

Public Comments

Montana Districting and Apportionment Commission
Comments received by 11:59 p.m. on September 8, 2022.

Distributed electronically September 9, 2022

Sherley, Laura

From: Maeyhem Violette <maeyhemviolette@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 8, 2022 5:57 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support for HDP-2

Madam Chair and Members of The Commission,

My name is Andrea Alfson. I live in Great Falls, Cascade County, Montana. I'm writing to express my support for HDP-2. I support a map that does not give an unfair advantage to any party and HDP-2 best represents that. Please make fairness, competitiveness, and the will of the people a priority. We, the citizens, want fair districts that represent us accurately.

Thank you for your time,
Andrea Alfson

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android \[go.onelink.me\]](#)

Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Thursday, September 8, 2022 1:08 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Janice Anderson

From: Janice Anderson janderson69@gmail.com
Residence: Boulder, Montana

Message:

Please adopt HDP2. Jefferson County has three very different communities in Whitehall, Boulder and Montana City, something recognized in HDP2. I have worked in all three. Whitehall is more allied with Madison County, Montana City really is part of Helena. We would all be best served by HDP2. Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

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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: Thursday, September 8, 2022 10:21 AM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Dee Anna

From: Dee Anna Deeanna21rf@gmail.com
Residence: Boulder

Message:

Please vote in favor of the map that best reflects the minority and partisan make up of the state's population. Vote for map 2 or 3. Thank you for voting to maintain a 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: Thursday, September 8, 2022 8:15 AM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Angela Bennin

From: Angela Bennin angelabennin@scottysoil.com
Residence: Livingston, MT

Message:

Please follow the law and have the districts be compact. I think plan 1 or plan 4 is more in line with the law.

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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: Thursday, September 8, 2022 4:52 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Corey D Biggers

From: Corey D Biggers hykabyk@gmail.com
Residence: Bozeman, MT

Message:

The redrawn districts by the Democrats do not meet the intent or design set aside for districts. The redrawn districts are not compact by any stretch.

I see no reason to redraw the district boundary's

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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: Thursday, September 8, 2022 3:32 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Ann Brodsky

From: Ann Brodsky abrodsky@mt.net
Residence: Helena, Montana

Message:

Chair Smith and Members of the Districting and Apportionment Commission:

I'm writing to share my views of the legislative reapportionment alternatives you are considering.

I appreciate the commitment you are all making to this work, especially the commitment of the Chair, and to acknowledge the challenges you face in redistricting Montana's legislative seats. I write with some personal perspective, having served as legislative staff to the Districting and Apportionment Commission following the 1980 census – when life was perhaps simpler.

This country is facing serious upheaval in many ways. Politics is divisive and can be nasty, and, unfortunately, it can be hard for Americans to separate truth from fiction when our news sources are often not reliable. Our democracy is at a precipice, I believe, and it concerns me greatly.

The conundrum you appear to face as Commissioners – particularly the Chair — is that, ideally, you would be able to satisfy all your criteria – mandatory AND discretionary, including that your redistricting plan create legislative districts reflecting the state's current partisan leanings. For me, that criteria is most important. Our legislative districts are not established like Congress, where states like Montana, by design, have a strength disproportionate to our population. Our legislative districts are established using a one-person, one-vote standard, and if the redistricting plan you adopt does not reflect the State's partisan makeup, it will dilute the votes of those in the minority.

I think it is essential that our legislature reflect who we are as a people, statewide. If that is not so, then the minority voice will be drowned out, not heard, and ineffective.

I've lived in this grand state for 45 years. Democrats and Republicans, Republicans and Democrats, have worked together for most of that time. Please do not create a legislative map in which democratic voices are drowned out disproportionate to their share of the state's population. That is not our Montana.

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: Thursday, September 8, 2022 7:26 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Rebecca Bronec

From: Rebecca Bronec beckybronec@gmail.com
Residence: Carter, MT

Message:

Please don't allow Gerrymandering in Gallatin Co that benefits the Democratic Party . The rules are clear that compact blocks are areas that need correct representation.

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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: Thursday, September 8, 2022 10:21 PM
To: districting@mt.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Jacob Corcoran

From: Jacob Corcoran jacob.helena@live.com
Residence: Helena, MT

Message:

My name is Jacob Corcoran. I would like to express preference for map 4 and if not 4, then map 3. It is clear that other maps attempt to gerrymander the districts in democrat favor. Instead of trying to win on policy, they are attempting to claim districts out of a sense of entitlement. They believe that they should have equality of outcome and that is just simply not American. As an indigenous man I find it insulting that the party that calls themselves the party for minorities believes they are entitled to more, for no other reason than because they want it. So again, I express my preference for map 4 to encourage both republicans and democrats to run their campaigns based on policy and values. If you can win on those, then you are entitled to nothing. Thank you for your consideration.

