

CHAIRPERSONS: Representative Gregg Haddad

SENATORS: Kelly, McCrory, Formica,  
Daugherty Abrams

REPRESENTATIVES: Candelora, Exum, Perillo

REP. HADDAD (54TH): So I will call this hearing to order, this is the first hearing of four to be held by the Reapportionment Committee. We'll share some information at the end about the other dates. But this is our first public hearing. I'd ask Senator Kelly if he has any opening remarks?

SENATOR KELLY (21ST): Thank you, Mr. Chairman just at the outset, you know, the purpose of this is to make sure that we get input. Hopefully, valuable input from the people of Connecticut. The goal is to make sure that this process is fair, it's equal, and equitable.

And so we look forward to the comments and commentary in any testimony and evidence that people put into the public record that will help us you know, through this process. And maybe even give us some, a little bit of insight that we hadn't seen before. So thank you.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you, Senator Kelly. We have three people signed up to testify tonight. They signed up and then they were randomized. And so yes, I think that we're here really to hear from members of the public. And so it'd encouraged, we'll just get started on that.

The first speaker is Cheri Quickmire from Common Cause. Ms. Cheri Quickmire, traditionally, we hold people to three minutes, know that because of the large crowds, we'll be strictly enforcing three minutes tonight.

CHERI QUICKMIRE: I know I can count on that. I've been cut off many times. Yes. But in this case, I will submit my testimony over via website and I didn't, I wasn't sure exactly where to do that today, so I didn't do it. So I will just say good evening, Chairman Haddad and Chairman Kelly, and members of the Reapportionment Committee.

My name is Cheri Quickmire and I'm the Executive Director of Common Cause in Connecticut. And I want to make sure that you can hear me through the mask, is that? Okay, we're okay. We're good. Okay. So Common Cause is a non-partisan grassroots organization dedicated to upholding the core values of American democracy.

And we work to create open, honest, and accountable government that serves the public interest, promotes equal rights, opportunity, and representation for all members of society. And I won't go into all the details here just because it would take a while. We've been doing this for over 50 years.

So we have a long list of things and tens of thousands of members here and supporters in Connecticut and we have a million and a half members and supporters nationwide. So I will say that one of our main focuses at the moment is the creation of fair and transparent redistricting processes across the country.

And we're working with legislators and legislatures and coalition partners to support redistricting reform here in Connecticut. And the basic point is that we believe voters should choose their representatives. And rather than having representatives cherry-pick their constituents.

And during previous redistricting cycles, many decisions were made within the legislature with little public input or advanced notice of proceedings. And this was prior to COVID and all the, you know, the delays that we had to deal with

from the US census and from just making things schedule here.

So that was back in the day you know, it's still, where things were done in sort of behind closed doors. And we really, really feel strongly that this needs to be a public process and that there should be as much real transparency to create fair districts in our state in this year. So this is something that we think people deserve and are expecting at this point. So we want to do away with whatever that business as usual mindset is and, ensure that every person in every town across the state from Stanford to Stafford is represented and heard in this process.

So this is a good year to make sure that that happens and we strongly encourage the Reapportionment Committee and the soon to be appointed, you know, reapportionment commission to commit to a fair and transparent process of drawing lines that really prioritizes communities of interest, particularly underrepresented communities who are often left out of this process and should absolutely be maintained intact if at all possible.

And we think that the before the final redistricting decisions are made, we should know that people have a fair shot to -- a fair shot to elect candidates that will not only be responsive to their concerns but where we can absolutely count on that because we really want to make sure that we're rebuilding trust in our government and ensuring that every voter has an equal opportunity to elect candidates that share their actual experience and values.

And we must guarantee that this process, which is ultimately the public process and that it should be open and transparent. I think that that is certainly the commitment that I understand that you all have to this process and to making that happen. And so we're very encouraged by that and appreciative of all the work you've done so far to

make that happen and to make sure that voters know that the process is an open process.

We encourage as much more outreach and education in the community as possible to make sure that people understand what's happening? In what timeframe? And you know, where the public hearings will be and how they can access the one virtual hearing?

And we had a few steps that we encourage you to undertake that we will, you know, you can definitely, you've already addressed a number of them, but I think the one that I want and we haven't agreed on it.

