

ADVISORY Independent Redistricting Commission for NH: HB 1665

HB 1665 IS A BIPARTISAN BILL that would create a fifteen-member **advisory** commission and establish redistricting criteria for congressional, state legislative, county, and executive council districts in New Hampshire.

Why Does New Hampshire Need HB 1665?

Every decade, after a new census occurs, our state gets new numbers about who and how many people live here and in turn, our legislative maps are redrawn to reflect these changes.

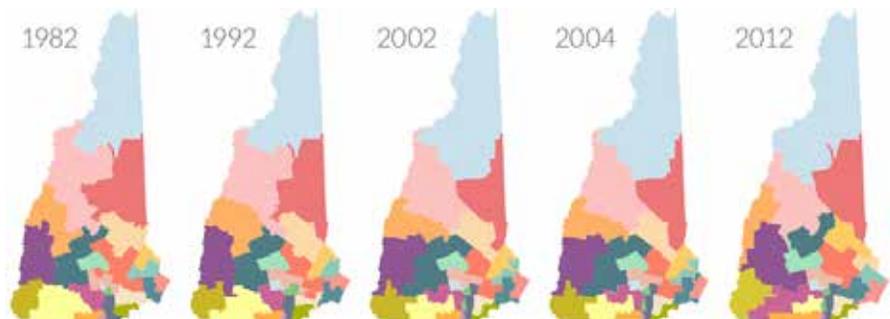
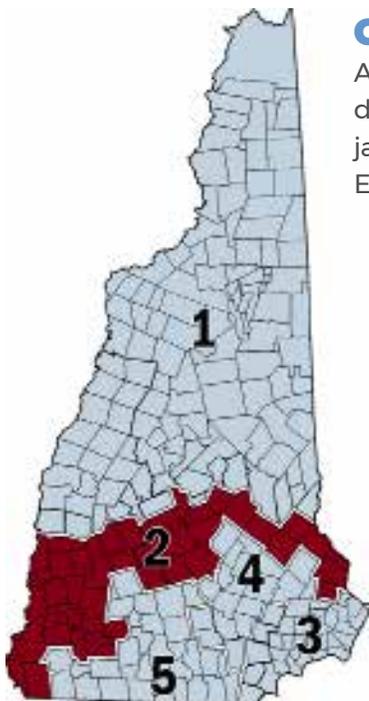
In New Hampshire the redistricting process has been behind closed doors, out of the public eye, where back room deals allow politicians to decide who their voters are. Unfortunately, if a voter resides in a gerrymandered district, they may be structurally disenfranchised for a decade or more.

Advancements in technology now make it easier than ever to configure highly partisan maps that limit the possibility of competitive general elections. The result is a political system where most electoral battles are fought in primaries and elected officials more and more seem to cater to the partisan extremes that dominate those contests.

A strong, vibrant democracy depends on voters choosing their politicians. Not the other way around.

Clear Evidence of Gerrymandering in New Hampshire

Ahead of the 2012 election during redistricting, legislators drafted numerous different maps – and a new map was settled one which included one particularly jarring example a heavily gerrymandered district: the bizarre dragon-shaped area Executive Council District 2 that borders Maine, Vermont, and Massachusetts.



State Senate districts have undergone considerable shifts over time and consistently the party who drew the maps have enjoyed disproportionately favorable election outcomes.