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

Sherley, Laura

From: Aishly Corrigan <aishlycorrigan@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 7, 2022 4:36 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Map HDP-2

Chair, members of the commission,

My name is Aishly Corrigan, and I am from Great Falls. Having lived in Great Falls for 30 years, I fully support map HDP-2. The map represents how fellow Montanans have historically voted and it does not unfairly favor one party over the other. Map HDP-2 provides the voter a voice and knowing that their vote counts.

I also support map HDP-2 because it considers and respects Indian Country as separate and important communities of interest.

I strongly urge the commission to put community interests ahead of political ones and adopt a fair, competitive and legal map that reflects the communities of Montana both in terms of political makeup and Indigenous representation.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Aishly Corrigan

Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, September 7, 2022 4:43 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Paul Currie

From: Paul Currie stinkycheeseheads@gmail.com
Residence: Bozeman, MT

Message:

Gerrymandering in such a fashion is a distinct and apparent attempt by democrats to avoid the very thing they uphold which is the idea of listening to the majority by segmenting the voting districts like so they manage to remove the voices of those that would oppose and provide a vital look at legislation they submit.

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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, September 7, 2022 11:41 AM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Margaret Gillikin

From: Margaret Gillikin mgillikin@stpaulshelena.org
Residence: Helena, MT

Message:
Montana Redistricting Commission –

I am strongly in favor that you CHOOSE MAPS 2 or 3 in your process.

I see that maps 1 & 4 create gerrymandered favoritism to Republicans, FAR out of proportion to actual population voting habits. This is unfair and will lead to policies, laws and government that DO NOT represent the people of Montana.

Please choose Maps TWO or THREE. Thank you. Rev. Margaret Gillikin, Helena

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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, September 6, 2022 6:17 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Franz Glaus

From: Franz Glaus franz.glaus@gmail.com
Residence: Bozeman

Message:
We need to follow the law. Do Democrats ever stop breaking the law?

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

Sherley, Laura

From: Jennifer Grady <j.grady12@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 7, 2022 8:21 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] HDP-2

Dear Madam Chair and Members of The Commission,

My name is Jennifer Grady. I am a community member and a registered voter of Great Falls / Cascade County, Montana.

I am writing to express my support for HDP-2. This map best represents a fair and competitive district. It accurately reflects historical votes and does not unfairly advantage any party.

Redistricting is a tremendous undertaking, and the Commission is endowed with significant public trust. It is of the utmost importance that redistricting is fair, competitive, and legal. HDP-2 is the best choice considering these factors. Importantly, HDP-2 also respects Indian Country as a separate but important community equally deserving of fair and competitive maps. I urge you to prioritize not only the intent of the nonpartisan commission, but the will of the citizens.

We want fair districts to ensure free and fair elections for us, and for the generations that will vote after us.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jennifer Grady

Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Thursday, September 8, 2022 11:36 PM
To: districting@mt.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Tatum Darrell Gray

From: Tatum Darrell Gray tgray1@mtech.edu
Residence: Dillon, Montana

Message:

Among the 4 maps presented, I have more confidence in the competitiveness in Proposals 2 and 3, rather than the selective focus of Proposals 1 and 4, that fails take additional contexts into account.

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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, September 7, 2022 9:14 AM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Alanah Griffith

From: Alanah Griffith alanah@bigskymtlaw.com
Residence: Gallatin Gateway/Big Sky

Message:

I thought of something to add to my public comment. Almost all of the maps carve Gallatin Gateway away from Big Sky. However, with the recent massive investment from Lone Mountain Land Company and the YC, Gateway's future existence is strongly tied to Big Sky. I would seem important that any representative of the area represent both so that they can help the two areas navigate the tricky waters ahead. Thank you again for your service! Alanah

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

Sherley, Laura

From: DeDe Tuxill Hayward <buttehaywards@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 7, 2022 1:15 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Nee Legislative District

I'm providing my input as a registered & active voter in Montana. I sincerely hope the new map will provide a fair representation for the democrats in this state. That is the only one I'll support.