One that I would say specifically is to be, is that we have an opportunity this time around to use the redistricting data, to allocate people incarcerated at the time of the census, and to make sure that they're reallocated into their home communities and that the data set that best counts them, minimizes the padding of districts that existed in this state for a very long time districts, where there were prisons that are no longer there in some cases, or that people are still incarcerated, but they are being will be counted in their home communities.

I think this is a really major step forward for our state. And I'm really pleased that the general assembly took those steps to make that happen. And I will just say that as a rough guide if a 70% reallocation success rate is achieved, that that would be a really good outcome, but of course, I would urge a hundred percent, but you know, this is our first time doing this is our first time with this data.

And I think that we, you know, we should give ourselves a break at some point, but I'm really excited that that's part of this whole, you know, this whole process. And we're looking forward to working with this Committee and with the commission when it gets established to make sure that the

redistricting process works for all of Connecticut residents and that we all have an equal opportunity to have our voices heard in this process. Thank you.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you for your offering your testimony. I would just say that I think that the appropriate way for you to deliver that testimony to us electronically is just through an email to our Reapportionment Committee's email address that's on our website.

And that way your comments, your written comments can be part of the public record as well. Are there any questions from members of the Committee? Seeing none, thank you very much for your testimony. My reading glasses say next up is Steven Erlingheuser. Welcome to the Committee, Mr. Erlingheuser. You can proceed after you get settled.

STEVEN ERLINGHEUSER: Greetings Co-Chairs Rep. Haddad and Senator Kelly, and all the numbers of the Reapportionment Committee. My name is Steven Erlingheuser, and I may be getting a little out of myself, but I would like to propose maps are required. This hour stricken for Congress, the state's at, and the Statehouse, because drawing map proposals has been a hobby of mine over the past few years.

And as I've hoped to eliminate like gerrymander maps and this hobby has helped strongly helped me learn what goes into making a fair map. First, I'd like to put the maps I draw tend to focus on compactness and retaining communities of interests while attempting to minimize municipal splits as much as possible as there's no county-level governor in the state of Connecticut I didn't factor that into these maps.

Well, I don't know any for other states, but as a result, my maps are not drawn to pay or disfavor political parties or incumbent legislatures. By

minimizing the municipal splits and retaining these communities of interest.

I hope to let people choose their legislators, not the other way around, but to start off with my congressional map proposal, which can be seen section two, my written testimony. As it currently stands. It doesn't split any cities or towns in the entire state. Inevitably, this'll change once the adjusted population per the new prison gerrymandering law comes back and then get there for that.

But my aim is basically to have a deviation less than 1000 persons from the average per districts, which is a target population of a little over \$721,000. This map makes districts more compact than the map used in the -- during the proceeding decade. For example, I didn't like the way the first district like essentially gave a bear hug to the fifth district.

So my, my proposal eliminates this awkward shape. For a community of interest example, I also kept the entire Lower Naugatuck Valley in a single district. And as such the third district takes in all of Oxford and Shelton. And inevitably, like I said, they'll change because of adjusting population. And as far as my state and statehouse map proposals go beyond my normal standards.

I don't, honestly, I don't have much contraries. You have something similar to my third congressional district proposal. Mentalizing the splits in the Lower Naugatuck valley where I reside. One specific comment that I've seen publicized in the past year is that officials in the seat of Darien do not, would prefer not to be split into three separate house districts. And that I could see it being lower to two or even one like I currently have in my current map.

So at the very least, no more than two district should encompass the towns of Ansonia and Derby, in my opinion. How they exactly this should be [inaudible] basically, I feel these could be used as baselines rather than strict proposals for what the line should be.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you for your testimony. And just for members of the public, I would just mention that all of the public testimony that's submitted to the Committee will be posted on our website.

Yours is Mr. Erlingheuser. And I had a chance to look at the maps while you were testifying. And I also noted that you added a link at the top of each page of your PDF, which links to a third-party redistricting site, which is where you actually drew the maps.

I think it was davesredistricting.org in this case, right? So I commend you for doing the work and submitting us the ideas. That's precisely what I think this Committee welcomes in terms of you know, the kind of testimony and that drawing. And so thank you very much for your testimony.

