

Public Comments

Montana Districting and Apportionment Commission
Comments between 8 a.m. on November 28 and 8 a.m. on November 29, 2022

Distributed electronically November 29, 2022

Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Monday, November 28, 2022 10:47 AM
To: Districting
Subject: MDAC Comment from: Claudia L. Howard

From: Claudia L. Howard howardc1037@yahoo.com
Residence: Havre, Montana

Message:

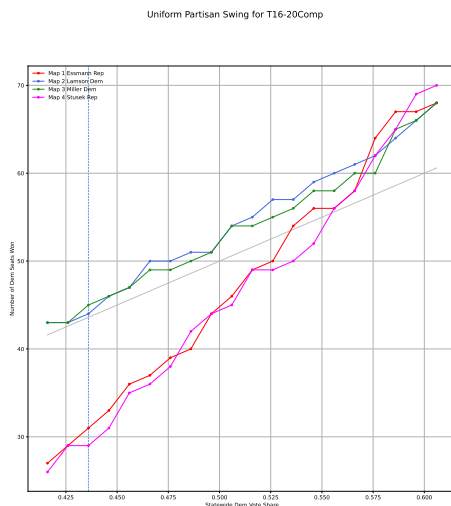
As a resident of Havre, Montana (Hill County) since 1976, I would like to request that when redistricting you could please include "North" Havre in the same district as the rest of Havre. North Havre is really part of Havre itself. Currently our representation for "North" Havre comes from Malta and could reach as far away as Glasgow, approximately 150 miles. A representative from there will not be serving the people of Havre as he/she should. Havre is not made up of a bunch of suburbs, we are all one city.

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November 28, 2022
 Comments to The Districting and Apportionment Commission
 On State House Redistricting Proposals
 From Kelly McKinnie, Missoula, MT

- As a Montana, I am proud that our state has an independent redistricting commission to make new maps. After following some of the undesirable and clearly biased outcomes of non-independent commissions in places like Ohio and New York it is as important as ever that Montana effectively uses and maintains the fully independent nature of this commission. I think it is a hard job to draw legislative districts given the many and varied parties with deep interest in the outcome but I have hope that all members of this Commission will consider the interests of all Montanans while completing the process and not simply those of the majority party, incumbents and/or their own political party. I realize that this is a big ask in a time of hyper partisan politics with a large Republican majority but implore those on the commissions to follow through for the health of politics in the state of Montana.
- Please work to increase the number of competitive districts in the State House. This will increase the number of Montanans engaged in the political process. It will also allow the state legislature to be more sensitive to swings in political leanings of the state as a whole. Proposed maps 1 and 4 have 7 and 8 competitive districts respectively while Proposed maps 2 and 3 have 10 and 11 competitive districts by the commission's definition of competitive. I think the commission should aim to maximize this number. With 11 instead of 7 competitive districts there are about 40,000 more Montanans who will live in districts that are considered competitive and will potentially field more moderate candidates from each party. This will lead to an increase in the number of Montanans engaged in the political process.
- It's important to maintain a proportional number of American Indian minority majority districts. Montana's recent history of having proportional representation of American Indians in the legislature is something Montanans can be proud of and should continue to prioritize. All four proposed maps have more minority majority districts than can be found in a random drawing of the house maps. This is important, but house maps 1 and 4 have one fewer than maps 2 and 3. Redrawing the map with fewer minority majority districts has the potential to drastically decreased the representation of American Indians in the legislature and must be avoided.
- Due to the way the minority political party (the democratic party) is distributed among the



population of Montana, it is clear that it is more difficult to draw a house district map that comes close to proportionality, especially when commissioners try to reduce splitting “communities of interest” and desire to have very compact regions. House maps 2 and 3 do a much better job of representing the whole of Montana as displayed in the graphic to the left. The gray straight line in the graph represents proportional representation. On the x-axis is uniform partisan swing. No swing occurs at the dashed blue line (about 43%) where maps 1 and 4 give around 30% of house seats and maps 2 and 3 give close to 43%. Maps 1 and 4 do not reach proportionality until there is a 10-point partisan swing (up to 53%).

- In the current era of computer drawn maps that can be drawn with the intention of producing a certain political outcome, there is no excuse to not use this technology for good. We should use it to draw more competitive maps that will increase participation in the political process and more justly represent the people of Montana. We do not have to live in the 19th century when it comes to map drawing (or transportation, thankfully). Though some proposed maps might look less compact or appear to divide communities of interest or require a little more travel, this is a necessary reality to obtain a better representation of all Montanans in the legislature.

Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Monday, November 28, 2022 8:47 AM
To: Districting
Subject: MDAC Comment from: Lindsey Ratliff

From: Lindsey Ratliff ljmmc406@gmail.com
Residence: Havre, MT

Message:

When looking at the map options, I believe it would be common sense to include North Havre with the current House District 28. North Havre is essentially Havre, and a short drive over the viaduct shouldn't result in one's representative being all the way from Malta or other far reaching Eastern MT towns. I encourage the board to add North Havre to our district map to insure all Havre people who have common interests have a common representative.

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