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Thursday, September 8, 2022 10:24 AM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Richard James Heikes

From: Richard James Heikes jimheikes0@gmail.com
Residence: Boulder, MT

Message:

Please vote for map 2 or 3 to maintain representative democracy. Thank you for considering my request.

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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: Thursday, September 8, 2022 5:53 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Robin Hellyer

From: Robin Hellyer rmliller500@yahoo.com
Residence: Bozeman

Message:

I am hoping that someday politics will become an honorable endeavor and profession. Sadly I know I will not see this in my lifetime. As a new citizen of Montana, having fled a blue state, I, for one, resent this gerrymandering tactic as proposed by the democratic party to ILLEGALLY gain more democratic seats. I thought Montana state law required that, "The districts must be compact, meaning that the compactness of a district is greatest when the length of the district and the width of a district are equal. A district may not have an average length greater than three times the average width unless necessary to comply with the Voting Rights Act." Neither party should be violating the laws that are designed to protect and uphold us.

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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, September 7, 2022 4:48 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Carl Hellyer

From: Carl Hellyer carl.hellyer@hellyer.club
Residence: Bozeman, Montana

Message:

Please do not adopt the illegal gerrymandering that the maps proposed by the Democrats would create. Districts must be compact in order to comply with Montana State law, and the thin, snake-like district lines drawn up by the Democrats are hopelessly out of sync with that law.

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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, September 7, 2022 9:27 AM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Deborah Hickman

From: Deborah Hickman hickmandeborah3@gmail.com
Residence: Columbus, Montana

Message:

As a resident of Stillwater County, I think that redistricting Map 1 best reflects what the residents and businesses in Stillwater County know as our community. It seems more in alignment with our socioeconomic needs of our existing and growing community.

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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: Thursday, September 8, 2022 9:57 AM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Theresa Kae Holmes

From: Theresa Kae Holmes phoenixladyrising@yahoo.com
Residence: MANHATTAN, MT

Message:

I would like to remind the members of this commission that as a state official, you should each have sworn an OATH to uphold both the State Constitution and the U.S. Constitution. They serve—under the 10 Commandments—as the ultimate law of this state and this nation. You are response-able to We the People of Montana and of this nation as a whole—and ultimately to Reality as a whole, within which each of us lives, moves, and has our being as strands of His Glory, woven into the Tapestry of His Story that is His Holy Name—for your words and actions on this commission.

Within this framework of perspective, I urge you to do the right thing. Failure to accept Reality and your places in it is failure to keep your OATH to that Reality. There are consequences enshrined in law. Just because you haven't been called to account for breaking oath does not mean you won't be. That is not a threat, merely a statement of fact.

I chose not to participate by Zoom after recalling my experience before the commission dealing with the Congressional Redistricting last year. I do not have the patience to listen to toddlers in grown up bodies trying to justify their efforts to shape Reality to their ends—which ultimately boil down to gaining and holding the power to force those they fear into positions of servitude at best—and death at worst.

We all need to grow up and accept that Reality as a whole IS, and each of us is part of that Reality, whether we like it or not.

I ask that Abba (Reality as a whole) wrap every single one of us in His comfort, healing, and guidance as tightly as needed to squeeze the demonic self-hatred out of each of us so we may learn how to be response-able to Him (and each other) for the proper exercise of His Power and Authority to BE and DO His Will on Earth as it is in the Realms of Light.

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, September 7, 2022 3:08 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Sally Indreland

From: Sally Indreland sallymi@itstriangle.com
Residence: Big Timber

Message:

These maps selected appear to try and split counties up to satisfy one party or another. Of the commission maps HDP1, Sweet Grass is kept whole but is with Park and Meagher which Meagher has very little in common with Park and Park will overrun Sweet Grass and Meagher with their more liberal leaning than Sweet Grass and Meagher. HDP2 has Sweet Grass kept whole but is put with Stillwater and part of Yellowstone County which SG has nothing in common with Yellowstone. Gallatin is split into 5 parts. HDP3 has SG County split into 2 with the North part going with Park and the South part going with Stillwater, Carbon and Gallatin. HDP4 has SG County whole but goes with Stillwater and a small part of Park. Instead of trying to put small rural, generally conservative populations, with larger more liberal populations, why not try and put counties together that are similar in past voting and economic bases. All of these maps have targeted areas trying to change the past voting results. The least offensive map for me in regards to Sweet Grass County is HDP1. PM-H1 at least puts Sweet Grass County with similar voting records and economic base of Meagher, Wheatland and Golden Valley. Its too bad, you didn't make an attempt to come to the different areas to try and get input. Most people don't even know this is going on. The legislature should not even be the ones doing this mapping. It should be an independent council that is not associated with the legislature.