Are there any questions by members of the Committee? Seeing none, we will say thank you very much. And I look forward to reviewing a maps in more depth later. Last person signed up to testify is Laura Smiths representing the League of Women Voters. Welcome to the Committee.

LAURA SMITHS: Thank you, glad to be here. Glad to see more people. Thank you so much for this opportunity. My name is Laura Smiths, and I'm the president of the League of Women Voters in Connecticut. The League of Women Voters is a grassroots member organization who century-old mission is to empower voters and defend democracy in a non-partisan manner.

We believe that voters are at the center of our democracy and strive to protect voting rights at all costs. Redistricting may not sound like voting rights, but it is. After all the way districts are drawn, determines who is on the ballot. If voters don't feel their vote will count because of the way their district is drawn or feel that their preferred candidate has little chance of prevailing, they don't vote.

Voter alienation equals voter suppression. Unfortunately, the redistricting process remains cloaked in mystery to many voters. Connecticut's process and timetable are set in our constitution and therefore cannot be changed except by changing the constitution. And as we recently found during this past year with statewide efforts to expand voting rights, changing our constitution is at the very least complicated.

This year, the league focused on ensuring that the 2020 US census data will be used to draw fair representative voting districts, the late delivery of this data in August five months later than usual, and amid a pandemic has resulted in additional pressure on your Committee, as well as the public's access to the process.

And so here we are. And while your Committee is a bipartisan one appointed by party leaders in the state Senate and house, this process is far from objective. The league supports the establishment of an independent redistricting commission in Connecticut. That would include the citizens at large representatives of public interest groups and members of minority groups.

But that is a mission and a goal for another day. Right now we cannot change the process or expand the timeline, but we do ask, what's been asked already, which is at this process, be transparent by expanding your website and sharing any criteria that you adopt in full pulp view of the public, including



plans for map creation, revision, and improvement. Engage the public in good faith, which is what you're doing now.

Thank you for that. By sharing draft maps, political and demographic data with time for interested communities, to comment on them. That the Committee take responsibility by publicizing your work and encouraging citizen input by using as many Connecticut news outlets as possible, including social media, to get information to the public quickly. In summary, the league's goal is to bring redistricting out of the shadows and into the light of day.

We want Connecticut residents and their communities to be the central concern and constituency when it comes to redistricting. Voters should choose their legislators rather than current legislators choosing their voters. The League's People Powered Fair Maps Campaign was initiated to stimulate citizen action on redistricting in order to create fair maps. When this cycle concludes on or before February 15th, 2022, and maps are adopted, the league's activism will continue and fair and equal maps are key to a representative democracy.

And I just want to say also, just in passing that what was said before, which is to keep neighborhoods and communities together, if at all possible small towns, shouldn't have more than one district. Some of that stuff I'm sure that you all know and are aware of, and I wish you the best of luck in your work. Thank you very much.

REP. HADDAD (54TH): Thank you very much for your testimony. Are there any questions? Seeing none. I think you're okay. You're halfway to your seat anyways. I appreciate all of you know, the folks who came out to testify today.

There are additional opportunities for members of the public to testify before this Committee tomorrow

September 9th, we'll be at Norwich town hall at 1:00 PM in the afternoon. On Monday that's September 13th, we'll be at Shelton town hall at 1:00 PM in the afternoon.

And next Tuesday, that's September 14th we'll have a zoom hearing that begins at 7:00 PM. And all of those are great opportunities for folks to submit testimony or to directly address this Committee. I would say one other thing, which is, I think that this Committee is very accepting of folks who just want to send information.

We have a number of people who have written or sent in testimony and that information will also be posted on our website for everybody to review. And that's a welcome way. And as Mr. Erlingheuser did, you can use third-party websites, which allow you to draw districts and send that information to this Committee as well.

And to this subsequent commission. I think I don't know if there's anybody else here would like to address the Committee, seeing none. I'll just ask Committee members if they had any closing remarks or, or any anything else that they want to add? Seeing none then we will adjourn and I'll see you tomorrow at 1:00 PM in Norwich.