfeet reservations in tact, as well as the Rocky Boy's, Fort Belknap, and Fort Peck reservations intact. This is crucial and necessary for the legislature to have these communities represented fairly in Montana.

The criteria set forth by the commission is fair and comprehensive. HDP 3 is the most comprehensive map to meet all of the criteria. With the main differences between each map being compactness and protecting the minority votes, HDP 3 does the best at both of these criteria. We should do our best to make it easy to travel along the district, but more importantly, the majority and the minority must be fairy represented.

Please consider these comments as Montana has taken pride in its ability to remain a fair state that values each of its citizens.

Sincerely,

Megan Lubitz
Kalispell, MT

Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, August 31, 2022 4:22 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Antoinette Lubrecht

From: Antoinette Lubrecht toni.lubrecht@gmail.com
Residence: Missoula Montana

Message:
I advocate for the adoption of Map 2 or 3 because they have 57 majority Republican and 43 majority Democratic districts, retain the same number of Native American districts, and meet all the other mandatory criteria.

Maps 1 and 4 are heavily gerrymandered and result in the deck being stacked against representative democracy.

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on MDAC (https://mtredistricting.gov [mtredistricting.gov])

Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, August 31, 2022 1:18 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Betsy Mancuso

From: Betsy Mancuso bbwin@bresnan.net
Residence: Manhattan, MT

Message:
Dear Sirs and Madams,

I am opposed to the maps 2 and 3 as they are not a fair representation of the area.

Thank you,

Betsy Mancuso

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on MDAC (https://mtredistricting.gov [mtredistricting.gov])

Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, August 31, 2022 10:59 AM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Margarita McLarty

From: Margarita McLarty mclarty1@outlook.com
Residence: Livingston, Montana (Rural in Paradise Valley)

Message:
I am distressed at the attempts by both political parties to create districts that skew natural community edges and physical boundaries to obtain immediate political advantage. Cannot we see that by such obvious attempts to manipulate us, the ultimate result will be a skeptical inattentive, and chaotic populace, and that benefits neither political party. The Republican maps that engage in "cracking" communities rely on such a blatant dishonest interpretation of the parameters of redistricting that they are a disservice to their constituents and will serve to damage our democracy.

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on MDAC (https://mtredistricting.gov [mtredistricting.gov])

Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, August 31, 2022 2:36 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Nancy Kae Ostlie

From: Nancy Kae Ostlie nancyostlie@gmail.com
Residence: Bozeman Montana

Message:
As a lifelong Democrat who believes in democracy and the values we have all been taught, such as integrity, I strongly support the HDP 2 or HDP 3 maps for redistricting. It is important that the districts fairly apportion in a way that reflects the numbers of Republicans vs. Democrats in the state, 47% and 53%.

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on MDAC (https://mtredistricting.gov [mtredistricting.gov])

Sherley, Laura

From: Arthur Plowman <arthurplowman67@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 30, 2022 5:36 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Montana House Redistricting comment

Good evening. I trust you had a blessed day. Thank you for this opportunity to share my view. I'm praying for my State! First, Map #1 is outstanding! Everyone in Carbon County should be thanking you for the possible privilege of being #1. Map #2 as well as 3 take our county seat, Red Lodge, and separate it from its county. Embarrassing. Please DO NOT! Map #4 is fine.
"The maps 1 and 4 keep the 1% or less variation but 2 and 3 grossly violate the compact requirement, and separating Red Lodge from the rest of Carbon County does NOT keep communities intact."
God loves you (John 3:16),
Pat

Blessings from our house to yours.
God loves you! John 3:16
Please reply to partplowman@hotmail.com

Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, August 31, 2022 3:36 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Eva C Patten

From: Eva C Patten evapatten1@gmail.com
Residence: Bozeman, Montana

Message:
I have always been impressed that Montana established a Redistricting Commission based on adherence to the Voting Rights Act and to a number of provisions to insure that in Montana, our votes are representative of our population…not gerrymandered, not rigged. It is a tough job. This time it is disappointing to see that the two alternatives, #1 and #4 drafted by the Republican members do not reflect the rules set up by the Redistricting Commission. Following their recommendations would produce a 70-30 advantage for Republicans and split Native American votes…hm-m. Sounds like gerrymandering to me. That is not Montana!! Both #2 and #3 reflect the 57% Republican, 43% Democratic split that means the fairness to all. It meets the Voting Rights Criteria set by Congress and the Mandatory criteria established by the Redistricting Committee itself. Let us retain our heritage as a state where our votes count, not look for ways to politicize the system for the benefit of "winning at all costs"

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on MDAC (https://mtredistricting.gov [mtredistricting.gov])

Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, August 30, 2022 7:45 AM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Kathleen Ralpj

From: Kathleen Ralpj k.a.ralph@gmail.com
Residence: Columbus, MT

Message:
Redistricting is a very important task and it must be done fairly, ensuring that no party is favored over another and that the voting rights of minorities are protected. HD 1 and 4 do not meet these criteria and SHOULD NOT BE SELECTED.

Maps HD 2 and 3 do meet the above criteria and the final map should be one of them.

It is essential that our voting districts reflect the population and that gerrymandered districts are avoided. "One person, one vote" – and that means equal weight is allocated to every citizen.

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on MDAC (https://mtredistricting.gov [mtredistricting.gov])

Sherley, Laura

From: ssrossiter@aol.com
Sent: Tuesday, August 30, 2022 1:52 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Montana House Redistricting

I live in District 43 and Maps 1 and 4 look to me like they most accurately reflect the district's demographics.

Sherilyn D. Rossiter
2990 Expo Pkwy, Apt. #302
Missoula, MT 59808

Sherley, Laura

From: Gordon Sirrine <sirrineg1@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 30, 2022 7:47 AM
To: kendra.miller@mtleg.gov; dan.stusek@mtleg.gov; Joe.Lamson@mtleg.gov; jeff.essmann@mtleg.gov; maylinn.smith@mtleg.gov; Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Redistricting Montana

Dear Montana Redistricting Committee Member,
Please choose map #1. It provides compactness of districts and keeps communities together.
Reject Maps #2 and #3. Living in Bridger, it is obviously ridiculous to include Red Lodge, Gardiner and Big Sky in the same district. This is Definitely NOT a compact district. It also does NOT keep communities intact, putting our County Seat in a different district than the rest of Carbon County. Also, the long and narrow district running east to west in the Fort Peck area is an obvious gerrymander, not having any semblance of compactness.
Map #4 is my second choice; it also provides compactness and keeps communities together.
Thankyou

Gordon Sirrine
104 Yellowstone ave
Po Box 111
Belfry Montana 59008

Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, August 30, 2022 7:33 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Marilyn Gail Trenfield

From: Marilyn Gail Trenfield 57pogeno@gmail.com
Residence: St. Ignatius, Montana

Message:
In these divided times, it is critical for the public welfare to provide fair redistricting maps that reflect how Montanans vote, and preserve Native American representation in accordance with the Voting Rights Act.

Despite this, Republicans have proposed maps that are clearly gerrymandered, and which illegally divide the Native American vote.

The proposed Democratic maps do ensure that the legislature can fairly represent a variety of interests. These maps also have 6 majority-minority House districts, paired to 3 such Senate districts – allowing election of Native candidates of choice.

The proposed Republican maps would favor Republicans winning 71-72 seats on 57% of the statewide vote. This might be good for them, but it will be very bad, indeed, for Montana.

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on MDAC (https://mtredistricting.gov [mtredistricting.gov])