--

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

Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Thursday, September 8, 2022 10:37 AM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Llewelyn Jones

From: Llewelyn Jones ljones@mtbus.net
Residence: Conrad, Mt

Message:

- 1) Pondera County was split in 1/2 on the Congressional Map. I would hope it can be kept whole with the legislative district (I understand the Reservation Boundary may need to be considered).
- 2) If there are splits in the rural counties, I ask they be done on already existing lines such as School Boundaries.

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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, September 7, 2022 9:01 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Patti Prinkki Keebler

From: Patti Prinkki Keebler pjk1254@gmail.com
Residence: Roberts Montana

Message:

Dear Chair Smith and Commissioners,

Montana has come a long way towards equity in legislative representation and it would be a regrettable step backward to adopt the plans of either Commissioner Essman or Commissioner Stusek.

The maps submitted by Commissioner Lamson and Commissioner Miller are fair and equitable and reflect Montana voters. Either would serve our state well for the next decade. I encourage you to support one of the Democratic maps.

Thank you,
Patti Prinkki Keebler
PO Box 35
Roberts Montana 59070

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

Sherley, Laura

From: Bill <wgklenn@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 8, 2022 8:34 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Redistricting Maps Comments
Attachments: Apportionment Commission.docx

Members of the Montana Districting and Apportionment Commission,

Sept. 8, 2022

Thank you for taking my comments on the four proposed redistricting maps.

There are four mandatory criteria for composing legislative districts, and the first, equal population, has been achieved in all 4 maps.

The second mandatory criterium, protection of minority voting rights is achieved by proposed maps two and three but has been ignored by maps one and four, which eliminate several majority Native American districts. That disqualifies those maps.

The third mandatory criterium, consisting of compact territory, is achieved by maps one through four pretty much equally. They each have their share of what seem to be large districts, but some areas of our state have very low population densities, and the larger districts are a function of that low density. To my eyes, maps one and four seem very similar to each other, and maps two and three seem very similar to each other. Map four districts seem marginally more compact than map one, and map three seems marginally more compact than map two.

The fourth criterium, districts must be contiguous, is achieved by all of the proposed maps.

Of the goal criteria, I consider the most important to be the first goal; *no plan may be drawn to unduly favor a political party*. For me this criterium is as important as the mandatory ones. Political parties tend to design apportionment maps to benefit themselves, and an election is meaningless if it's not fair, so I believe not favoring one political party over another is one of the very most important points of this issue. Maps two and three come very close to meeting this goal. Maps one and four ignore it entirely - either would greatly increase the probability that the majority party would control substantially more seats than it already does. That would certainly *unduly favor* the majority party.

In conclusion, all of the proposed maps meet the mandatory criteria for population equality, compactness of territory, and contiguousness. Maps two and three meet the mandatory criterium for protection of minority voting rights, while maps one and four do not. Maps two and three also meet the goal criterium about not unduly favoring one political party, while maps one and four work against it.

For the reasons stated above, I believe maps two and three clearly do a better job of meeting the mandatory and goal criteria for our legislative districts, and map three is marginally better in compactness of districts.

I am not a member of either the Republican or Democratic parties; I vote for whichever candidate I believe will best represent my ideals and who will work to improve our state and our country. I implore you to choose a map that will allow me and my fellow Montana citizens to choose our representatives fairly. **Please choose map three.**

Thank you for considering my comments and for serving on this commission,

William Klenn

408 Overbrook Drive

Bozeman, 59715

Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, September 7, 2022 12:10 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Melissa Kwasny

From: Melissa Kwasny melissakwasny@gmail.com
Residence: Basin, MT

Message:
Dear Commissioners:

I am writing in support of redistricting map 2 or 3. I have lived in Jefferson County for over forty years. I have watched as three extremely qualified Democrat. candidates have run for office and not had a chance because of the extreme discrepancy in Republican and Democratic voter numbers. This is frustrating to me as I feel my voice is never represented. Statewide, the partisan difference is closer to 43% Democratic. Maps 1 and 4 redistrict these voters so that Democrats have less than a 20% chance of winning. This is unfair. We need a legislature that is not controlled by one party only. That kind of situation creates cynicism in our youth and a feeling of helplessness in those of us who are politically informed. Please do the right thing and make elections in our state more competitive.