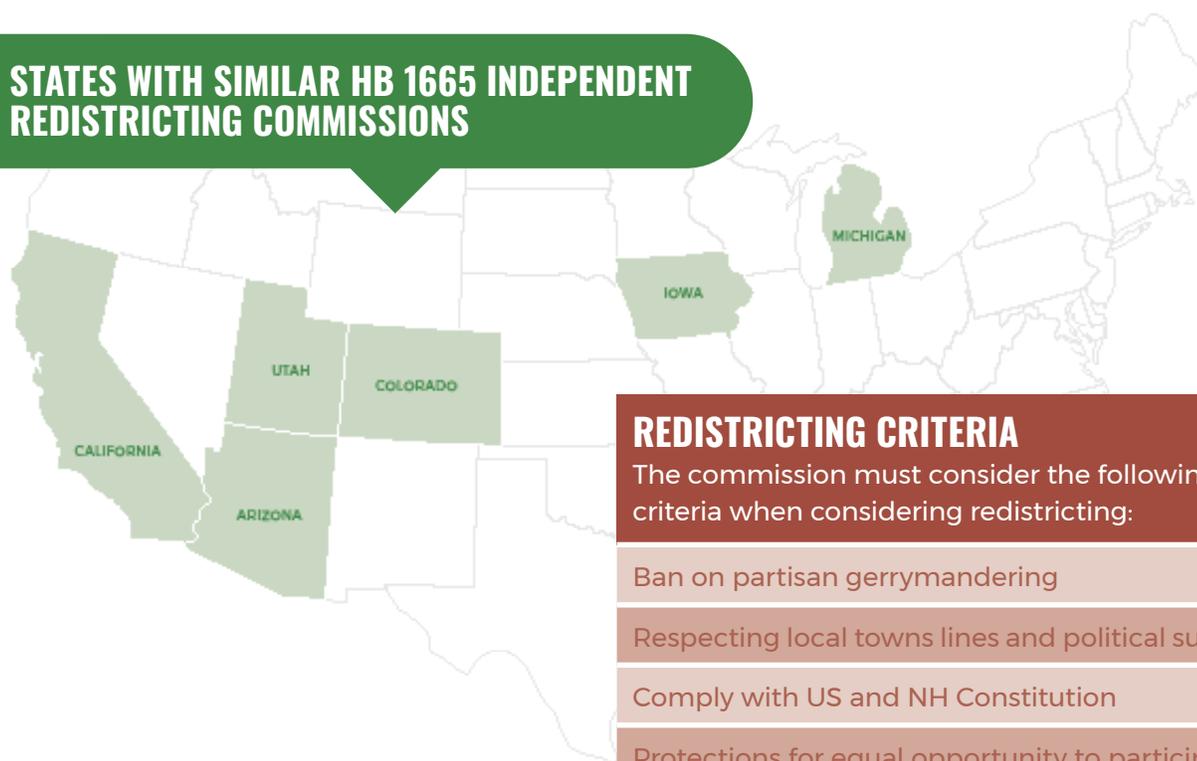
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Transparency

Unlike the current process, HB 1665 throws open the doors of redistricting to the public by requiring the commission to hold public hearings, provide forum for public comment, and disclose all data and communications used to reach a decision. It is imperative for the public's trust in new, fair maps that the process is as transparent as possible.

- All commission meetings are open to the public, and all commission communications and documents are public record.
- The commission must hold at least one public hearing in each county before and after proposing a new map.
- The commission must create a website to provide notice of public hearings, a forum for public comment and map submissions, as well as proposed maps and accompanying data.
- Along with a proposed map, the commission must release a report that measures the maps against external metrics, including the established redistricting criteria.

STATES WITH SIMILAR HB 1665 INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING COMMISSIONS



REDISTRICTING CRITERIA

The commission must consider the following criteria when considering redistricting:

Ban on partisan gerrymandering

Respecting local towns lines and political subdivisions

Comply with US and NH Constitution

Protections for equal opportunity to participate

Preservation of communities with common interests

Contiguity requirement

How a Map Gets Approved

A plan must receive support from at least nine out of the fifteen commissioners, including two members from each of the three categories of partisan affiliation. The plan may then be voted on by the state legislature for approval.

ADVISORY Redistricting Commission Structure At-A-Glance

Type of Commission

Advisory

What Maps the Commission Will Draw

Congressional, state legislature, executive council, and county commission

Commission Size

Fifteen members
(5 Republican,
5 Democrat,
5 unaffiliated)

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO BE A COMMISSIONER?

A prospective commissioner must be:

- A registered New Hampshire voter, that voted in two of the past three statewide general elections.
- Prospective commissioners may not have served as – or be related to - elected officials, candidates, or staffers at the federal, state, or county level.
- Applicants may not have been a registered lobbyist or contributed 75% or more of the individual campaign contribution limit to a federal candidate.

HOW ARE COMMISSIONERS SELECTED?

Nine members are appointed by the secretary of state through a random selection process:

- Forty-Five eligible applicants are selected by the secretary of state – 15 Republicans, 15 Democrat, and 15 unaffiliated.
- Interviews are conducted, and each election pool is narrowed to 10 applicants based on racial, ethnic, gender, and geographic diversity.
- State legislative leaders may each strike up to two applicants.
- Finally, the secretary of state randomly chooses nine members from the remaining applicants in the pool.

The six remaining members are appointed by the nine randomly selected commissioners, with two members from each selection pool.