

These sample letters to the editor, educating your community about redistricting & gerrymandering. Please don't copy them verbatim. We ask that you use your own words and make it authentically from you.

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( 340 Words - larger than some papers will allow; shorter letters below)

To the Editor:

After the U.S. Census every 10 years, states reapportion the population into voting districts for the NH House and Senate, the Executive Council, County Commission and for the U.S. House. When redistricting is fair, maps are drawn to consider how many in the town, what towns are in what school districts, whether towns have a shared economic source like a mill, or a shared geographic area. And they must be contiguous.

When redistricting is NOT fair, it becomes gerrymandering, a manipulation of those maps for partisan gain. Gerrymandering tries to give an advantage to the party in power by "packing" towns which lean one way together, such as New Hampshire's Executive Council District 2, which snakes through blue-leaning towns from rural Hinsdale to urban Portsmouth, leaving the adjoining districts redder.

That district and several Senate and House districts were gerrymandered in 2011. As usual, a bipartisan Special Committee was to draw the maps, but it was really created for show. The reality was that the maps were drawn by a handful of people, all behind closed doors and using a software program which still has never been publicly scrutinized.

When it was time for the required public hearings in 2011, there were no maps shown at the meetings. For the NH House maps, it wasn't until one week prior to the full House vote that most legislators in either party had the opportunity to see the maps -- to analyze the districts for 400 state reps! How much time did the public have to review the House map? 24 hours.

The NH House is about to embark on a redistricting process for the next 10 years. A statewide effort is underway in 103 NH towns to head off any further gerrymandering, with the NH Resolution for Fair Nonpartisan Redistricting. You can help by passing this resolution in your town, but just as important, call or write your state representatives and demand that our redistricting process be fair, nonpartisan and transparent. The travesty of 2011 should never be allowed to happen again.

Your Name & Town

Your Phone number (not published)

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To the Editor: (250 Words )

Not too many citizens really understand the redistricting process, nor do they know the rights we have under our New Hampshire Constitution. Did you know that under a 2006 NH Constitutional amendment, every town with 3294 population (2011's number) our NH Constitution guarantees that town can have it's own exclusive state rep district?

In 2011, many towns were inappropriately combined into districts for partisan reasons. For instance, two towns where the larger town leaned heavily red, and the adjoining town was less so, by combining the two, it made the second town consistently consistently red, too, adding to the total in the state house. While it doesn't have squiggly lines, this is gerrymandering, and is the most common form in NH.

Voters in NH towns affected by this should be livid about this, but unfortunately didn't understand what was being done to them in 2011. Then, the redistricting process was done behind closed doors, using unknown software, out of the sight of the public.

Our legislature is about to start redistricting in 2021 to draw maps for the next 10 years. If your town got combined in 2011 and you are eligible for your own district, town officials and voters need to speak up! Your Constitution guarantees you proper representation of your town.

And if voters in your town are proposing the NH Resolution for Fair Nonpartisan Redistricting in your town, make sure to not only support it, but speak to it in town meeting or social media.

Your Name

Your Town

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**(246 words)**

To the Editor:

Don't know much about gerrymandering? Neither did I until recently. Gerrymandering is the process of redistricting, or reapportioning our voting districts, gone bad. In 2011, dozens of NH districts were gerrymandered, much to the dismay of responsible members of both parties. The Executive Council District 2 is an obvious one, but many NH Senate and House districts were as well, by combining towns in such a way as to run up the count in Concord.

Every 10 years under our current system, the legislature appoints a committee to redistrict, but there have been two recent bipartisan bills for an independent redistricting commission like Florida, Michigan and California. But these bills were vetoed in 2019 and 2020.

So now, like 2011, we are at the mercy of a legislature which could further gerrymander the state to guarantee continued power in future elections. Whether the legislature chooses fairness or cheating, is up to the moral compass of our legislators.

Voters and towns officials must speak up and demand a fair, nonpartisan and transparent redistricting process. For voters, this gerrymandering makes your vote matter less, when the "fix" is in. For towns, the last process may have robbed you of your own Constitutionally guaranteed state representative if you were combined with another town, provided you have 3300+ population. If they think they can get away with it, bad actors may try to further gerrymander our towns. Speak up and let the State House know how you feel about it!

Your Name & Town

Your Phone number (not published)

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