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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: Thursday, September 8, 2022 10:00 PM
To: districting@mt.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Kevin Lavelle

From: Kevin Lavelle boddah1195@msn.com
Residence: Anaconda Montana

Message:

It is in the best interest of Montana's voters that districting be fair and competitive. The republican presented maps are obviously rigged to benefit the Republican Party. Both democrat presented maps keep things fair. I found commissioner Miller presented the best districting map and believe it should be chosen. Thank you for your time and this opportunity to comment.

--

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

Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Thursday, September 8, 2022 8:25 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Marcia A. Lennick

From: Marcia A. Lennick marciaalennick@hotmail.com
Residence: Great Falls, MT 59401

Message:
Please use maps 1 and 4.

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

Sherley, Laura

From: Betsy Mancuso <councilwomanmancuso@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 8, 2022 4:42 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Districting maps

Dears Sirs and Madams,

I'd like to make a comment on the proposed districting maps.
Maps 1 and 4 follow Montana criteria stated in MCA 5-1-115 and maps 2 and 3 do not.

Please go with map 1 and 4.

Thank you,

Betsy Mancuso
Manhattan, MT

Sherley, Laura

From: Beth mcdonough <bthmcdonna@icloud.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 8, 2022 11:04 AM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Districts

Why are there so many fingers in some of the proposed district splits. It makes it hard to know ,(especially for new residents) which district they in. Don't solid blocks make more sense?

Sent from my iPhoneBeth

Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Thursday, September 8, 2022 9:57 AM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Carol McQuiston

From: Carol McQuiston carolmcq55@yahoo.com
Residence: Bozeman

Message:

Don't allow the gerrymandering by the dems leave the redistricting maps compact

--

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, September 6, 2022 5:21 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Sandra Merchant

From: Sandra Merchant smerchant@tutanota.com
Residence: Great Falls, MT

Message:

I have been looking at the redistricting maps 1-4 that are being considered. Map 1- looking at the overall map, there are some strange shapes and placement of SE districts; zooming in on Great Falls the apportionment looks pretty balanced. This map is acceptable. Map 2- overall map also has some strange shapes; zooming in GF the shapes get stranger and do not reflect the GF area or neighborhoods. They are not compact as required by law and not reflective of the layout or neighborhoods in GF. Map 3- this one again has strange shapes around Great Falls, not reflective of the areas or the neighborhoods and definitely not compact. Map 4- This map looks like the best one to represent the neighborhoods and areas surrounding Great Falls. The areas are more compact and not strung out, containing communities and neighborhoods as they should. Thank you for letting me voice my opinion.

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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, September 7, 2022 8:04 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Debbie Moran

From: Debbie Moran debbie_moran@icloud.com
Residence: Belgrade, MT

Message:

It is imperative to abide by the law and keep our legislative maps as they are and not allow the Democrats to gerrymander themselves into office.

--

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



Native American Rights Fund
1506 Broadway
Boulder, CO 80302
303-447-8760
Fax: 303-443-7776

September 8, 2022

Maylinn Smith, Presiding Officer
Commissioner Essmann
Commissioner Lamson
Commissioner Miller
Commissioner Stusek
Montana Districting and Apportionment Commission
P.O. Box 201706
Helena, MT 59620
districting@mt.gov

Dear Commissioners:

These written comments serve as a follow-up to the comments submitted by the Native American Rights Fund to the Commission on July 22. In those comments, we stressed the importance of the development of fair redistricting maps that do not dilute the Native American voting strength and that provide Native American voters with an equal opportunity to elect the candidates of their choice as required by the Voting Rights Act (VRA). We also shared illustrative maps, endorsed by multiple tribes in the state, showing how three pairs of adjacent majority-minority State House districts could be drawn in compliance with the VRA, which in turn could form three Native American majority VRA compliant State Senate districts.

Section 2 of the VRA prohibits the application of redistricting plans that discriminate based on race, which includes plans that have the effect of unlawfully diluting the voting strength of Native American voters. The United States Supreme Court in *Thornburg v. Gingles* provided the three preconditions that must be present under the VRA to require the establishment of a majority-minority voting district. Applying these *Gingles* preconditions to each of our nine proposed majority-minority districts, reveals that the three preconditions are satisfied for each proposed House and Senate district. Specifically for each district, it can be demonstrated that the minority

group (1) is large and compact enough to constitute the majority in each proposed district;¹ (2) is politically cohesive;² and (3) would have their preferred candidates consistently outvoted by the non-minority voters, who tend to vote together as a bloc, if not for the establishment of the proposed districts.³

Since submittal of our comments and maps, the Commission has publicized four proposed State House maps. While the maps labeled HDP-2 and HDP-3 would provide the requisite six majority-minority House districts and three Native American majority Senate districts, the maps labeled HDP-1 and HDP-4 fail to meet the requirements of the VRA; and we therefore oppose those maps and ask the Commission to either disregard them or make the necessary changes to bring them into VRA compliance.

Proposed map HDP-1 geographically splits the districts encompassing the Fort Peck and Fort Belknap reservations (designated on this map as districts 7 and 9), making it impossible to pair those districts into a single Native American majority Senate district. Such Senate district containing both reservations is required under the VRA, and any map would be unlawful that does not provide it.

Additionally regarding map HDP-1, the adjacent districts drawn encompassing the Crow and Northern Cheyenne reservations (designated on this map as districts 1 and 2) do not satisfy all the *Gingles* preconditions. Although each district is drawn to include a Native American voting age population above fifty percent, the districts would not allow the Native American candidate of choice to usually get elected, in violation of the third *Gingles* precondition. In fact, a performance analysis shows that the Native American candidate of choice received the most votes in under 40% of the statewide elections in the proposed District 1 over the past six years; while the Native American candidate of choice in District 2 received the most votes in less than ten percent of those elections. For these reasons, proposed map HDP-1 must be rejected.

Proposed Map HDP-4 also contains a geographic split of Native American majority House districts, with this map splitting apart the Blackfeet and Flathead reservations (designated on this map as districts 6 and 18), violating the VRA by preventing the formation of a Native American majority Senate district. Even if it did not run afoul of the VRA as applied to the Senate district (which it does), an analysis of proposed House District 18 reveals serious VRA compliance concerns, as there is an unlikelihood that the Native American candidate of choice would usually succeed in this district as required by the third *Gingles* precondition. Specifically, the Native American candidate of choice failed to receive the most votes in a majority of the six statewide races in 2020 within the proposed District 18.

¹ Our proposed map shows that the nine majority-minority districts can be drawn to comply with traditional redistricting principles.

² Analysis shows that Native American voters are politically cohesive by usually voting for the same candidate.

³ Racially polarized voting is present for all tribal reservation areas when compared to nearby off-reservation voters, and non-Native voters will outvote the Native American candidate of choice if VRA compliant districts are not drawn.

Likewise regarding map HDP-4, the Crow and Northern Cheyenne reservation districts (designated on this map as districts 39 and 40) would raise concerns under the third *Gingles* precondition as not performing for the Native American candidate of choice. While proposed District 39 might have allowed the Native Candidate of choice to receive the most votes a slim majority of the time over the past several years, the Native American candidate of choice received the most votes in less than 20% of statewide elections over the past six years in proposed District 40. Therefore, the Commission must not adopt these districts as currently proposed in map HDP-4.

It is disheartening to see that the Commission generated maps proposing such glaring VRA violations, particularly given our prior testimony and previously submitted maps illustrating how VRA compliance can be achieved. Further, proposed maps HDP-1 and HDP-4 fail to follow this Commission's own mandatory redistricting guidelines requiring the "Protection of minority voting rights are guaranteed in Article II, Section 4 of the Montana Constitution and through compliance with the Voting Rights Act."

We appreciate the Commission's diligent attention to these concerns and look forward to working together to create a redistricting plan that is fair to all Montanans.

Sherley, Laura

From: Vicky O'Hara <vickyohara63@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 8, 2022 7:10 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Redistricting

My vote and support is for maps one and four.
Splitting maps and areas to suite parties is not right. Population numbers dems or reps.
Thank you

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Sherley, Laura

From: Kelly Quick <drquick34@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 8, 2022 8:25 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Vote for HDP-2

Madam Chair and Members of The Commission,

My name is Kelly Quick, and I live in Great Falls, Cascade County, Montana. I'm writing to express my support for HDP-2. This map best represents a fair and competitive district, which I know is the goal of the Commission to create. It accurately reflects historical votes and does not unfairly advantage any party. Redistricting is a tremendous undertaking, and the Commission is endowed with significant public trust. We all know it is of the utmost importance that redistricting is fair, competitive, and legal. HDP-2 is the best choice considering these factors. Importantly, HDP-2 also respects Indian Country as a separate but important community equally deserving of fair and competitive maps. I urge you to prioritize not only the intent of the nonpartisan commission, but the will of the citizens. We want fair districts.

*Thank you for your time and consideration,
Kelly Quick*

Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, September 7, 2022 4:53 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Stephen Reinertson

From: Stephen Reinertson govmail@fastmail.com
Residence: Belgrade, MT

Message:

Dear Commission Members,

I am writing as a Gallatin county resident having reviewed the proposed house district maps and the MCA sections regarding redistricting criteria. I have observed that, especially in Gallatin county, maps 2 and 3 contain greatly elongated districts which seem to violate the MCA which requires that each district be 1) drawn to "...coincide with the boundaries of political subdivisions of the state to the greatest extent possible...", 2) drawn so that districts "...be compact, meaning that the compactness of a district is greatest when the length of the district and the width of a district are equal...", and 3) "...not be drawn for the purposes of favoring a political party."

In summary, maps 2 and 3 seem to be the least aligned with political subdivisions of the state, with more republican-leaning rural areas being drawn far into and together with more democrat-favored urban areas in a manner which clearly benefits democrat representation and damages republican representation and in a manner which is clearly not "compact" by definition of the MCA.

As a Belgrade resident and one that believes in fair and local representation, I do not want the election of my representative to be determined or swayed by Bozeman residents (which it would were maps 2 or 3 implemented) who, on average, have fundamentally different views, experiences, wants, and needs, than the typical Belgradian. Therefore I ask that the members of this commission select a map that does meet the MCA requirements and that offers the highest degree of local representation. Specifically, I ask that you select map 1 or, preferably, 4 for the new house districts.

Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,
Stephen L. Reinertson
Belgrade, MT

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Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, September 7, 2022 10:21 AM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Theresa Roll

From: Theresa Roll ltdwbr1@gmail.com
Residence: Montana

Message:

I am asking that state law be followed when drawing new re-districting maps.

Gerrymandering should never be tolerated.

https://leg.mt.gov/bills/mca/title_0050/chapter_0010/part_0010/section_0150/0050-0010-0010-0150.html

Thank you

--

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Sherley, Laura

From: Dixie Schroeder <dixsch56@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 7, 2022 7:22 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fair redistricting

Madam Chair and Members of The Commission,

My name is Dixie Schroeder. I live in Havre, Hill County, Montana. I'm writing to express my support for HDP-2. This map best represents a fair and competitive district. It accurately reflects historical votes and does not unfairly advantage any party. Redistricting is a tremendous undertaking, and the Commission is endowed with significant public trust. It is of the utmost importance that redistricting is fair, competitive, and legal. HDP-2 is the best choice considering these factors. Importantly, HDP-2 also respects Indian Country as a separate but important community equally deserving of fair and competitive maps. I urge you to prioritize not only the intent of the nonpartisan commission, but the will of the citizens. We want fair districts.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Jasmine Taylor"

Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Thursday, September 8, 2022 4:23 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Patricia A Simmons

From: Patricia A Simmons psimmons100@gmail.com
Residence: Bozeman

Message:

I don't understand why you are asking for comments on Republican maps that propose gerrymandering, which is illegal. This State is already has a Republican control with winning all statewide races and the majority of the Legislature and 2/3 of our federal representation.

I commented on the maps done last year for the federal races and you ignored my comment and thousands more and allowed the new Western District to be set up that is favorable to Republicans. You allowed Senator Baucus and Governor Raiscoe to sway the supposed neutral party. Now you continue with this bias on legislative districts which is totally unfair. You should only consider the two Democrat maps that do meet the requirements. Do not utilize your competitiveness factor by party, as people learn new information and want to vote by the person's background, experience, leadership plans, etc. And this map will have to stay fair over 10 years – that is through another President's term or two terms, and national affairs, economy, population diversity, etc. influence all registered voters in the country. The Republican maps violate the ability of Native Americans' to serve office, and gain experience allowing them to serve at higher levels. I think this violates the Voting Rights Act and Montana's Constitution treating Native Americans as valuable citizens and teaching Montanan's about the original citizens of Montana.

Please reconsider Ms. Chair your obvious favoring of Republicans and taking away my rights to have both parties and non affiliated voters have an equal chance at serving as my and others like me, representative. We need to get into the current century with lots more diversity, care about diversity and equality, stop trickle-down economics and work from the bottom up for a prosperous future, and new ways to serve Montanans. Thank you.

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Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, September 7, 2022 7:10 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Julie Stiteler

From: Julie Stiteler stitelju@earthlink.net
Residence: Missoula, Montana

Message:

I am amazed at how little publicity this effort has received, and hope that is not deliberate. It is crucial that this activity is not undertaken to provide one party with a distinct advantage over the other, or to suppress the voting of people who are other than white, as is being done in so many other states. Maintaining equitable access to representation is a critical part of how our government is supposed to work and using redistricting as a way to curtail that is immoral and unethical. Please ensure that this effort is not being done to create inequity.

--

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Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Thursday, September 8, 2022 5:19 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Brennon Sullivan

From: Brennon Sullivan epicframesinfo@gmail.com
Residence: Bozeman MT

Message:

Stop the illegal democratic gerrymandering proposals for redistricting Gallatin County and the rest of MT.
I am a MT native.

--

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Sherley, Laura

From: Laurie Talcott <laurietalcott@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Thursday, September 8, 2022 10:46 PM
To: districting@mt.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Montana Redistricting Maps

Dear Chair and Redistricting Commissioners,

I support district maps HDP-2 and HDP-3. They both represent how Montanans have historically voted and do not unfairly favor any party over any other. Both maps also consider and respect Indian Country as separate and important communities of interest.

Thank you for your efforts to maintain fair district maps for Montana that safeguard our democracy.

Sincerely,

Laurie Talcott
410 S. 11th Street
Livingston, MT 59047
406-333-2543

Sherley, Laura

From: Jasmine Taylor <jasmine.taylor.mt@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 7, 2022 4:06 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Redistricting Public Comment

Madam Chair and Members of The Commission,

My name is Jasmine Taylor. I live in Great Falls, Cascade County, Montana. I'm writing to express my support for HDP-2. This map best represents a fair and competitive district. It accurately reflects historical votes and does not unfairly advantage any party. Redistricting is a tremendous undertaking, and the Commission is endowed with significant public trust. It is of the utmost importance that redistricting is fair, competitive, and legal. HDP-2 is the best choice considering these factors. Importantly, HDP-2 also respects Indian Country as a separate but important community equally deserving of fair and competitive maps. I urge you to prioritize not only the intent of the nonpartisan commission, but the will of the citizens. We want fair districts.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Jasmine Taylor

Sherley, Laura

From: Stacy Tempel-StJohn <sstjohn@fairclaimlaw.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 8, 2022 8:52 AM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Redistricting

Madam Chair and Members of The Commission,

My name is Stacy Tempel-St. John. I live and work as an attorney in Great Falls, Cascade County, Montana. I am writing to express my support for HDP-2. This map best represents fair and competitive districts. It accurately reflects historical votes and does not unfairly advantage any party. Redistricting is a tremendous undertaking, and the Commission is endowed with significant public trust. It is of the utmost importance that redistricting is fair, competitive, and legal. HDP-2 is the best choice considering these factors. Importantly, HDP-2 also respects Indian Country as a separate and important community equally deserving of fair and competitive maps. I urge you to prioritize not only the intent of the nonpartisan commission, but the will of the citizens. We want fair districts.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Stacy Tempel-St. John

STACY TEMPEL-ST. JOHN, ESQ.
FAIRCLAIM
LINNELL, NEWHALL, MARTIN & SCHULKE, P.C.
P.O. BOX 2629
GREAT FALLS, MT 59403
(406) 454-5814
SSTJOHN@FAIRCLAIMLAW.COM

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Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Thursday, September 8, 2022 2:40 PM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Gordon Whirry

From: Gordon Whirry gwhirry@gmail.com
Residence: Great Falls

Message:

I support HDP2 and HDP3 because they are the most fair and proportional. These maintain communities of interest in a logical manner and are reasonably compact. It is important to foster competitive districts in order to avoid extremist takeovers and encourage moderate candidates. In Great Falls there is the best opportunity to do that with HDP3. Republican maps unduly favor their party and would not result in proportional representation. It is not healthy for Montana to be dominated by one party.

--

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Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Thursday, September 8, 2022 10:33 AM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Kandy Zanto

From: Kandy Zanto fynbistro@gmail.com
Residence: Great Falls, MT

Message:

Map #4; best choice; Map #1 second choice.

The others are all obviously drawn with the intent of gerrymandering and should not be considered.

--

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Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Thursday, September 8, 2022 9:29 AM
To: Districting
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MDAC Comment from: Lewis Zanto

From: Lewis Zanto lewzanto@msn.com
Residence: Great Falls, MT

Message:

First Choice: Map 4

Second Choice: Map 1

These 2 are best choices and have the least amount of gerrymandering; the others have been corrupted to favor certain areas.

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